

Phenology and Nature Notes

2008

12/16/08: - 17 this morning. The coldest day of the winter thus far.-Z

12/16/08: My father called me this morning and reported that he saw two wolves on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage this morning.-Z

12/12/08: Today is the first day that we have groomed cross-country ski trails for the year.-Z

12/2/08: Snowy Owl that we brought in to the NWC was released today at Powell Marsh. Her eyelid was sutured up and she flew off strong. -L

11/24/08: Brown Creeper at the Discover Center's feeder.

11/23/08: While deer hunting on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage I literally stumbled on a dead snowy owl. It looked like it had been killed by a fox. We have lots of reports of snowy owls coming down from the North.-Z

11/23/08: Also while deer hunting I saw a Male Goshawk fly overhead. Probably looking for a ruffed grouse or snowshoe hare to eat. This is the first sighting for me in many years.-Z

11/20/08: First skier on the trails today (Troy). Grouse, otter, weasel and snowshoe hare tracks were seen. The trails are not groomed, but we have several inches of snow for those brave souls who want to tackle them! -L (First snow shower on 11/18/08)

11/18/08: Right on time. Today Statehouse Lake completely froze over. Calm winds and 10 degrees overnight locked up the lake today.-Z

11/13/08: Anna and I saw a snowshoe hare in 90% winter phase here at the center. -L

11/4/08: Bruce Bacon and I captured a Female Juv. Snowy Owl at Powell Marsh today. The owl smelled of skunk and had an injury to her right eye lid. The Northwood's Animal Hospital has the bird and is planning on keeping it for a week or so. -Z

10/29/08: Snow has disappeared. -L

10/27/08: First snow fall of the year!! at 5:50 pm, we have just a snowflake over 3 inches of accumulation on the picnic table outside the office- we'll see how long it lasts! -L

10/22/08: Snow buntings seen playing at the Discovery Center -L

10/16/08: Many of the maple, birch, aspen, and ash trees have dropped their leaves.-Z

10/11/08: Monarch sighting! I saw a monarch butterfly while hiking around Clark Lake in the Sylvania Wilderness in the UP- the critter needs to start heading south! -L 10/10/08: The Woods and Waters project has captured another American Pine Marten in Iron County. This makes it 5 animals captured and radio-collared in less than two years.-Z

10/8/08: Peak Fall color in the Northwood's.-Z

10/1/08: Dark eyed juncos are moving through the north woods.-Z

9/15/08: 22 Canada geese floating around Statehouse Lake early this morning -L

9/9/08: Heard geese honking over the center...fall is on the way...with temps in the 30's it feels like it is already here! -L

9/5/08: The last of our "reared" monarchs emerged today. This last generation of monarchs in the northwoods are the ones to migrate 3000 miles down to the Transvolcanic Range in Mexico. There they will over-winter and next spring start heading back north. They will get to the southern states, lay eggs and die. Those monarchs that emerge from those eggs will fly north and be the first monarchs we see next spring. Long story short, the babies of the monarchs heading south now will be the first ones we see next spring. Good luck on your journey monarchs!! -L

8/30/08: 2nd nest of snapping turtles hatched at the CL Nature center -L

8/28/08: Snapping turtle hatched today at the Crystal Lake Nature Center. We collected 10 and released them into Musky Lake. -L

5/6/08: Black Throated Green Warbler singing at the Center today! (heard two days ago in Eagle River) -L

4/29/08: Towhee by Deep Lake in Eagle River -L

4/27/08: Manitowish River (between Pea Patch and Bridge) Palm Warblers and Pine Warblers seen. Not really phenology related but kind of neat- on a hike on the River trail at the Center, we went down by the campsite off the trail and under a large white pine found 3 large owl pellets- later identified as Great Horned owl. -L

4/26/08: ICE OUT!! On Statehouse Lake- finally! The southern portion of the lake held on to the ice for a few days after the rest of the lake had opened up -L

4/25/08: Loon pair returns to Statehouse Lake -L

4/22/08: Happy Earth Day! Spring peepers, white throated sparrows and the mourning cloak butterfly were all seen/heard this past weekend. -L

4/19/08: Bear tracks on the yellow loop trail...large male. -L

4/18/08: Common loons arrived on the Manitowish River today.

4/18/08: I got my first Deer tick of the year today.

4/18/08: Ruffed Grouse are drumming.

4/18/08: Hermit thrushes were singing on Croker Rd in Eagle River yesterday. -L

4/18/08: This week strong south winds brought many spring migrants. In the last two days I've seen; Snow buntings, eastern phoebe, song sparrow, cowbirds (bad), purple finch, fox sparrow, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, common redpoll, common & hooded mergansers, woodducks, sandhill cranes, belted kingfisher, Red-tail hawk, Am. Robins, grackles, red-wing blackbirds, canada geese, mallards, and a pair of gold finches (which I haven't seen all

winter).z

4/17/08: First bird club outing of the year came up with 25 species at the Powell Marsh Vista; Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Crow, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and American Goldfinch.

4/16/08: Phoebes have been heard outside Trees For Tomorrow in Eagle River all week.

4/16/08: During a stroll down the 3-Eagle Trail in Eagle River, Troy heard/saw a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Harrier, Turkey Vulture, and 20+ Yellow-rumped warblers. -L

4/14/08: This morning and yesterday I heard a solitary Fox Sparrow at my mom's house in Arbor Vitae. While hiking at Raven Nature Trail we spotted a nice otter trail with signs of estrus. About 20 Common Mergansers were seen by the fish hatchery in Woodruff as well. -L

4/8/08: Today we saw two flocks of tundra swans fly over the Discovery center. (30 + in each flock) Unfortunately for us, they are only passing by on their way north to Canada and Alaska.- Z

4/7/08: We also saw Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers along the river.

4/7/08: During a spring canoe this weekend in Eagle River (note: there are several parts of the WI River that are NOT open ;) we saw/heard many neat things. Birds we heard included GC Kinglets, Brown creeper, Winter Wren, Song Sparrow, Sand hill Cranes, and in the evening watched a woodcock display near Cassian (where we also heard a red-bellied woodpecker). The puss willows were also out by the river. -L

4/4/08: This morning a Dark-eyed Junco was found outside the program center. I had hit a window, but luckily was still alive. We have also been tappin' the maples (10) since Tuesday, with a few trees that are producing quite a bit of sap, and a few others that are more resistant. We will see what the coming weeks bring...enjoy the weather, and all the slush that it brings... -L 3/31/08: The last day of March and it doesn't look like the ice is going out anytime soon on Statehouse Lake. We are supposed to get 6-10 inches of snow/rain this afternoon into tomorrow. A few updates: a chipmunk was seen at Zach's house on the 19th, this past weekend two robins were seen at the North Lakeland school, and a badger was hit by a car between Mercer and Manitowish Waters.

3/27/08: We found some blood under the bird feeders yesterday (hoping it was a squirrel). On a walk around the snowshoe loop last night I came across a grouse or what was left of a grouse-the predator, a coyote, left a nice piece of evidence, his scat.

3/20/08: Happy first day of spring!

