

Nature Notes and Phenology Archive 2012

12/31/12: Bobcat out during the day at a Mercer residence, looking under the deck for the resident rabbit.

12/30/12: Group of purple finch sitting in the middle of Hwy B.

12/26/12: Had our first hoar frost this morning, so beautiful! so cold! about 0 degrees. Hoar frost (also called radiation frost or hoarfrost or pruina) refers to the white ice crystals, loosely deposited on the ground or exposed objects, that form on cold clear nights when heat losses into the open skies cause objects to become colder than the surrounding air.

12/25/12: Cold night tonight, almost -10 in some spots....brrrr!

12/22/12: Coldest morning yet- 0 degrees F on the way into work today! Brrrr, better get out there and get active to stay warm :)

12/21/12: Happy Winter Solstice! Winter finally came yesterday and last night, just in time for the first day of winter- the Manitowish Waters area received between 6-8 inches of beautiful snow. It's nice to not be able to see grass now. Get out and enjoy it and hope for more to come!

12/18/12: Filling up the feeders today we have black-capped chickadees, red breasted nuthatches and american goldfinch!

12/17/12: High of 28 the next couple of days, not even an inch of snow on the ground, very sad. However there is snow predicted to come on Thursday....here's to hoping they are right!

12/15/12: Brown creeper on the red pines outside the office- groups of snow buntings in a field in Arbor Vitae

12/12/12: Happy Aaron Rogers Day! (if you are a Packer fan) We now have about 2 inches of snow on the ground, hopefully more coming this weekend. There have been several sightings of both Evening and Pine Grosbeaks in the area. There is now about 2-3 inches of ice on most lakes.

12/4/12: All of our beautiful snow is now gone- poor hibernating critters, no more insulating layer to protect them from the cold! There is a chance of snow later this week. On another note, I just received a message from Monarch Watch that on November 6th it was reported that hundreds of Monarchs had made their way down to their wintering grounds near Crescencio Morales in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve!

12/3/12: Unusually warm temps (high of 46 today) has created a foggy haze of melting snow- lake is also a puddle, but after throwing a rock on it, found it is still ice covered.

11/30/12: Looked out the window tonight and saw a Snowshoe hare, all white except a brown strip of fur down the back.

11/30/12: Took a stroll on the trails, saw tracks of the usual suspects: deer, squirrel and mouse. There was also a few areas of high deer activity where there was sign of estrus (blood in female deer urine) which means they are getting ready to mate.

11/27/12: Redpolls and Evening Grosbeaks seen in the area. Also a Cooper's hawk took out a smaller songbird at a local feeder.

11/25/12: Colder temps have frozen Statehouse Lake over, temps in the upper 40's expected next week...

11/22/12: Warm temps have opened up Statehouse Lake once again.

11/19/12: With the warm temps we have had for the past several days, mid-upper 40's into the 50's, Statehouse Lake is about 40% frozen. Colder temps due back at the end of the week.

11/16/12: Statehouse Lake 98% frozen.

11/15/12: Snowshoe hare spotted at about 75% transition to white. The local weasel population are at 100% white winter phase, and are now referred to as ermine. This physical adaptation doesn't do much good if we don't have any snow!

11/14/12: Pine Grosbeaks have been spotted here and there in the area.

11/13/12: Sandhill cranes (About 24) were seen and heard flying over the Hurley area.

11/12/12: A very chilly Veterans Day, woke up to snow on the ground and snow falling-not to get above 25 today- first day to wear long underwear for the year- L

11/10/12: More snow buntings seen on the side of the road.

11/9/12: A rare Red-bellied Woodpecker has been seen at the feeder area here at the Center all week.

11/7/12: Monarchs were seen migrating through Camino al Cielo entrando por Jaumav in Mexico, on their way to the wintering grounds! Visit http://www.learner.org/jnorth/maps/monarch_peak_fall2012.html to see Journey North's map of the complete migration.

11/5/12: A family of otters spotting playing in Statehouse Lake. They are so fun to watch!

11/4/12: A flock of snow buntings was seen playing in a hay field near Harshaw, WI.

11/3/12: The small lake I live on in Presque Isle was completely covered in ice this morning.

11/2/12: There are still blue jays all over the feeders- collectively known as a band or party. There is your factoid for the day :)

11/1/12: Snow flurries off and on today, it's been getting pretty cold at night, into the low 20's- ice on puddles in the morning. Brrrrrr- can't wait for the time change.... :)

10/31/12: Happy Halloween! Heard a wolf pack howling near my house in Presque Isle tonight.

10/30/12: Evening Grosbeak on a feeder south of Minocqua.

10/29/12: Carolina Wren seen and confirmed the past few days at a feeder near Palmer Lake.

10/26/12: 5 trumpeter swans out swimming on Rest Lake off of K- it appeared as though two of them were banded.

