



MAY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2013

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

In May, warm temperatures and rain work to continue early summer's greening-up process. 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 this year with last.

MAY

1

The first Rose-breasted Grosbeaks arrive at feeding stations, feasting on sunflower seeds. Yellow-rumped Warblers are quite numerous, and the first Palm Warblers arrive. Purple Martins return en masse. Ruffed Grouse start drumming in the Lutsen area.



May 2 * The first Ruby-throated Hummingbird arrives. It's the official ice-out date for Lake Minnetonka (avg. is April 13.) A snowstorm dumps over a foot of snow in southeastern MN—resulting in tree damage, downed power lines and, for some students, a very rare May snow day.

May 4 * Many more Baltimore Orioles return, consuming sugar water, orange halves and grape jelly at feeders. Eastern Bluebirds come to feeders for mealworms. Indigo Buntings and White-crowned Sparrows seek out feeding stations offering seeds.

MAY

6

The first lawn mower sputters alive. Forsythia shrubs and magnolias bloom. Black-capped Chickadee nests contain eggs. A Whip-poor-Will sings at 5am near Stillwater.



May 8 * Mallard Duck eggs hatch. American toads call for the first time. Rhubarb is ripe and ready for making sauce.

May 11 * It's the Minnesota fishing opener and many northern lakes are still ice-covered. Gray Catbirds visit feeders offering sunflower chips. Garden asparagus is ready to cut. Moose young begin arriving in NE Minnesota.

May 14 * The first Canada Goose goslings hatch. A record high of 98°F at MSP International Airport ends up being the warmest day of this year. Common tree frogs call.

May 15 * Migrating Scarlet Tanagers appear in yards and at feeding stations, eating grape jelly and cracked corn. It's a late ice-out date for Leech Lake (avg. is April 28.)

MAY

16

The first Ruby-throated Hummingbirds return to the Lutsen area today, as do Black-throated Green Warblers and Ovenbirds.



May 18 * Baltimore and Orchard Orioles, House Finches and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds feed at nectar feeders. Corn and soybean planting continues in southern MN.

May 19 * Thickets of wild plum trees are loaded with white flowers. Backyard plum varieties, eastern redbud trees and tulips are also blooming.

May 23 * In Carver Park near Victoria, 21 species of warblers, including Blackburnian and Yellow Warblers, plus five species of vireos including Warbling and Red-eyed Vireos thrill observers.

May 24 * Common Nighthawks migrate over Ramsey County from sunset through dusk.

May 25 * Eastern Bluebirds lay eggs. Morel mushrooms are up. In southern Minnesota, crabapple, apple and Ohio Buckeye trees, as well as lilacs and azaleas are finally in bloom.



May 25 * American Crows, plus Red-bellied and Hairy Woodpeckers are busy feeding young. American Redstarts, Magnolia and Chestnut-sided Warblers are among the most numerous of 25 warbler species observed in Duluth.

May 31 * The first monarch butterfly emerges from its cocoon. Wild geranium, Virginia waterleaf and columbine are woodland wildflowers blooming at their peak.