3/19/08: After a few inches of snow accumulation yesterday morning, the sun is out, the temps are up, and the snow is slowly melting again. Ice on the lake is still about 1 1/2 - 2 feet thick. If you are out on the snowshoe loop, keep your eyes open and upward as you get into the deciduous forest across the lake, just after the bog. In a great white pine, there is a porcupine that has taken residence. Look for tell-tale signs like twigs and needles littering the snow, plowed-up trail, and cashew-shaped scat. He/she doesn't seem to be too active; hardly ever leaving the white pine. *American Pine Marten young are also being born this week. We will keep you updated on any Marten births we discover with the Woods and Waters project in Iron County.

Enjoy the sun and nice weather!

3/10/08: First Pileated woodpecker seen at the Center!

3/10/08: Bobcat sighting on Hwy K between Manitowish Waters and Boulder Junction.

2/20/08: Watch for the lunar eclipse between 8:00pm and 10:00pm.

2/11/08: The First Mourning Dove arrived at the NLDC feeders today.

1/30/08: Watch for Red Squirrels chasing one another up and down and all around the pines. It is their mating season and they are very active with their courtship rituals!

1/25/08: Listen closely at night for the "who's awake, me too" sound of the Great Horned Owl. They are beginning their courtship activities and are quite active!

1/23/08: Due to the extremely cold temperatures, most of the Manitowish River has frozen over. This has force the Trumpeter Swans to take refuge near the Manitowish Waters dam. This morning there were two battling the cold.

Phenology and Nature Notes

2007

12/17/07: We have had very cold conditions for the last two weeks. The lowest - 16 degrees F. and the Highest was 20 degrees F. It's great to have our winters back.

12/9/07: The Big Buck: I've noticed another monster buck harvested in town today. For some strange reason this year it seems that a number of large dominate bucks have been shot during the muzzle loader deer hunting season. As a naturalist and avid hunter the big buck has always intrigued me. Their majestic nature, intelligence, and wisdom make me want to learn more about these creatures. So far, I've only harvested one in my 19 years of hunting and that was by accident. So I ask; why are the muzzle loader hunters getting these dominate bucks? I decided to start polling these hunters and trying to find out what it is that they are doing to take down such an animal. It turns out that most of them are hunting over corn piles. The results of my little survey showed that during the gun hunting season the large dominate buck were done with phase III of the rut and they retreated back to their secluded "buck bedrooms for some R&R. When the normal gun season was finished and muzzle loader started the large bucks where hungry and needed to gain some weight back for winter. So they frequently visited these corn piles resulting in this years dominate buck harvest during muzzle loader season.

12/9/07: State house lake has 5 inches of snow on top of the ice and the ice is also 5 inches thick.

11/26/07: Deer exclosure was put up today around 2pm-on the interpretive trail just before the bog

11/19/07: Despite a little rain and temperatures in the mid to high 30's, the lake still has 100% ice cover! So far...

11/16/07: Yee-haw! Today the lake froze completely over! Snow is falling on top of the ice-past dates of ice-on: 2003: November 8th 2004: November 14th 2005: November 14th 2006: No Data Found, possibly the 15th

11/8/07: 8:30 am - 2/3 of Statehouse Lake is covered in a thin sheet of ice (disappeared by sunset)

11/5-11/6/07: First significant snowfall that has stayed on the ground, here at the center. Approx 3-5 inches of snow.

10/23/07: Phase II of the rut has started. This is where bucks start to move out of their home areas and start marking breeding ground territories. Look for ground scrapes and rubs on trees.

10/22/07: Tamaracks starting to change color and drop their needles

10/10/07: First Hard Frost

9/18/07: Leaves are really starting to change their colors here at the Center- There are some really nice "red" trees around the property

9/14/07: SNOW falling here at the center at 10 am!!! Did not stick around...

9/10/07: Wildrice on some of the lakes and rivers have started to fall into my canoe. However, due to low water levels it is difficult to harvest the rice this year. The rice beds appear to be healthy.

7/28/07: Sharp-shinned Hawk seen chasing Chickadee during running of "Run for the Northwood's Wild Roses". Thoroughbred horses were seen on the Center grounds.

7/1/07: Monarch emerged from chrysalis here at the center!

6/22/07: Male ring-necked pheasant seen in Mercer.

6/18/07: Monarch caterpillars have gone into the chrysalis stage here at the Center.

6/8/07: Hummingbird Moth sighting- Big Lake.

6/7/07: Baby Hairy woodpeckers in nest.

6/7/07: While exploring out in the bogs here at the Center, we noticed that the Bog Laurel and Labrador Tea are flowering, along with the Pitcher Plants. Some of the Bog Laurel was fruiting as well.

5/15/07: David Foster from Natural Lakes writes: Hi folks, as we know the birds have hit town bigtime in the last few days. I always find the warblers particularly fascinating. In Natural Lakes I've seen or heard the following yesterday and today: Yellow rumped warbler, Black and White, Wilson's, Nashville warbler, Palm, Pine, Magnolia, Yellow warbler and a Ovenbird.

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4/21/07: The yellow bellied sapsuckers and Eastern Phoebe have returned.

4/20/07: During the International crane count I saw lot's of new birds for the years; Merlin Falcon, winter wren, wood duck, hooded mergansers, cranes, geese, mallards, wood cock, Am. Robin, song, tree, and fox sparrow.

4/20/07: Today, I heard my first loon call of the year.

4/5/07: Today, I saw my first Belted Kingfisher of the year near the Manitowish River. It looked a little out of place with the snowy background.

4/5/07: After yesterday's spring blizzard the mourning doves and the Robins look a little cold outside. Today, the feeders are hoppin. Lots of action with 50 - 100 finches, junco's and pine siskin's all fighting over the seed.

4/4/07: Kathy Hammer called yesterday to say she has had a female Cardinal feeding on her deck the last few days. Kathy lives near the Winchester Town Park.

4/3/07: April Showers Bring May Flowers. Well, I don't know who started this old saying but I bet they weren't thinking of snow showers. It snowed 10 inches today.

4/2/07: Purple and House finches, gold finch, Song Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, Mourning Doves, and lots of Dark Eyed Junco's are regular visitors at the feeder.

3/30/07: Today, the Ice went off of State House Lake. This is about two weeks earlier than last year. Check out Archived notes for spring phenology comparisons.

3/28/07: Last night the southern winds brought us Dark Eyed Juncos.

3/27/07: American Woodcock's started making their spring mating call last night. The birds call from the ground making a nasally "beent" sound. To experience this fascinating event come join us on April 24th at 7pm.

3/25/07: The first tornado watch of the year was issued today for Iron, Ashland, and Price Counties. It sure seems a bit early for a tornado watch.

3/25/07: Powell Marsh Happenings - off of the vista dike this past weekend there were; 4 Trumpeter swans, 1 ringed bill gull, 1 sand hill crane, a flock of red wing black birds, 20 or so female mallards, 12 Canada geese and 5 eagles.

3/24/07: I spotted my first American Woodcock today near Manitowish Waters.

3/22/07: Chipmunks are out and about. I had my first sighting today; one ran across the road just north of Mercer.

3/21/07: The sap from sugar Maple trees is now running steady. It was a slow start, but now they should be good for a couple of weeks.

3/18/07: A flock of snow buntings were feeding at the wild rice farm behind my house near Manitowish Water. These birds will not be hanging around for long. They are on a journey north to cooler breeding grounds.

