



MAY PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2011

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

In May, the greening-up process continues, amidst blooming wildflowers, nesting birds and usually delightful weather. 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 * Despite snow flurries, today's the right time to put out Baltimore Oriole and Ruby-throated Hummingbird feeders and to watch for the first Rose-breasted Grosbeaks eating sunflower seeds at feeding stations. House Wrens continue to arrive, filling our yards with their cheerful songs and looking for nesting boxes. Be on the lookout for Chimney Swifts and the first Bobolinks and Gray Catbirds to return. As of today, about 1% of Minnesota's corn crop is planted; 84% of corn was planted at this time in 2010.

May 3 * Both White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows migrate through the area and stop at feeding stations. Bloodroots and Dutchman's-breeches bloom in woodlands.

May 4 * The first Canada Goose goslings hatch.

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Today Scarlet Tanagers migrate through the Twin Cities and the first Mallard Ducklings hatch.



May 6 * First Barn Swallows return. Male American Goldfinches are now all bright yellow and black.

May 17 * Both Yellow-rumped and Yellow Warblers are very vocal. The first Eastern Kingbirds arrive.

May 10 * Today's the first 80°F or above day this season (high of 88°F in Twin Cities). Red-eyed Vireos return.

May 12 * Expect the first Ruby-throated Hummingbirds to return to Itasca State Park and the Bemidji area today.

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Today the sugar maples, basswoods, green ashes and other trees leaf out enough to shade the ground below. Warbler migration peaks with 17 species observed.



May 16 * The Whip-poor-will, a voice in the woods, calls out in the evening near Rice. Today is the official ice-out date for Greenwood Lake in Cook County; it's the last lake in Minnesota to lose its ice cover.

May 17 * Beautiful flowering crabapple trees and common purple lilacs fill the air with fragrance. Morel mushroom hunters delight in their finds.

May 21 * Indigo Buntings visit feeders. Newly fledged American Robins patrol lawns for food with their parents. Common Nighthawks migrate overhead.

May 23 * Common purple lilacs are at peak bloom. Great Blue Herons feed nestlings.

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Today the first Green Heron and monarch butterfly arrive.



May 28 * Lilies of the valley bloom. New migrants, such as Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos, continue to arrive. In northern Minnesota, the first moose calves arrive.

May 31 * Baltimore Orioles sing and call energetically. Bridal wreath blooms look like white fountains.