10/25/12: After the storm rolled through (an amazing thunderstorm lasting all night and into the morning) I looked out at the little lake I live on and four huge trumpeter swans were honking and swimming around.

10/24/12: While out scouting local SNAs, I heard and saw four loons on Star Lake- they were hooting and doing a little bit of wailing. Also found another small deer tick on me. ick.

10/24/12: Warm and balmy today, highs in the 60's, very foggy. Supposed to be in the 30's for a high this weekend.

10/23/12: It rained Tamarack needles all day today. Joined a group from the Nature Conservancy at the Tenderfoot Reserve to tackle the invasive honeysuckle- found a deer tick biting my leg, they are still out there!

10/22/12: Large group of goldfinches at the feeders today.

10/18/12: Warm temps and rain have brought out the worms, the driveway and sidewalks were covered with them this morning.

10/16/12: Temps have been a bit warmer this week, in the upper 50's, I think this has brought back out some of our cold blooded friends, on my run tonight I saw two garter snakes that had meet tires on the road, another was also reported on our trails today.

10/15/12: 4 Trumpeter swans flying North?

10/13/12: Tamaracks at peak color

10/12/12: Coldest AM yet this fall, 18-23 degrees F in the area

10/8/12: LOTS of Blue Jays at the feeder today- NOISY!

10/8/12: Possible Coopers Hawk grabbed small song bird off of the feeder today, happened so fast we didn't get an exact ID

10/6/12: Snow! It snowed on and off all day, no accumulation, was gone by the end of the day

10/2/12: Tamaracks bronzing

10/1/12: Dark eyed Juncos in large numbers around the lake9/29/12: Juvenile loons staging

9/18/12: Hail- 45 degrees F

9/15/12: First frost this morning- and I swear there was a Brown Creeper calling outside- migrating south? Hummingbirds also appear to be gone, no activity at the feeders for over a week.

9/14/12: Deer are growing in their dark, thick winter coats, fawns have faint spots

9/13/12: Geese on the move, forming their south moving "V"

9/11/12: Monarch butterflies spotted (haven't left yet)

9/4/12: Baby snapping turtles are hatching and emerging from their nests, shells about 1 inch in diameter

9/2/12: Yellow shafted Flickers migrating out, seeing large numbers of them

8/30/12: Adult loons (10+) staging on Presque Isle Lake

8/28/12: Tagged two male monarchs

8/27/12: Milkweed seed pods opening

8/27/12: Japanese knotweed blooming

8/22/12: Turtlehead and pearly everlasting blooming

8/16/12: Giant puffballs

8/14/12: Chanterelles out in full force; Indian pipe

8/11/12: Vervain blooming

8/8/12: Arrowhead blooming

8/7/12: Large leaf aster flowers in bloom

8/6/12: Eaglets flying

8/5/12: Hummingbirds very active at the feeders\8/3/12: Maples turning color

7/17/12: Queen Anne's Lace in bloom

7/16/12: Bot Flies being eaten by frogs. In bloom: Bee balm, St. John's wort, Compass plant, Cupplant, Culver's root

7/14/12: Pods forming on milkweed

7/12/12: First red maple leaf!

7/11/12: Galls on goldenrod

7/10/12: Chanterelle mushrooms out

7/7/12: Wood frog eggs in Statehouse Lake

7/1/12: Chipping Sparrows fledged from nest (1 died)

7/1/12: Purple Loosestrife blooming

6/30/12: First Blueberries Ripe, sumac blooming, elderberry blooming

6/25/12: Beaked hazel fruiting

6/22/12: Andropogon dubius seeding out; Bracken fern senescing

6/21/12: Happy Summer! The first two reared monarch butterflies emerged today- both females.

6/19/12: Chestnut-sided warblers fledging; Chipping sparrows now hatched

6/18/12: Turtles (painted and snapping) hatching; Strawberries beginning to ripen

6/16/12: 4 chipping sparrow eggs (in nest next to shop)

6/12/12: 5 chestnut sided warbler hatchlings (in nest)5/29/12: Indian paintbrush in bloom, chestnut-sided warbler nest now has 5 eggs!

5/25/12: Shroom update: Oysters, boletus out. Bunch berry, Lupine, columbine all flowering

5/24/12: 4 eggs in said nest.

5/22/12: Chestnut-sided warbler nest is complete.

5/17/12: While birding with NLS 6th grade students we saw a broad-winged hawk on the lake, as well as chestnut-sided warblers building a nest.