3/15/07: The oh so familiar sounds of the Canada geese honking throughout the night have returned. A couple flocks of geese have showed up along the open areas of the Manitowish River.

3/14/07: To my surprise last night I heard my first Saw-whet owl calling near Presque Isle. Saw-whet owls are the smallest owl in North America and sound like a slow garbage truck backing up. Beep beep beep, this can last for hour on end.

3/11/07: Two mourning doves arrived today at my feeder in Manitowish Waters. This is the first

time since fall that I have seen doves around my house.

For more information please contact: Zach Wilson at the Discovery Center or visit:
<http://www.wisc.edu/cels/K12/paradiselost.html>

2/22/07: Last night was the first thunder and lightning storm of the year. It is starting to feel like spring is knocking on the winters door. Today's high temperature was 50 degrees F.

2/17/07: Climate Change? Global Warming? These are two topics that have been spreading around businesses throughout the Northwood's this winter. With abnormally warm weather early on and now extremely cold temperatures, people are starting to wonder; what is going on with our climate? The talk of rising carbon dioxide levels, due to the burning of fossil fuels, agriculture, and deforestation, an increase in green house gases, and the warming up of the planet. The Discovery Center is interested in knowing how these global Climate Changes will affect the north woods. In May of 2006 the Discovery Center partnered up with the University of Madison in a project of global proportion. Paradise Lost? Artist on Climate Change in the Northwood's! Working with artists, scientist, and educator this project helps inform the general public about global warming and climate change. Often the topic seems overwhelming, unstoppable and hopeless. Well, we have decided to tackle the topic and inform our members and visitors by creating a traveling art exhibition dealing with climate change in the Northwood's and how we as stewards of the land can "Alter the Coarse". The opening exhibition is in Rhinelander, February 17th starting with a panel discussion, film, and activities for all ages from 1:30- 5:00 and reception at 7:00pm. For more information please contact: Zach Wilson at the Discovery Center or visit:
<http://www.wisc.edu/cels/K12/paradiselost.html>

2/6/07: Extremely Cold Temperatures, this morning I had -30 degrees in Manitowish Waters.

2/1/07: Great Horned Owls Begin courtship activities

1/26/07: I've noticed this week lots of animal sign in the woods. The canines (Wolves, Coyote, and Fox) have begun marking their territories and looking for a mate. This is the time of year canines increase movement and mark territories by leaving scent (urinations, and scat) along road sides and at intersections throughout the forest.

1/5/07: Black Bear Cubs are being born in dens.

1/17/07: Black Capped Chickadees begin spring courtship song

Phenology and Nature Notes

2006

12/28/06: Usually warm winter weather. December has seen several daytime temperatures in the 40's and some nighttime temperatures in the upper 30's. We have experienced rain and much of the snow that was on the ground from October has been melted. Meteorologists say that this old phenomena is from La Niño with some influence of global Climate Change.

12/24/06: A Varied Thrush was recently seen at a bird feeder near Presque Isle WI. Varied Thrushes are beautiful robin sized birds that typically live in the western part of North America, migrating from Alaska to Washington State. This sighting is rare, but not uncommon in northern Wisconsin. It seems like every couple of years a varied thrush holds out for a few months in our area.

12/6/06: River otter slides were observed today in the fresh snow on Statehouse Lake and the Manitowish River.

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12/24/06: A Varied Thrush was recently seen at a bird feeder near Presque Isle WI. Varied Thrushes are beautiful robin sized birds that typically live in the western part of North America, migrating from Alaska to Washington State. This sighting is rare, but not uncommon in northern Wisconsin. It seems like every couple of years a varied thrush holds out for a few months in our area. 11/26/06: This year's gun deer hunt has had locally mixed results, with some nice deer being taken and other hunters faring more poorly. The unseasonably warm temperatures may have made the whitetails more nocturnal in their daily habits of movement and feeding.

12/3/06: The Discovery Center's bird feeders have been an increasingly popular destination for resident birds and squirrels these first cold and snowy days of December. Recently, the Discovery Center Bird Club did a wonderful job of improving the facilities for our furry and feathered friends.

12/5/06: The first ice fisherman appeared on Statehouse Lake today. The especially cold nights have been making strong ice...but slowly. A growing blanket of fluffy snow on the lake has been providing insulation from the cold, with only 2.5 inches of ice having developed as of this date.

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11/18/06: Good Luck Hunters!

11/5/06: Black Bears should be starting to den up for the winter. However, researchers believe that black bears are dening up later in the fall do to the abundance of food in the forest. Remember that November is deer bow and gun season. Researchers believe that bears are scavenging at bait piles and the remains of deer parts left by hunters, allowing them to stay out later than normal.

10/29/06: Phase 2: White-tailed bucks begin breeding. They will continue to make scraps on the

ground and rubs on trees, but this is the time of year when the doe is in estrus and ready to breed.

10/15/06: Phase 1: White-tailed bucks begin making straps and rubs, marking out their territory and preparing for the rut.

10/14/06: Frogs and turtles begin to burrow themselves in the mud for the winter.

10/9/06: Today, State House Lake Completely froze over. This is the earliest date that I can remember. The forecast shows some snow and wind which may or may not break up the ice that has formed.

10/1/06: Tamarack trees are starting to turn golden in color. Tamarack is the only conifer in the north woods that completely loses its needles every fall.

9/25/06: Maple, oaks, birch, and aspen, are all starting to change color. By the first week in October we should see peek color.

9/23/06: Shorebirds, duck, and sand hill cranes begin migrating south.

9/11/06: White-tailed bucks begin to shed velvet. Today, I noticed a buck rub in the woods near my house in Manitowish Waters. Examining the debris, I noticed some small pieces that appear to be velvet.

7/29/06: Deer antler growth nearing peak size.

7/28/06: Spotted jewelweed blooms, Rough blazing star blooms.

7/25/06: The Blue birds are nesting again in the blue bird box near the community garden.

7/22/06: Joe-pye weed blooms.

7/18/06: Sandhill Crane chick learn to fly.

7/12/06: Today we saw lots of baby wood frogs on our hike to the Van Vliet Hemlocks.

7/11/06: Full Moon

7/6/06: We are now seeing mid summer wildflowers starting to bloom. Check the Roadside for Hop Clover(yellow), evening primrose (yellow), mullen (yellow), St. John's Wart, birds-foot-trefoil, goldenrod, fireweed, buttercup,yarrow, common tansy,tiger lily, thistle,butter and eggs, to name a few.

May 29/06: Love and babies are in the air... Mating and birthing season for many mammals has passed. Many birds are either sitting on eggs or are starting to feed their newly hatched young. Look for increased activity & foraging for food as the parents have to replenish their energy, as well as to feed their young.

April 11/06: Today is the first day that I have heard spring peepers calling.

April 11/06: With the 70 degree temperatures and high winds today State House Lake completely opened up. It is 2 days later than last year. Last year the ice left the lake on April 9th.

April 9/06: The Loons are back. Loons were calling from the Manitowish River.

