



MAY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2010

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

In May, warm temperatures and showers continue the greening-up process. It's the month of many woodland wildflowers, much bird migrating and nesting activity and delightful weather. Listed below are a few observations from a year ago in the Twin Cities Metro area, Waconia and outstate when indicated. These events can be used to anticipate upcoming happenings and will help you compare this year with last.



May 1 * Canada goose goslings continue to hatch (starting as early as April 29). House wrens return and fill our yards with song. Some eastern bluebird pairs feed their recently hatched young. Time to put up oriole feeders!

May 2 * First mallard ducklings appear. Blooming crabapple trees and common purple lilac shrubs show off their colors and fragrances. Morel mushrooms start to pop up.



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More morel mushrooms sprout up. Near Rice, watch for migrating scarlet tanager.

May 12 * Female Baltimore orioles build nests. Ruby-throated hummingbirds return to Itasca State Park and Bemidji area after wintering in south Texas and Costa Rica.

May 13 * First wood duck young jump from their nesting cavity, high up in a tree, to the ground or water. Most wood duck broods jump between 8:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m.

May 15 * First monarch butterfly is back. More than a dozen species of migrating warblers arrive today. First common nighthawks return to St. Peter. At Lutsen, the first ovenbird and ruby-throated hummingbird arrive. It's the Minnesota fishing opener and the water temperature of Green Lake at Spicer is 58°F.



May 16 * Black-capped chickadees feed their nestlings. June bugs hit lighted screens for the first time this year.

May 22 * It's prime time for most wood duck eggs to hatch.

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First bobolink and gray catbird come into sight.

May 5 * Young red fox kits come out to play in the sunshine; they're about a quarter the size of their mother.

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By now, "the big three" are back: Baltimore orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks and ruby-throated hummingbirds.



May 8 * You may see a very early clutch of eastern bluebird young fledge today. Many southern Minnesota farmers seed their soybean fields.

May 9 * Frosty morning kills off many apple blossoms. Common loons in central and northern Minnesota begin to lay eggs.

May 10 * Tree swallows begin to lay eggs.

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Green frogs call. Monarch butterflies deposit eggs on milkweed foliage. Tall bearded irises bloom.

May 28 * The surface temperature of Lake Waconia is up to 73°F—time to go swimming!