5/20/12: Monarch butterflies are laying their eggs on the milkweed- look for the tiny, whitish/yellow eggs the size of a pin head- they hatch 3 days after being laid. I had three hatch out at night :) -L

5/13/12: Hummingbirds south of Hazelhurst at Katies house...waiting to see our first here at the Center! -L

5/12/12: MONARCHS!!! They are back! Last year we didn't see them until the end of May. Our milkweed here is only about 4 inches tall, but you can start checking them for eggs. Also, tons of Tiger Swallowtails flying around this weekend. So many new birds calling as well, hard to sleep in when I am laying there trying to identify them all at 5 in the morning :) -L

5/10/12: While exploring the "underworld" with North Lakeland School elementary students we came across a red-backed salamander under a log!

5/8/12: Found some False Morels, so keep your eyes open for the real ones! Blueberry flowers are just starting to bloom, and bud caps are falling off new Balsam Fir tips. Also, male Black-capped Chickadee are singing away...fee-bee!

5/5/12: While kayaking on the Manitowish River, I heard: Black and white warbler, Parula, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed vireo. Saw three eagles fighting over a sucker and also spring beauty and gaywings are in bloom. -L

5/5/12: Discovery Center Grounds: Bluebirds and Ovenbirds are back! -L

5/2/12: Toads trilling for the first time this season! -L

5/2/12: Heard the first Black-throated green warbler calling outside my window this morning! Zee zee zee zoo zeeee! -L

4/30/12: With a little more sun, we now see Trout lilies, wild strawberry and marsh marigold in bloom. Also Yellow-rumped warblers and white throated sparrows are here calling -L

4/25/12: Bats have returned to a bat house in Presque Isle- first I have heard of returning in this area- most likely Big brown bats, as they are the last to go into hibernation in the fall and the first to come out in the spring :) -L

4/24/12: Heard my first Gray Treefrog today, also heard a snipe at night. -L (on another note, was in FL for a few days and heard my first Tufted Titmouse- "Peter Peter Peter!")

4/16/12: So it is windy, about 30 degrees and snowing today! This is some spring we are having! -L

4/14/12: More sightings of turtles this weekend- big snappers on the side of the road, and little painted turtles. Painted turtles will hatch out in the fall, but stay underground and hibernate through the winter, emerging the following spring. -L

4/13/12: Saw my first Great Blue Heron today at the Lakeland School forest while setting out Tree frog houses with AVW first grade students -L

4/8/12: First painted turtle sitting by the side of the road today- also, a snowshoe hare was hit on the side of the road (sad because it was Easter), but interesting because it was still about 85% white -L

4/6/12: Tonight on my owl survey I heard Killdeer, Leopard frogs, woodcock and spring peepers- first time this season for Killdeer and Leopard frogs -L

4/6/12: Our vermicomposting bin (composting with worms) now has baby worms and egg cases! It took just over two months, which is normal. -L

4/5/12: While setting up our geocache sites, I heard my first Belted kingfisher and watched it fly over by Statehouse Lake -L

4/4/12: This morning as I was leaving for work I heard the entire song of the Hermit thrush, oh happy day! -L

4/3/12: A late evening tromp behind my house led me to hear the call note of the Hermit thrush! -L

4/2/12: The Phoebes are back at the Center today!

4/1/12: Golden-crowned Kinglet, Sandhill Cranes (which I hear have been around about a week), Brown Creepers (which I heard about 2 weeks ago for the first time)- were all out calling today. Also, the first woodcock at the center was "peenting" away tonight...

3/31/12: First Loon heard flying overhead today!!

3/30/12: Report of a Northern Saw-whet Owl - could be a resident, with this weather we think any migrating through already came by... -L

3/29/12: Three pairs of ring-necked ducks out on Statehouse Lake today! -K

3/29/12: This morning I heard the rhythmic thumping of the ruffed grouse for the first time this season! -L

3/27/12: Went hiking at Devils Lake by Baraboo this weekend - Cardinals and Phoebes were going crazy! The Northwoods temps have dropped quite a bit this week, in the 30's and 40's. Reports of critters are still coming in - the salamanders are on the move to the forest ephemeral ponds to lay their eggs, and bear activity has also been reported. They will be coming out of their torpor (not true hibernators) and will be quite hungry, so watch those bird feeders and bring them in at night! -L

3/26/12: The Merlin pair is back at the Center! -L

3/22/12: Visited the Mani Waters Chamber today and Beth noticed a huge beetle sitting in the sand of the ashtray outside the building. Upon first look I thought it might be a predacious diving beetle - but what in the world, they live in water! I brought it back to the Center and upon further investigation found out it was a Giant Water Bug... Read more about it on our blog -L

3/21/12: An evening hike at Van Vliet Hemlocks was filled with the calls of the spring peeper, and for the first time (for me-had a report a few days ago from someone else) the wood frogs were calling! They are the ones that sound like a duck quacking. -L

3/20/12: Happy first day of spring! Statehouse Lake is officially open-snow buntings are here and the first mosquitoes came out a few days ago! -L