April 9/06: Eastern Phoebe, Starlings, Common Grackle, Fox Sparrow, Yellow Bellied Sapsucker, Red Wing Black Bird,

April 8/06: Song Sparrow, Mourning Doves, Bohemian Waxwings, Am. Robin, Tree Sparrow, Eagles, Mallards, Common Mergansers, Sand hill Cranes,

April 6/06: ACTION AT THE FEEDER. Today we had a sharp shinned hawk arrive at the Discovery center feeders. Sharp-shinned hawks are in the accipiter group meaning that they are more commonly sleek, narrow shaped birds with a longer tail and spend most of its life dodging through the woods search for prey. "Sharpies" are not a large bird weighing only 5oz. and its total body length is 11 inches. Sharpies feed on small song birds, snakes, frogs, and insect.

April 5/06: The ruffed grouse started their mating ritual call, which sounds like a drum beat starting out slow and progressing faster.

March 26/06: Today, I tapped some of the maple trees at the Center. Some of the trees where running at a steady pace and some where not running at all. The word in the woods is that the maple sap run started about 1-2 weeks ago, but it is slow this year.

March 6/06: First sign of spring. Dr. Dick Verch an ornithology professor at Northland College came to the Discovery Center on this date and reported that he saw an American Robin fly across the Manitowish Waters dam. Robins have been known to over winter in our area but this is usually very rare. The robin sighting could either be an over wintering bird or a migrant coming up to visit.

March 28/06: Sand hill cranes, purple finches, and dark eyed junco's have arrived along the Manitowish River.

March 27/06: Tonight the woodcock's came back to the north woods. In April the males will begin their mating ritual spiraling upwards to a height of 200 + feet, and in less than a minute spiral back down to the earth, zig zagging while making a musical, chirping sound. On the ground the birds make an explosive nasal beent sound.

March 27/06: A ground squirrel was spotted running across hwy 47 near Flambeau.

March 27/06: Terry Daulton called and said she heard her first Sand hill Crane calling from the Turtle Flambeau Flowage. This years International Crane Count will be held on April 22. If you are interested in participating please call Zach Wilson at 1-715-543-2085.

March 26/06: I saw my first Robin of the year today at the Discovery Center. I also saw a flock of starlings flying over the lake. As the temperature warms up keep an eye out for those spring migrants.

March 24/06: Large flocks of common redpolls have been seen passing through our area. Red polls winter in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest; their breeding grounds are located farther north into Canada and Alaska. Yesterday I found a dead redpoll under my feeder near the Manitowish River. Remember that the warm weather, bird fesses, and decomposing seeds can make the bird sick. Clean old seeds out of feeders once a week and use bleach before refilling. When the snow melts rake old seeds and debris away from the feeders. Sal mania, blastomycosis, and other diseases have been affecting a few of the birds this winter.

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February 24/06: With recent cold temperatures more of the Manitowish River is freezing. This has pushed our local Trumpeter Swans up to the Manitowish Waters Dam, where there is still some open water. I'm always amazed that these birds can find enough food to survive.

February 24/06: Bobcats will begin mating this time of year.

February 20/06: Several Common Merganser sightings on Island Lake, in Manitowish Waters.

February 11/06: On a recent outing we discovered that the female wolves are starting to begin breeding. This is the time of year when breeding female wolves show blood in their urine. Look for raised leg urinations on snow banks and road intersections in wolf territory.

February 7/06: LOVE IS IN THE AIR This week I have noticed an interesting tribal drum beat coming from the trees. The ancient ritual of the woodpeckers. Almost every time I go outside I hear the drumming of the downy, hairy, and pileated woodpeckers. Rapidly pecking their bills against resonant objects to announce their availability to prospective mates. Once the woodpeckers have paired up, many species stop drumming. Woodpeckers will excavate a nest cavity between now and early May and then start laying their eggs around the end of May to June.

January 26/06: Record temperatures in the 40's and 50's.

January 16/06: Recently, we have found several dead pine siskin and gold finches near the bird feeders. It is my understanding that salmonella is going around and making many of the birds sick. Make sure to clean all bird feeders and bird bath regularly.

January 12/06: Tonight is the first full moon of the New Year.

January 10/06: RARE BIRD SIGHTING: Bruce Bacon the wildlife biologist from the Mercer Ranger Station found a dead Eurasian Siskin at his feeder today. There have only been 2 or 3 sightings of this bird in Wisconsin and it is not native to North America. He believes it died of salmonella poisoning.

January 9/06: Today is the first day since December 22 that we have seen the sun. It's been a strange winter so far with unseasonably warm weather. The snow depth is several inches less than we had last year at this time.

January 6/06: John Bates and Mary Burns had an American Robin at their crab apple tree today. He also mentioned that a man called him with a sighting of a common loon on the river channel between Rest Lake and Stone Lake in Manitowish Waters. These are rare sightings for this time of year. Sometimes a young loon will get trapped in the ice but the sightings appear to be of an adult loon.

Phenology and Nature Notes

2005

December 29/05: Christmas Bird Count Results; this year was a strange year, with more birds and more species counted than ever before. Thanks to the bird club and dedicated bird counters. With the combination of warm weather and more counters we came up with a grand total of 30 species, and 2,456 individuals. Some of the bird species include: snow buntings, brown creeper, common grackle, sharp-shinned hawk, purple finch, pine siskin, pine and evening grosbeaks, barred owl, northern shrike, golden-crowned kinglet, bohemian waxwing, wild turkey, belted kingfisher, trumpeter swan, grey jay, and a rare sighting of a black-backed woodpecker and a common loon seen during the count week. December 18/05: There has been a snowy owl sighting at the overlook on Powell Marsh. Last year it was the Great Gray Owls that came down in great numbers, this year it is the Snowy Owls. Look for them in open areas perched on a snag or stump.

December 18/05: There has been a snowy owl sighting at the overlook on Powell Marsh. Last year it was the Great Gray Owls that came down in great numbers, this year it is the Snowy Owls. Look for them in open areas perched on a snag or stump.

December 9/05: Lots of action at the feeder this week. At the Discovery Center feeders we have had: 30 plus goldfinches, 2 purple finches, 12 pine siskin's, downy and hairy woodpeckers, red and white-breasted nuthatches, and lots of black-capped chickadees.

December 6/05: Very Cold Temps. We have had a couple of -10 degree mornings. The lakes are making good ice. December 5/05: While passing through Lac Du Flambeau, I spotted a pair of Mallards swimming in the trout pond. Open water this time of year can hold a few waterfowl species in our area but most of the birds migrate to warmer climates. If you want to try and find waterfowl this time of year look below dams or wherever there is open water.

November 30/05: A couple of trumpeter swans were seen on the Manitowish River just below the dam. For several years now we have seen these swans stay most of the winter.

November 21/05: We are now seeing large flocks of goldfinches and a few pine siskin's at the Discovery Center feeders. This year should be a good finch year. According to the Christmas Bird Count Statistics, finch numbers fluctuate year by year. Last year their numbers were down slightly, this year we should see an increase.

November 20/05: Today Statehouse Lake froze over. This year the ice came 6 days later than last year and 11 days later than 2004. This may suggest some overall climate changes in Northern Wisconsin but with only a few years of data it is hard to prove. If you have any information about ice cover on your lake, please give the center a call? We are starting a new project at the center called citizen science monitoring. We would like to encourage all citizens to start monitoring their local environment and be on the watch for environmental changes, whether it is good or bad. This helps us monitor our endangered species, invasive species, and species that are changing their ranges. An informed and aware community is a healthy community.

