



APRIL PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2014

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

Every April we welcome the greening of grasses, the first wildflowers, the bursting of tree buds, and return of more summer migrants. Listed below are a few observations from a year ago in the Twin Cities Metro area, Waconia and areas beyond when indicated. These events can be used to anticipate upcoming happenings and will help you compare 2015 with last year.

April 1 * The first American Woodcock and Fox Sparrows arrive. The landscape is about 80 percent snow-free.

April 2 * The first Tundra Swans flock.

April 4 * A spring snowstorm dumps 8 to 11 inches of snow. Wood Ducks are checking out nesting boxes. A Canada Goose is on her nest, starting incubation.

April 6 * The maple sap runs well both yesterday and today. The landscape is again about 80 percent snow-free. Dark-eyed Juncos are very numerous.

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Today is the first 70°F day and marks the arrival of the first Tree Swallows. Eastern Bluebirds continue investigating nesting boxes. Western chorus frogs have been calling since yesterday.



April 10 * Ponds are becoming ice-free, and painted turtles are up sunning on logs. A female Mallard Duck begins incubating nine eggs. Today is the ice-out date for Lake Pepin at Lake City.

April 11 * The snow trillium is blooming, and sharp-lobed hepatica has its first open flowers.

April 13 * With ice departing some southern MN lakes and rings of open water forming well into the central part of the state, Common Loons begin to appear as far north as the Wadena area.

April 16 * Another spring snowstorm leaves 4 inches at Waconia, 8 inches in Plymouth, and 20 inches of snow at Pine City. There are more good maple sap runs but the best maple syruping season in 21 years is coming to a close.

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The first Purple Martins return.



April 22 * The first lawnmowers power up and gardeners pull the first rhubarb for sauce. Farmers begin planting alfalfa and oats.

April 24 * Today is the official ice-out date for Lake Minnetonka.

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Red-winged Blackbirds, Mourning Doves and others at a feeding station are not bothered by a thunderstorm with heavy rains hitting them.



April 30 * Daffodils and forsythia are blooming. American Robins finish their evening singing at 8:41pm.

