



# APRIL PHENOLOGY

*A reflective look at 2016*

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

*April arrives with the greening of grasses, the blooming of the first wildflowers and the budding of tiny tree leaves. Migrating birds continue to arrive. 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 2016 with last year.*

**April 1** ✱ Tree Swallows and female American Robins return.

**April 3** ✱ High of 69°F. Wood frogs and western chorus frogs are very vocal. Turkey Vultures and White Pelicans appear.

**April 5** ✱ First Purple Martin arrives; this male came all the way from its wintering area in Brazil. Official ice-out date for Mille Lacs Lake (average is April 25).

APR.  
9

**First Yellow-rumped Warblers arrive. Frosty morning with a low of 20°F. Thin, new ice appears on ponds that have been ice-free for nearly a month. It's -11°F on the Gunflint Trail, where there's still lots of snow for cross-country skiing.**



**April 12** ✱ Carver County farmers prepare soil for planting and gardeners till their plots. American Robins build nests. Male American Goldfinches sport their bright yellow breeding plumage. Great Horned Owls and Bald Eagles feed their nestlings. Canada Geese and Mallard Ducks incubate eggs.

**April 13** ✱ High of 71°F. Common dandelions now bloom on south-facing slopes. Wild ginger and Dutchman's-breeches first bloom in woodlands. Garter snakes sun themselves. Mourning cloak butterflies are out and about. Thousands of American Coots dot the surface of Lake Waconia.

**April 14** ✱ Corn planting begins in Carver County. Chipping Sparrows are back. High of 76°F in the Twin Cities.

**April 16** ✱ First 80°F reading in the Twin Cities since Oct. 11 (Average first 80°F day is May 1). More Purple Martins return. First lawnmowers run. Magnolia and apricot trees bloom.

**April 17** ✱ The morning bird chorus is great, and includes: Canada Geese honking, Tree Swallows chattering,

Mourning Doves cooing, Red-winged Blackbirds trilling, and Song Sparrows singing. High of 79°F (normal high is 59°F). First rhubarb is ready to pull for sauce.

**April 18** ✱ First brood of Mallard Ducklings. First tiny leaves out on native basswood and sugar maple trees. Hyacinths, daffodils and early tulips bloom. Wabasha reports first Chimney Swifts.

**April 19** ✱ Brown Thrashers arrive. Today is the ice-out date for Lake Bemidji.

**April 20** ✱ Ruffed Grouse in Lutsen are drumming.

**April 22** ✱ First shade shelters deciduous forests. Rhododendrons are loaded with flowers. A very early male Rose-breasted Grosbeak arrives at a Northfield feeding station. Waterville reports first newly hatched Canada Goose goslings. A Black-capped Chickadee nest has full clutch of eggs. First Barn Swallows are back in southern MN.

**April 23** ✱ First House Wren. Busy farmers do field work.

**April 24** ✱ Nashville, Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Cape May and more Warblers arrive in the Twin Cities. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and an Indigo Bunting arrives at a Rushford feeding station.

APR.  
25

**First of year male Baltimore Oriole dines on sugar water in Waconia.**



**April 26** ✱ Significant numbers of hawks migrate over the Twin Cities.

**April 28** ✱ Migrating White-throated Sparrows visit the area.

**April 30** ✱ Many crabapple tree varieties begin flowering. Common purple lilac first blooms.