November 16/05: Today is the first major snow storm of the 2005-06 winter. 20 degrees, 5 inches of snow and more still to come.

November 14/05: Statehouse Lake froze over on this date in 2004. This year however, it will be much later.

October 18/05: Today, I took a stroll behind State House Lake and noticed a buck rub on a small tree. This is a sign that the bucks (male deer) are in the beginning stages of the rut. A time when deer movement increase significantly and mating begins. Increased deer moments in the Northwoods mean that deer / car collisions increase as well. Be very careful and drive with caution.

October 12/05: Today our fisher research team caught a female fisher in the Hurley area of Iron County. On October 10th we set 6 tomahawk live traps in an ecotone area, (an area where to ecosystem meet) in hopes of capturing last years radio-collared fisher. This is a project that has been collecting data for 7 years, on fisher's and their relationship with forest habitats in Iron County forest. Our Hurley trapping location for the last 3 years have produced a female fisher within one to two weeks and they have all been captured in the same location. Fisher's are opportunistic feeders meaning they eat whatever opportunity provides, but primarily feed on snowshoe hare, squirrels, and even porcupines.

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September 28/05: Dark eyed Junco's have arrived at the discovery center feeders. Junco's primarily feed on the ground and migrate through our area in the spring and fall. I have noticed that when the snow accumulates on the ground they will continue their journey to the southern part of the state, where food is easier to find.

September 23/05: During the last few years I have noticed that in the fall my black lab (Johnny) starts getting large amounts of wood ticks. This morning I pulled off 4 wood ticks from behind his ears and it has been months since we have noticed any sign of a tick on him. It is my recollection that during the fall there is one more blast of ticks. I guess it's a last chance to feed before winter sets in. Make sure you check yourself and your pets during this time of year.

September 23/05: The second day of fall brought us the first morning of frost. Make sure to bring in potted plants and cover the garden.

September 22/05: Today is the first day of fall and the autumnal Equinox. The autumnal or fall equinox's is one of two times a year when the sun crosses the equator and the day and night is of equal length. At the autumnal equinox (Sept. 22, 2005, 6:23 P.M. EDT), the sun appears to cross the celestial equator, from north to south; this marks the beginning of autumn in the Northern Hemisphere.

September 21/05: Trumpeter swan cygnets are learning to fly.

September 15/05: The Birds are moving through our area right now in large numbers. Terry

Daulton was out on one of the Apostle Islands this past weekend and noticed large flocks of warblers making their traditional migration across the Big Lake. The Apostle Islands are one of the first stops for many birds migrating across Lake Superior. It is a great place to watch the fall migration of warblers and hawks.

September 14/05: RARE SIGHTING by Virginia Thomas a dedicated member and volunteer. Virginia e-mailed this unique sighting at the Turtle Flambeau Flowage the day while fishing; "Don Pemble (fishing guide) and I saw a huge Bull Moose getting out of the water at one of the islands. Dennis, the ranger, also saw it. Great sight! Don figured the spread was 50".

September 5 /05: Today, coming back from the Spring Stead area, I saw 10 young turkeys eating gravel on the side of the road. I have also heard of several other turkey sighting in our area. They must have successful raised young this summer.

September 1/05: Fall is in the air. I have noticed that in the lower lying areas many of the trees are changing color. This may be due to different temperatures and light exposure. Peak color in the Northwood's varies from year to year but if you want to play it safe the end of September is almost always a good time to view the fall colors.

August 25/05: Last night the discovery center was conducting a wolf howling survey for the DNR and two wolves responded in the Mercer area. I have also received several phone calls of wolf sightings throughout the area. This year Wisconsin's wolf population increased by 14% with a overall state total of around 425-455 wolves, 108 packs.

August 3/05: Andrew spotted a sharp shinned hawk sitting in the pines at the center today. Sharp shinned

July 31/05: Andrew, our summer naturalist, spotted an adult tom turkey in the field at the discovery center this past weekend. Turkey's are becoming more and more common in the Northwood's due to the Lac Du Flambeau tribe, who released these turkeys a couple of years ago. Turkey's are ground feeders and it always amazes me that they can survive the winters.

July 28/05: One of the large yellow roadside flowers (Evening Primrose) has started to bloom.

July 22/05: Last night I spotted a badger near the Manitowish River wayside on hwy 51, just north of Manitowish Waters. It appeared to be digging in the same location where just a month ago I saw a snapping turtle laying her eggs. Badgers are nocturnal animals and have long claws and are excellent diggers.

July 19/05: Today our Adventure Club team went to Little Turtle Flowage in search of the black tern colony. Our mission was to capture and band black terns. To our surprise the young terns had already fledge and were flying better than we had expected. We were unsuccessful in our attempt to capture and band the terns but learned that terns are very protective of their nesting sight, even when they are no longer using them. Terns are known for the ability to dive bomb intruders. For our Adventure Club team this was an exciting day even though we didn't capture any birds. Black terns are an uncommon species in our neck of the woods and Iron County has two active colonies. Black terns nest on vegetation that floats on the water. Their flight patterns have been compared to that of a butterfly, long big flaps.

July 15/05: Late summer bloomers. I have noticed that the Canada golden rod is in bloom along with common mullein, purple cone flower, clover, daisy fleabane, common tansy, black eyed susan, birds-foot trefoil, spotted knapweed which is an (invasive flower) and common yarrow.

June 23/05: Andrew, our new summer naturalist, was doing the breeding bird survey this morning at the Discovery Center and found a broad-winged hawk nest. Breeding bird survey's help us monitor bird population trends here at the center. This is a new project but already we have added a few new species to our site tally. This morning winter wren was added to the list. If you are interested in joining Andrew on the breeding bird surveys please send an e-mail to zach@discoverycente.net.

June 22/05: NORTHERN LIGHTS "No pencil can draw it, no colors can paint it and no words can describe it in all its magnificence." The Northern Lights had a beautiful display on this night around 10:30 in the evening. The northern lights or "Aurora Borealis" can happen in any month of the year, but June seems to be a hot month. The northern lights occur as a result of solar particles colliding with the earth's atmosphere. This past winter I stumbled upon a website that predicts the occurrence of the northern lights. For more details and to learn about predicting northern lights go to; <http://www.northern-lights.no/>

June 21/05: Happy Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year plus a full moon. This year's solstice has an added surprise to it. Besides 15 hours and 42 minutes of light, there is a full moon.

June 18/05: Crows young are now fledging. Meaning that they are no longer in the nest and they are active and flying around. We have a crow's nest here at the center and believe me, you will know if you have one on your property. They are very active and quite loud.

June 15/05: Bruce spotted a black bear with 3 cubs crossing the road at the center today.

June 6/05: Watch out for the Turtles!!! Snapping Turtles and Painted Turtle are making their way to their nesting grounds. Snapping turtles can weigh up to 75 pounds and grow to be 2 feet long. The painted turtle grows to be 4 to 9 inches long.

June 5/05: Lupine is flowering along the road sides.

May 25/05: Gray Catbirds, and Northern Orioles have been visiting our feeders this year. We are using oranges cut in half stuck on a nail. Also, grape jelly can be used.