3/19/12: Statehouse Lake is about 90% open today - just a little bit of ice on the shore - should be out by the end of today if this sun stays out. I also noticed that many of the maple trees have buds that are open - thus ending any attempt in tapping them this season. Check out our facebook page for a link I put up on the sad state of our maple sugaring season this year... :(-L

3/18/12: I can't wait for each morning, this warm weather (near 75-80 most days this week) is bringing up those spring migrants-this morning i was woken up by a winter wren singing (with one of the longest continuous calls of any bird), my

morning was further brightened by the first sighting of a butterfly, the mourning cloak (they overwinter as adults in the bark of trees and once it warms up they become active, being one of the first butterflies we see in the spring)-although I have heard of earlier reports- on an evening bike ride the spring peepers were calling and then I heard the sound of the Woodcock "dance"- also a song sparrow was calling today-so much going on! -L

3/17/12: Rough-legged hawk (seen in Mercer), Dark-eyed juncos and grackles are around-also a Golden-crowned kinglet calling at home, sandhill cranes and yes, ticks, have all been reported this weekend! -L

3/16/12: Purple finches at the bird feeder - also, chipmunks are out of hibernation! -L

3/15/12: Red wing blackbird heard and seen today, near Presque Isle- also, we have about 10 Common redpolls at our feeders today -L

3/14/12: Saw a small owl laying in the road this morning, I was going to stop and check it out, but someone else stopped ahead of me...I assume it was a Saw-whet owl- which will be migrating through the area-also, it is supposed to reach close to 70 degrees today! -L

3/13/12: Robin seen in Mercer! -L

3/13/12: Hit my first moth last night while driving- spring is literally in the air! With temps reaching near the 70's this week, we are sure to lose most of this snow-Robins reported in Steven's Point as early as 3/7/12. -L

3/9/12: Bob Hay, retired WDNR cold-blooded wildlife specialist: "We had two tiger migrations noted on Wednesday, March 7 in the Madison area. We should have frogs calling on Sunday and turtles will be out if the weather forecast holds. I was at a site today in Belleville. A 30-acre lake was totally ice free. I think Blanding's will be out tomorrow or perhaps Monday. Sunday we are supposed to get rain in the late afternoon. Welcome to herp season 2012. This may actually be bad news in a number of ways. I am hoping we do not get a hard freeze after next week as I think the first ornates will be emerging by mid-week."

3/8/12: A tiger salamander was reported crossing a road in Dane County, making it the 2nd salamander sighting of 2012 -L

3/5/12: Temps predicted to be in the 40's this week and next weekend- all our beautiful snow may disappear - although all this snow will be great to recharge our water supply -L

3/3/12: Raven seen with large stick; perfect for a nest?

2/29/12: Leap Day Blizzard! Around 20" of snow fell in 24 hours. It's beautiful, and heavy.

2/24/12- Big brown bat seen flying around a garage in Steven's Point. The bat is most likely hibernating in the garage for the winter, Big Browns will wake up throughout the winter to search for water. -L

2/23/12: First salamander reported in 2012 from Trevor, WI in Kenosha County. A couple found a tiger (they called it a spotted) salamander in their window well. -L

2/2/12- Several reports of woodpeckers drumming in the forest- it is their mating season and the drumming activity increases this time of year. -L

1/31/12- A member reported the grey squirrels are mating -L

1/27/12- On the free Friday adventure to the River trail, 32 Trumpeter Swans and one Common Goldeneye -L

1/21/12- Brrr- Coldest temps of the year so far- yesterday got down to -26 degrees F and a high of 2 degrees F, this morning was -22. -L

1/17/12- No birds at our feeder this afternoon. Why? A shrike was lurking around! -L

1/16/12- While hiking at Van Vliet, found sign of two very active otters. Slides, tracks and holes into a small bog lake. -L

1/12/12- Our Nibbles speaker, Mark Naniot from Wild Instincts rehab got a call to pick up two bear cubs from a den disturbed by a logging operation. They were five days old. Mama bears are giving birth to their cubs right now, middle January. When born, they weigh less than a pound, are blind, hairless and totally helpless. -L

1/11/12- We've had a stretch of some pretty unseasonably warm weather this week- 1/9- 41 degrees F and 1/10-44 degrees F. Today is a high of 38 degrees F. Snow and colder temps are due later this week. -L

1/4/12- Bird Club member Ed Marshall reported a Northern shrike hanging around his bird feeders in Lac du Flambeau. -L

1/2/12- Had about 10 evening grosbeaks at my feeder today- both males and females, they were kind enough to let the chickadees get some seed as well -L



Sorry for the quality of the photo, took it through the screen- three males and one female at the bottom.

1/1/12- Winter finally came in the form of about 12 inches of beautiful snow last night and into today. -L