

Spring 1978

## Noteworthy events from Spring to Autumn

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## NOTEWORTHY EVENTS FROM SPRING TO AUTUMN

While pursuing formal and informal research at the UWM Field Station, I have observed the progression of three spring and summer seasons (1975-77). My fascination with phenology prompted me to note the events marking the onset of spring and its transition into summer. This summary is not a detailed phenological report. No particular area or species was observed consistently and not all events such as bud opening, leafing etc. were noted. Since I was not at the Field Station daily, the date of the actual first event in any instance, e.g., the very first flower, could easily be missed. What follows, is a summary by date of those colorful events such as flowering and warbler migrations which I found noteworthy. The year in which a given event was observed is placed in parentheses after the description.

- March 8 – Several flocks of Canada Geese observed flying overhead. (77)
- March 9 – The geese are still flying in, in V's or lines heading westward; some wheel into Mud Lake for a stopover, others keep on going. The Red-winged Blackbirds have taken their perches on the cattails. Their singing can be heard along with that of a Cardinal. A Red-shouldered Hawk was calling. (77)
- March 12 – The Meadowlarks were singing, as were Cardinals and Red-winged Blackbirds. Observed a Northern Shrike first regurgitate a pellet, then capture a mouse.
- March 15 – Red-winged Blackbirds were common and singing. (76)
- March 28 – The first Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrel of the season was seen exploring the area around its burrow.  
Sandhill Cranes were observed flying overhead through the week. (76)
- March 30 – A Ground Squirrel was feeding outside of its burrow where the snow was melted. Song Sparrows singing. Both Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks were calling. In a temporary pond, in a nearby field, male and female Shoveler ducks and several Killdeer were sighted. (77)
- April 13 – Black-capped Chickadees were singing vigorously. Green Darner (Aeschnid) dragonflies were flying. In the Upland Woods Hepatica and Bloodroot were blooming as was an occasional Downy Yellow Violet. Skunk Cabbage was blooming in the low wet areas. A Yellow-rumped Warbler and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were sighted along the wood's edge. (77)

- April 17 – More Downy Yellow Violets were blooming in addition to Hepatica and Bloodroot. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were observed. (77)
- April 22 – Several Hepatica in flower and Scarlet Cups were observed in the upland woods.
- April 25 – White-throated Sparrows seen in the upland woods. Wood Anemone was forming buds, Large White Trillium was flowering, May apples were their full height but the leaves were not fully spread. On the bog islands Bellwort was blooming in profusion with Hepatica and Bloodroot. Some Tree Swallows were sighted. (77)
- April 26 – Song and Field Sparrows were singing. A Great-horned Owl was sitting on its nest on the first bog island. (77) Walking across the bog stream, I roused a Purple Gallinule out of the Cattails. On the second island a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was making sampling holes around a maple trunk. White-throated Sparrows were singing. Ground Squirrels were active. Marsh Marigold was in full bloom as was Downy Yellow Violet and Woolly Blue Violet. Also blooming was Yellow Bellwort, Skunk Cabbage, and Leather-leaf. May Apples had leafed out and the Royal Fern fiddleheads were 5 in. tall. (76)
- April 28 – The Barn Swallows have returned and four Great Blue Herons were sighted flying northward. In the upland woods Large White Trillium, some Hepatica and Bloodroot blooming with Downy Yellow Violet and Woolly Blue Violet. (77)
- April 29 – Two Bluebirds, Brown Creepers and a Black and White Warbler sighted in the Upland Woods. (75)
- April 30 – A Rufous-sided Towhee foraging in the litter. (76)  
Four well-sized fox kits were observed outside the fox den in the field. (76 and 77)
- May 2 – Large White Trillium blooming in the woods. (76)
- May 6 – A Rufous-sided Towhee singing. (76)
- May 7 – In the Upland Woods sighted Ovenbirds on the forest floor and two Great Blue Herons were seen flying overhead. On St. Augustine Rd. a family of Woodcocks (hen and four young) bob up and down as they walk across the road. (76)
- May 9 – The warblers have arrived in the Upland Woods, Black and White, Palm, a Black-throated Green Warbler, and an Ovenbird; also a Rufous-sided Towhee. In the Bog, White-throated Sparrows were singing. In the Bog, Honeysuckle, Leather-leaf and Juneberry had been blooming for the past week. On the first bog island, Bellwort was blooming and Columbine was forming buds. Bog Rosemary was blooming in the string bog. (76)
- May 10 – In the Upland Woods, Black and White Warbler, Palm Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Catbird and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were seen. (76)
- May 11 – A White-crowned Sparrow and Song Sparrow were feeding on Dandelions. In the Upland Woods, sighted an Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Baltimore (Northern) Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Rufous-sided Towhee, Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Green