May 24/05: Forget-me-nots, blue violets, and sessile bellwort are flowering.

May 18/05: ATTENTION RARE BIRD SIGHTING: John Bates called me last night from Little Turtle Flowage with a Snowy Owl sighting. He said that he was taking the dogs for a walk when he spotted the owl perched on an osprey platform near the edge of the marsh. Snowy owls typically nest on the tundra this time of year.

May 17/05: Today Brown Thrasher and American Redstarts were seen near and around the Maintenance shed at the Discovery Center.

May 17/05: The WSO bird hotline reported large flocks of warblers last night around the Milwaukee area. If the weather stays warm we should have a wave of new birds coming to our area by this weekend. Perfect for the birding festival.

May 16/05: We have our first sighting of a Northern Oriole and a Ruby throated humming bird at the feeder. Thanks to the bird club who cleaned and filled the feeders.

May 16/05: Despite the weather some of our early bloomers started flowering. Most of the cherry trees are in full bloom and bring a wonderful feeling of summer to the Northwood's. I've also

noticed a few plants blooming, wild and barren strawberry, violets, and

May 10/05: Bob Schmidt wrote: I just enjoyed a half hour, noon hour concert by a Cardinal here on our peninsula below the Library on South Turtle Lake! I was never able to see him because of thick trees and after inching closer and closer hoping to catch a glimpse, he finally flew. We enjoyed many Cardinal friends at our previous home in Stevens Point and know their distinctive call very well and really miss them. Now, I know where he perched and I plan to 'camp out' there regularly hoping to catch a glimpse, perhaps even a photo.

April 28/05: A GREAT DAY: Today a team of researcher from Cornell have officially reported a sighting of 1 Ivory Billed Wood Pecker. Ivory Billed Wood Peckers were believed to have been extinct. It is a great day. The next step in protecting the Ivory Bills will be the most important and the most challenging.

April 25/05: Pine Warblers and the Swallows have made it back to the Discovery Center area.

ATTENTION BIRDERS: UNCOMMON BIRD SIGHTING IN THE NORTHWOODS April 19/05: This morning a very well respected birder reported a sighting of a Scissor-tailed flycatcher. The sighting was on Sunday, between the towns of Manitowish Waters and Manitowish. It was seen in a field on the south side of Hwy 51 about 3 miles north of Manitowish Waters. Just past the Hawks Nest canoe rental. Any interested birders should look in fields and open spaces.

April 17/05: I saw a Merlin falcon today, as I was pumping gas at Dietz gas station in Manitowish Waters.

April 16/05: Trailing Arbutus is flowering. One of our earliest flowering plants.

April 12/05: The loons are back.

April 10/05: Chorus frogs are now calling. They sound like a thumbnail running down a fine-toothed comb.

April 9/05: The ice went out on State House Lake, about a week and half earlier than last year.

April 7/05: Tonight I heard the first fogs of the year calling. Wood Frogs and Spring Peepers are the first to call.

April 5/05: Susanne Brown reported in from the Upper Peninsula area with sighting of Kinglets and a possible fly-by of warblers.

April 4/05: During last nights bird club meeting there were lots of new sightings shared. Several people saw Rough-Legged hawks and Northern Harriers at Powell marsh. Yellow bellied sapsuckers are back tapings on the maple trees. We had a purple finch at the Discovery Center bird feeder and several people reported coopers hawk at their bird feeders. Vanessa even caught a female coopers hawk eating a mourning dove on film.

April 3/05: I spotted a Northern Harrier and a Red Tail hawk at the big marsh on hwy 47 just before the turn off to Powell Marsh Rd.

April 2/05: Eagle Eye Cramer reported in with a sighting of a woodcock near Boulder Junction. Woodcock's are hard to see during the day but are easy to hear at night. Birds on the ground make a explosive nasal beent sound and a whistling sound when they are in the air. Eagle Eye

Cramer also reported in with a Red-bellied woodpecker at their feeder near Boulder Junction.

April 1/05: Tracy reported a sighting of a HUGE snapping turtle along the beach by Aberdeen lodge.

April 5/05: I'm not totally positive, but I think this morning I saw a goshawk flying over my house about 4 miles north of Manitowish Waters, across from the wayside. It was the right size and a pretty light colored bird (Grey color). The hawk flew into the sun and it quickly became impossible to identify.

March 31/05: This morning I heard the longest bird call of North America, the winter wren. Winter wrens are early arrivers and will stay around to nest. They prefer old growth hemlock / sugar maple stands.

March 30/05: Last night one of the foresters in Mercer heard the call of the American Woodcock.

March 30/05: Last night I heard my first Saw-wet owl calling near the Manitowish River about 3 miles north of Manitowish Waters. Saw -wet owls are the smallest owls in North America.

March 30/05: Sarah Donahue our new birding and education specialist spotted a healthy black bear on Hwy W between Winchester and Presque Isle at around 7:00pm.

March 30/05: Karen Cramer has spotted another new bird species, Dark Eyed Junco's. Somewhere around Trout Lake in Boulder Junction. Karen receives our Eagle Eye Award for this month. She's been the first to spot several new spring migrants. Thanks Karen.

March 30/05: The chipmunks are out of hibernation. I saw one cross Tower rd.

March 30/05: I heard my first Sand hill Crane fly overhead near the town of Mercer. Also a Great Blue Heron was seen flying over the DNR ranger station in Mercer.

March 29/05: John Bates and Mary Burns canoed the Manitowish River and spotted two Mute Swans.

March 29/05: The first Robin that we know of was spotted in the town of Presque Isle on Easter Sunday. Also, Karen Cramer called in with a Robin sighting at her feeder in Boulder Junction.

March 25/05: Red Wing Black Birds have arrived along the Manitowish River.

March 24/05: Canada Geese have arrived and were honking on Wildrice Lake.

March 22/05: Common and Hooded Mergansers have arrived along the Manitowish River and in Vance Lake below the Manitowish Waters Dam. March 15/05: Spring Is Coming Soon The Trees Tell Me So! Yesterday I went for a snowshoe hike around my new property and came across a willow shrub. I couldn't believe my eyes; at first thinking there was snow on the trees. A closer look showed me it was Pussy Willows in bloom. A good sign of spring's return.

March 15/05: Spring Is Coming Soon The Trees Tell Me So! Yesterday I went for a snowshoe hike around my new property and came across a willow shrub. I couldn't believe my eyes; at first thinking there was snow on the trees. A closer look showed me it was Pussy Willows in bloom. A good sign of spring's return.

March 2/05: Last night I was driving towards the Springstead area on 182 when I noticed a bird perched on top of a snag along the side of the road. It was a fairly large bird with tufted feathers that looked like ears protruding from the top of the head. It was a great horned owl. I often hear great horned owls year round but rarely do I see them. The end of February and the beginning of March is probably one of the best times of the year to do both. Great Horned owls are the earliest bird species to nest in Wisconsin. Mid February to early March they will be sitting on eggs.

Feb 28/05: LOVE IS IN THE AIR This week I have noticed an interesting tribal drum beat coming from the trees. The ancient ritual of the woodpeckers. Almost every time I go outside I hear the drumming of the downy, hairy, and pileated woodpeckers. Rapidly pecking their bills against resonant objects to announce their availability to prospective mates. Once the woodpeckers have paired up, many species stop drumming. Woodpeckers will excavate a nest cavity between now and early May and then start laying their eggs around the end of May to June.

