

# April Phenology

a reflective look at 2009

by Jim Gilbert



**1** New 2" snowfall. Screech Owls are incubating eggs. Hooded Mergansers check out next boxes. White Pelicans return to extreme southern Minnesota.

**5** About 2.5" of fresh snow on the ground this morning, but all gone by 5 p.m. This is our last snow this season. Excellent maple sap runs since April 1. Ice-out date for Lake Phalen in St. Paul, Upper Lake St. Croix and Swede Lake at Watertown.

**7** Canada Geese are laying eggs and some have started incubation. First bats flying tonight.

**8** Ice-out date for Lake Calhoun in Minneapolis and Medicine Lake in Plymouth.

**9** Crocuses bloom nicely in gardens. First dandelions bloom next to buildings.

**10** Birders are seeing Hermit Thrushes, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Yellow-rumped Warblers. First greening of grasses on south slopes. Ice-out date for Lake Waconia, where the first American Coots arrive today. First Common Loons arrived yesterday.

**11** End of maple syrup season. Aspen catkins blow in the wind like tiny windsocks. First Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Belted Kingfishers. Bluebirds are laying eggs. First Purple Martins return to Fairmont and Waseca areas. A Peregrine Falcon is on its nest of eggs in downtown Rochester.

**12** First Northern Flickers. Last day this spring for skiing at Lutsen Mountains.

**13** Official ice-out date for Lake Minnetonka.

**15** High of 67 degrees. First mourning cloak butterflies out and about. First Chipping Sparrows return.

**16** First 70 degree day. High of 71 degrees in the Twin Cities. Bloodroots and Dutchman's-breeches bloom in woodlands, and pasqueflowers on prairies. Western Chorus Frogs and Wood Frogs very vocal.

**17** Dandelions now blooming on south-facing slopes. High of 73 degrees in Minneapolis and Duluth.

**18** Barn Swallows return and American Toads are trilling.

**19** Forsythia, hyacinths and daffodils have begun blooming.

**23** First rhubarb pulled for sauce. First Brown Thrasher spotted. Temperature hit in 80s for the first time in 2009. The Twin Cities had a high of 85 degrees, but Alexandria reached 88 degrees and Redwood Falls topped out at 92 degrees.

**24** Ice-out date for Mille Lacs Lake, West Battle Lake in Otter Tail County and Lake Roosevelt at Outing.

**25** First leaves appear on Quaking Aspens. First garden asparagus cut. A dozen species of wildflowers are blooming, including wild ginger, large-flowered bellwort and marsh marigold. Southern Minnesota farmers are doing much field work, including planting corn.

**26** Some robins and bluebirds have complete clutches of eggs. Rainy day. We needed this!

**30** First Canada Goose goslings seen out and about. House Wrens are back and singing. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird arrived in Faribault. Ice-out date for Leech Lake, Lake Vermilion and Rainy Lake.

**31** About 6" of snow cover the landscape. High of 30 degrees F. A White-breasted Nuthatch is singing the "whi, whi, whi...." or "who, who, who...." spring song.



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