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## **New Art Exhibition Features Native Wildlife When Missouri Became a State in 1821**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

COLUMBIA, Mo., February 2, 2021—As part of its efforts to commemorate the state’s bicentennial, the State Historical Society of Missouri offers a new exhibition, *Native Creatures: The Indigenous Mammals and Birds of Missouri*. The artworks depict animals that inhabited Missouri at the time the territory became a state in 1821.

Images created in that era by John James Audubon and Karl Bodmer show animals and birds that are still found in Missouri, as well as some that are now extinct or no longer can be found within the state. Later works by artists such as Charles Schwartz and Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling represent Missouri’s biological diversity and encourage viewers to consider how settlement, industrialization, and agriculture have changed our ecosystems.

Interpretive text panels describe the artworks and place them in historical context. “Throughout the exhibition, we have interspersed quotes from Alphonso Wetmore’s 1837 Gazetteer of the State of Missouri,” said State Historical Society of Missouri art curator Joan Stack. “Wetmore describes the native birds and animals pictured in the exhibition, revealing early Missourians’ relationships with these creatures.”

“We hope the exhibition will provide viewers with an appreciation of Missouri’s past and present biodiversity,” Stack said.

The SHSMO Art Gallery is FREE and open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Society’s Center for Missouri Studies in Columbia. Stop by and experience this exhibit, or learn more at [shsmo.org/exhibitions/native-creatures](https://shsmo.org/exhibitions/native-creatures).

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### **About The State Historical Society of Missouri**

*Founded in 1898 and established as a trustee of the state a year later, SHSMO is the premier center for the study of Missouri state and local history. SHSMO collects, preserves, and publishes materials that enhance research and support learning opportunities in the study of the Midwest at six research centers around the state, with headquarters on the University of Missouri campus. Visit: [shsmo.org](https://shsmo.org).*

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