Feb 18/05: 4:00pm Bruce and I just watched a Northern Shrike dive down and catch two mice near the Discovery Center bird feeder. Shrikes mainly feed on mice, voles, and small birds. If you have any thorny shrubs near your house you may find them decorated with dead mice and small birds from Northern Shrikes. Shrikes have a tooth-like structure on the cutting edge of their upper bill, which allows them to kill their prey with sharp bits.

Feb 17/05: Denny Breitholtz was driving to work today on Hwy W when 4 wolves crossed the road in front of him. He was just east of where Hwy O intersects with W. Wisconsin's wolf population is now estimated to be between 373 and 410 wolves. That is a 11 percent increase from last year's wolf report.

Feb 16/05: While I was chasing fishers in the Hurley area I happened to drive upon a very large flock of Bohemian Wax Wings. They were in a patch of Willow trees along the side of County Highway C. There must have been around 100 birds in the flock and they were flying back and forth between the road and the trees. It appeared that they were picking sand from the road which was spread out by the town trucks.

Feb 3/05: Today was an exciting day for seeing not so common bird species. In the town of Mercer there were 5 European Starlings, on Tower Road in Manitowish Waters 2 Pine Grosbeaks, and at the Discovery center feeder there was a Brown Creeper. Also, with above freezing temperatures the maple tree will have sap flowing.

Feb 2/05: Above normal temperatures. This past week the temperature has been above freezing and as high as 43 degrees. With the melting of snow I have noticed more activity at the feeders and in the woods. Along roadsides car killed deer are starting to poke through the snow providing a meal or two for scavengers.

Jan: 30/05: This afternoon Sarah and I were working diligently at our desk when we noticed movement out the window. There were 6 deer at the bird feeders and one was an 8-point buck. An unusual sighting since most of the bucks have already lost their antlers.

Jan: 28/05: Four Trumpeter Swans have been hanging out below the Manitowish River Dam in Manitowish Waters, for about a week now.

Jan 17/05: Our bird club headed up to the Duluth / Superior Area in search of Great Gray owls. Along on the trip was expert bird bander Bruce Bacon with the intent of beating his one-day capture record of six great grays in one day. By the end of the outing we not only spotted 17 great gray owls but also banded 7 and recapture 1. An incredible day and unique opportunity. Other

rare sightings were 1 snow bunting near Wisconsin Point and 12 Mallards at the Ashland hot pond.

Jan 14/05: Last night the temperatures dropped to -19 degrees. Cold Cold with wind chills as low as -40. Enjoy

Jan 10/05: The Mercer ecology class embarked on a wolf tracking survey and found several old wolf tracks in the Mercer area and two spots that had urine with blood in it. This is the time of year when many of the canines start to go into heat. Wolves breed during the months of January and February and then will have their pups around the month of April.

Jan. 3/05 OWL INVASION: Northern Wisconsin is under invasion. Owls from Canada have been moving into the state this month in unprecedented numbers. In the most recent count, there have been more than 1,300 reports of great gray, 200 northern hawk and 300 boreal owls in Minnesota during the fall and winter. That compares to 35 great gray, six northern hawk owls and one boreal in an average year. The best location in the state to see the rare owls is in the Duluth / Superior area.

Phenology and Nature Notes

2004

Dec. 24/04 X-Mas Bird Count Results: This year we had the most participants ever, and the highest total of individual birds counted in the 12 years of the count. There were 25 total species found and 1726 individual birds counted. Black Capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, American Crow, Mourning Dove, Bald Eagle, Gold Finch, House Finch, Evening and Pine Grosbeak, Ruffed Grouse, Blue and Gray Jay, Red and White Breasted Nuthatch, Barred Owl, Common Raven, Common Redpoll, Northern Shrike, Pine Siskin, Trumpeter Swan, Cedar Waxwing, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Red belly Woodpeckers were all of the species we found during the one day X-Mas bird count.

Dec. 20/04: Bill and Carolyn Weh wrote in reporting of four Trumpeter Swans flying over near Benson Lake. In the last three years I have been involved in the Christmas Bird Count, there have been Trumpeter Swans on the Manitowish River near Benson Lake. Great Sighting! Thanks Bill and Carolyn.

Dec. 13/04: The biggest snow storm of the season thus far. 50 miles an hour gusts and about 8-10 inches of snow. Be careful on the roads.

Dec. 12/04: I just returned from the Ashland area on the south shore of the big Lake Superior. The Ashland bay area still has open water with lots of little ice bergs floating around. Mixed among the floating chunks of ice there was about 50 plus Tundra Swans, and a few Male Hooded Mergansers.

Dec. 10/04: Mike Janeczko told me the other day that he noticed one of the bucks at his deer feeder had already lost its antlers. Typically, this doesn't happen until the end of December. A good place to look for antler sheds are on deer trails leading into and out of a deer yard. During a winter with deep snow, deer herd together in areas where there are plenty of food and shelter. Cedar Swamps are a favorite deer yard location.

Dec. 7/04: Jim and Karen Cramer of the Bounder Junction area had a Red-Bellied Woodpecker at our suet feeder this morning.

Nov. 26/04: A Northern shrike was at the bird feeder chasing a goldfinch.

Nov. 24/04: Mike reports Big Bucks still in rut and chasing does around the Discovery Center.

Nov. 23/04: Gray jays, hairy woodpeckers and chickadees eating deer fat from this years hunting season. The Gray Jays enjoyed looking at their reflection in the window and occasionally would test their strength by flying into it.

Nov. 22/04: The lakes are frozen but the river is still open. A Canoe trip down the Manitowish River this time of year seems crazy but the wildlife viewing opportunities are excellent. Here's what we saw: Two otters playing in the current of the river, many active beaver lodges with their winters food cache on display outside of their lodges, muskrats eating vegetation on the ice shelves of the river, several pairs of eagles soaring across the sky. One pair of Eagles is still hanging around their nest near Murray's Landing.

Nov. 14/04 Statehouse Lake completely froze over. Despite the cold nights the weekend was unseasonable warm with a high in the lower 50's.

Nov. 11/04 I would like to welcome the Mercer Ecology Class to our nature notes and phenology page. We are studying phenology this year and already they have some exciting sightings to contribute to the page. Male Northern Cardinal was sighted at the schools bird feeder. As a class we will be making updates to this page on a weekly bases.

Nov. 11/04 A brisk but sunny morning in the Northwood's. Most lakes are starting to see ice forming around the edges. Dog Lake in Manitowish waters had floating ice on about half of the lake.

Nov. 10/04 Bruce spotted the elusive 6-point albino buck near Fish trap road outside of Boulder Junction.

Nov. 9/04 Most of the dark-eyed juncos have migrated south for the winter. Those lovely ground feeding birds scavenging on left over seeds migrate to central and southern Wisconsin for most of the winter.

Nov. 8/04 Flocks of snow buntings have arrived from their high arctic nesting grounds. Snow buntings nest further north than any other land bird. Watch for them along roadsides near fields.