- Warbler and Yellow-rumped Warbler. (77)
- May 12 – A Great-crested Flycatcher sighted in the Upland Woods. (76)
- May 13 – In the Upland Woods – a pair of Catbirds, a Nashville Warbler and Yellow-rumped Warbler. A Common Flicker was observed with only its head sticking out of the nest hole. Marsh Marigold was in full bloom along the stream. Hepatica and Trillium were blooming. Beech leaves were unfolding and May Apples had formed their umbrellas. (75)
- May 14 – In Kurtz's Woods, Trillium, Violets, Gallium, Spring Beauty and Jack-in-the-Pulpit were blooming. (76)
- May 17 – In the Upland Woods, four Scarlet Tanagers, a Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Great-crested Flycatcher, Red-headed Woodpecker and Swainson's Thrush were sighted. Blooming were Trillium, Wild Geranium, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Gallium sp., Downy Yellow Violet and Woolly Blue Violets; in the field were Short-billed Marsh Wrens. (76)
- May 19 – In the Upland Woods, a pair of Yellowthroats, American Redstart and two Scarlet Tanagers observed. Also observed a pair of Flickers at their nest hole, the male inside with its beak open. The temperature 91<sup>o</sup>F. In the bog-Marsh Marigold, Bog Violet, Wood Violet, Goldthread, Wild Sarsaparilla and Bellwort blooming. (75)
- May 20 – Along the bog trail Columbine and Small Yellow Ladyslipper flowering. Barn Swallows and Purple Martins in flight over the laboratory. (77)  
On the wood's edge, observed Bluebirds and an American Redstart and in the woods, a Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and a Scarlet Tanager. (76)
- May 21 – A male and female Northern Oriole observed in the marshy woods on Edgewood Rd. At the lab building, Oxalis is in bloom and Barn Swallows and Kingbirds were flying. In the woods, an American Redstart, Canada Warbler, Ovenbird and Great-crested Flycatcher were sighted. (76)
- May 26 – At the beginning of the boardwalk, Yellow Ladyslipper was in bloom. Along the boardwalk, Buckbean, Starflower and Bitter Cress blooming. In the woods, a male and female Bay-breasted Warbler and Scarlet Tanager were sighted and, in the marshy woods next to the field, a Yellow Warbler. (76)
- May 28 – Yellow Ladyslipper blooming in the bog. (75 & 76)  
In the Upland Woods a Red-shouldered Hawk is nesting, with two young, grey and fluffy which appear close to fledgling size. (76)
- May 31 – Showy Ladyslipper starting to bloom in the bog. (77)
- June 2 – Three blue Catbird eggs were laid in a nest in the streamside shrubbery near D7. A Luna Moth was found on the laboratory doorstep. (76)
- June 3 – Calla Lily blooming in the bog, while Canada Mayflower has been blooming for the past week. (76)
- June 9 – Wild Rose still blooming along the loop road in the field. Many dragonflies, both numbers and species were seen flying on the trail bordering the South field. (76)  
A few Yellow Ladyslippers still in bloom as also Daisy Feabane. (75)
- June 13 – Pink Showy Ladyslippers in full bloom. The Red-shouldered Hawk

