



# Carlinville Public Library To Host Program On Owls Of Forest Park

by Tom Emery  
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CARLINVILLE - The Great Horned owls of Forest Park in St. Louis will be the topic of a free program hosted by the Carlinville Public Library at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 7.

“Forest Park Owls: Hiding in Plain Sight” will be presented by Mark H.X. Glenshaw, an award-winning naturalist and expert from St. Louis who delivers programs to enthusiastic audiences around the region.

Glenshaw has documented the life of Charles, a male Great Horned Owl from Forest Park, as well as his five mates and various offspring, for over sixteen years.

“My official start date was Dec. 29, 2005. I call it my ‘owl-i-versary’,” laughed Glenshaw, a manager of university services at Fontbonne University. “Since then, I’ve spent countless hours following Charles and the owls around him.”

Glenshaw and his fascinating owl studies have been covered by many media outlets in the area. He delivers around fifty programs a year, mostly in Illinois and Missouri.

In addition, Glenshaw leads “owl prowls” for small groups in Forest Park. The “prowls” usually last two hours and start around sunset, when the owls become active. “I set a record for prowls last year,” said Glenshaw. “Normally, I do around seventy a year, but last year, I had 96 of them.”

Information on his owl prowls can be found at <https://forestparkowls.blogspot.com> and on both Instagram and Twitter at @forestparkowls.

Glenshaw’s program at the Carlinville library will last around ninety minutes and will use Power Point slides, as well as videos, to demonstrate the lives of owls and their mating behaviors.

Great Horned owls are the third-tallest owl in North America, and can reach 18-25 inches. They are the second-heaviest, weighing 2-5 pounds. “But their wingspan is massive,” said Glenshaw. “They can reach four to five feet wide. It’s really something to see.”

The owls are remarkably adaptable, and can survive in many different surroundings. “They’re so widespread, and are found in so many places, from city parks to state parks to residential neighborhoods,” remarked Glenshaw. “But they’re not always seen so easily.

“That’s one reason I call my program ‘hiding in plain sight,’” continued Glenshaw. “They’re out there, but they’re fast, silent fliers who camouflage well and operate after dark, so they can be hard to find.”

In addition to their adaptability, Glenshaw says that people are surprised to learn that Great Horned owls are apex predators. “They’re at the top of the food chain,” he said. “They’ll eat insects, worms, raccoons, wild turkeys, skunks, anything.”

Glenshaw’s programs are for all ages and emphasize what he calls “the four ‘e’s.’ I want my programs to be energetic, engaging, entertaining, and educational. I want the audience to learn, and have some fun. People will come away with a better understanding of Great Horned owls, which are great in every definition of the word.”

For more information on the program, contact the Carlinville Public Library at 217-854-3505 or [mail@carlinvillelibrary.org](mailto:mail@carlinvillelibrary.org).