Nov. 8/04 The Phenology archives show that Statehouse lake froze on this date 2003. We're a little behind from last year's phenology. Remember to send me your sighting and I'll add them to the list. Have a wonderful day.

Nov. 8th/04 this weekend Statehouse Lake completely froze over.

Nov. 7/ 04 Northern Lights "No pencil can draw it, no colors can paint it and no words can describe it in all its magnificence." Last night was one of the most spectacular showings of the northern lights I have ever seen. At about 6:30 the sky light up with excitement. Amazing colors of green and red danced in a curtain of light across the nights sky. The northern lights occur as a result of solar particles colliding with the earth's atmosphere. For more details and to learn about predicting northern lights go to; <http://www.northern-lights.no/>

Oct 28th/04 This morning I woke to memories of what lies ahead. Shorter daylight hours cooler temperatures and snow. Another winter wonderland is upon us. There was inches of snow on the ground this morning. Not enough for grooming the ski trails yet but, soon we will be back on the skis. On this date in 1948 the record high was 75 degrees and the low was in 1905 and 1925 at 17 degrees. Squirrels and chipmunks are frantically preparing for winter. You can see them scavenging for the last of the red oak acorns under the trees at the center. There are signs of deer scrapes and rubs throughout the woods indicating it's time for the rut. A time when a deer's movement doubles and the bucks begin to chase does. So those of you returning to the Northwood's or traveling on the roads at night beware of the deer.

July 04

During the first two weeks... · Flowers in bloom: milkweed, sumac, pickerel weed, heal-all, pitcher plant, true Solomon's seal, partridgeberry, mullein, wild rose, sweet cicely, bedstraw, maple-leaved vibernum, ox-eyed daisy, black eyed susan, blanket flower, orange hawkweed, yellow (Canadian) hawkweed, white clover · Cicada and katydids are heard. They can be found in trees feeding on cherry, oak, maple, and apple trees During the last two weeks... · Daisy fleabane, ox-eyed daisy, blanket flower, · Blue berries and raspberries ripening · Monarch butterflies are seen feeding on blooming milkweed plants · Osprey chicks start to look like adults

June 2004

During the first two weeks... · Pine pollen can be seen everywhere (wind pollinated) · Flowers in bloom: Canada mayflower, bunchberry, barren strawberry, wild strawberry, starflower, false

Solomon seal, bog laurel, bog rosemary, high bush cranberry, marsh marigold, fringed polygala · Black ash leaf out · Peak of fawn birth · Spring peeper, wood frogs, green frogs, leopard frogs calling · Dragonfly metamorphosis from nymph to adult form · Mosquitoes are out in full force · Turtles laying eggs During the last two weeks... · Summer solstice occurs between the 20th and 22nd · Deerflies are out · Chunks of "spit" which is the nymphal stage of the spittlebug is seen on various plant species · Canadian tiger swallowtail butterfly is seen · Yellow bellied sapsuckers chick active in cavity nests · Peak of black bear mating occurs until mid-July · Wild lupine, orange hawkweed, yellow hawkweed, columbine, blue flag iris, blackberry, and ox eyed daisy in bloom

Jan. 27, 2004

We are finally experiencing a typical winter like I used to remember. Snow has fallen about every week since the New Year. Cold temperatures have also made their presence this year making outdoor travel quick and cold. Despite the cold temperatures we can still see hints of spring. Hairy and downy woodpeckers can be seen and heard drumming on old trees and branches marking their territory and establishing pair bonds. Listen for the chickadees song to change soon to their more territorial song.

Jan. 27, 2004

Tracy reported this morning that she watched a medium sized hawk swoop down and carried away one of her quail from her chicken coup. The event happened so quickly that she could not effectively identify the bird.

Jan. 15, 2004

The 2003 Christmas Bird Count numbers are in. Here's what we found. Overall total number of species 23, total individuals 1139. Species list: Black-capped chickadee, American crow, mourning dove, bald eagle, American gold finch, evening grosbeak, pine grosbeak, ruffed grouse, rough-legged hawk, blue jay, gray jay, red-breasted nuthatch, white breasted nuthatch, common raven, common redpoll, northern shrike, pine siskin, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, red-bellied, trumpeter swan.

Jan. 9, 2004

Two flying squirrels have been visiting my feeder in Mercer for the past month. Every night when there are black oil sunflower seeds in the feeder they are active.

Jan. 8, 2004

One Brown creeper was seen scaling a white pine near the feeder at the center.

Jan. 7, 2004

Large flocks of Red polls are not an uncommon sight this year. Look along the roadside for these large flocks sampling the gravel and salt. Also, this year Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Grosbeaks have been seen along the roadsides.

Jan. 1, 2004

Happy New Year!!! Rain and Sleet

Phenology and Nature Notes

2003

Dec. 29, 2003

Lots of wolf tracks found on the wolf-tracking program. The tracks lead us to a dead spike buck, which had been eaten on by a pack of wolves.

Dec. 28, 2003

I talked with a friend of mine who over the weekend found 3 bucks antlers sheds lying on the snow. This is the time of year when bucks drop their antlers. I'm sure the big ones are thankful!!

Dec. 25-28, 2003

Unseasonably warm temperatures for December. The highs were in the 40's and barely freezing at night. 8 of the 14-inches of snow melted at the Center. Not warm enough to break the 1922 record on Christmas Day of 51 degrees.

Dec. 11, 2003

We watched a Sharp Shinned Hawk catch a chickadee out of the air, then land in the snow and devour it. Leaving nothing behind but feathers.

Dec. 4, 2003

A Juvenile Sharp Shinned Hawk was perched on a branch above the bird feeder. Wisconsin's smallest Accipiter.

Nov. 26, 2003

A Northern shrike was at the bird feeder chasing a goldfinch.

Nov. 24, 2003

Mike reports that some of the bucks are still in rut and chasing does around the Discovery Center.

Nov. 23, 2003

Gray jays, hairy woodpeckers and chickadees eating deer fat from this year's hunting season. The Gray Jays enjoyed looking at their reflection in the window and occasionally would test their strength by flying into it.

Nov. 22, 2003

The lakes are frozen but the river is still open. A Canoe trip down the Manitowish River this time of year seems crazy but the wildlife viewing opportunities are excellent. Here's what we saw: Two otters playing in the current of the river, many active beaver lodges with their winter's food cache on display outside of their lodges, muskrats eating vegetation on the ice shelves of the river, several pairs of eagles soaring across the sky. One pair is still hanging around their nest near Murray's Landing.

Nov. 8, 2003

This weekend Statehouse Lake completely froze over.

Oct 28, 2003

This morning I woke to memories of what lies ahead. Shorter daylight hours, cooler temperatures and snow. Another winter wonderland is upon us. There were inches of snow on the ground this morning. Not enough for grooming the ski trails yet but, soon we will be back on the skis. On this date in 1948 the record high was 75 degrees and the low was in 1905 and 1925 at 17 degrees. Squirrels and chipmunks are frantically preparing for winter. You can see them scavenging for the

last of the red oak acorns under the trees at the center. There are signs of deer scrapes and rubs throughout the woods indicating it's time for the rut. A time when a deer's movement doubles and the bucks begin to chase does. So those of you returning to the Northwood's or traveling on the roads at night beware of the deer.

Thank you for being interested in the changes of the Northwood's.