- young much browner in color. A Baltimore caterpillar caught a few days ago was now a second-day chrysalis. (76)
- June 14 – The first baby Ground Squirrel appeared outside of its burrow. (76)
- June 19 – Some Showy Pink Ladyslippers in bloom as were Daisy Fleabane and Wild Rose. (75)
- June 21 – The Baltimore butterfly emerged after 10 days. (76)
- June 27 – An Eastern Kingbird sitting on its nest in a tamarack near the boardwalk with three young. (75)
- July 7 – A female Pheasant and several young crossed St. Augustine Road from a cornfield. Of the Kingbird young, one was sitting on the rim of the nest. They looked almost adult, but still had yellow-orange mouths. (75)  
Three Barn Swallow young sitting in a nest under the eaves of the laboratory building. Sweet Clover, St. John's-wort, Milkweed, Fleabane and Alfalfa blooming. (76)
- July 8 – Three Cedar Waxwing eggs laid in a nest in a small tree near the laboratory building. (76)
- July 10 – A Common Yellowthroat was seen feeding a young Cowbird at least twice its size. Mullein is blooming in the field (76)
- July 11 – The Kingbird young are no longer in the nest. Instead, three young Kingbirds were seen sitting on the barb wire fence along St. Augustine Road being fed by their parents. Young Barn Swallows were trying their wings when not sitting in a row on the barb wire fence. (75)
- July 19 – A Buck Moth caterpillar pupates. (76)
- August 8– About 4:00 pm as I crossed the bog bridge, an Osprey circles overhead with a fish in its claws. When it flew over me, it gave a series of calls, circled once more, “screamed” again, then soared off over the trees to the east. (75)
- Sept. 2 – A Ruby-throated Hummingbird spotted near F11 feeder. (75)
- Sept. 5 – The chickadees in the bog active in flocks which included several species of warblers. (75)
- Oct. 10 – Kinglets active among the chickadee flocks. (75)
- Oct. 14 – One Ground Squirrel observed out of its burrow, but most Ground Squirrels and Chipmunks had not been seen for several days. The Buck Moth emerged, malformed. Confirmed sightings of a Pileated Woodpecker in the Upland Woods. (76)
- Oct. 16 – During the day, numerous Robins were banded. At night, banded two Saw-whet Owls. (76)
- Oct. 21 – The Tamaracks at their golden autumn peak and the New England Asters and Jewelweed long gone. At 6:00 pm, a noisy blackbird flock congregated near the bog stream. (75)
- Oct. 22 - Three Saw-whet Owls caught this night. (77)
- Oct. 29 – A Long-eared Owl caught near the D7 feeder. (77)
- Oct. 30 – One Screech Owl and two Saw-whets caught. The Tamaracks are gold in color. (76)
- Nov. 7 – An American Coot sighted on the bog stream. (75)
- Nov. 12 – Whistling Swan and Geese seen flying over. In the Tamaracks, Pine Siskins, White-winged Crossbills and Evening Grosbeaks observed. (77)

My notes show differences from year to year. For example, in 1977, White Trillium flowered by April 25 whereas, in 1975, a more normal year, Trillium was not blooming in large numbers until May 13. May 2 was the date of blooming in 1976. The Fall 1977 issue of the Wisconsin Phenological Society newsletter, states that weather conditions in 1975 resulted in "normal" blooming times, whereas 1976 and 1977 had favorable conditions early in the year. However these two years differed, 1976 had an early start and persistently favorable conditions until May. In 1977, in contrast, early blooming plants such as Hepatica flowered later than 1976, while later blooming plants such as White Trillium and Jack-in-the Pulpit bloomed earlier. This year's pattern is as yet unknown. However, the large influx of Canada Geese this year (1978) did not occur until March 20, 12 days later than the 1977 date of March 8. Whether other events will be late in 1978 will depend on the vagaries of weather.

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