

2002 LLCC Phenology:

12.26.02

Chickadees are singing "cheeseburger" and "fee-bee!" Let the hormones begin. A major aurora, with lots of streaks and colors, but no reds.

12.25.02

Christmas is a sunny, mild day. The snow drought continues.

12.18.02

Moderate ice storm makes Co. Rd. 88 slick like a skating rink at 5:20 a.m. Many school closings in the area.

12.17.02

Barb sees bald eagle on Hwy. 210 at 12:30 p.m.

12.16.02

More wind and afternoon snow--about 0.5 inch. Bald eagle on prairie just clears truck on take off.

12.15.02

Major wind--30 + miles per hour--blows from the east all day.

12.11.02

Foggy, frosty, and cool morning, with low "only" 22° F. Clouds persist at LLCC, but International Falls sets another warmth record at 43° F. Two bald eagles on the roadside of north Hwy 169, near the Soo Line trail.

12.10.02

7:45 a.m. A bald eagle is roosting in a tree near the Aitkin flats, along Hwy 169/210. Warm front invades Minnesota. Temperatures at LLCC rise from 12° F at midnight to 45° during the day. Meanwhile, International Falls hits a record-breaking 41° F! (Hutchinson has 46°, also a record.)

12.09.02

A.M. Pat and Farid report numerous otter slides, two active beaver lodges, and a ring of open water in the floating bog on a hike around the lake. The ice is thick and continues to sing in the cold temperatures.

12.08.02

4:50 p.m. A barred owl stops by Chris' feeder looking for supper.

12.06.02

Those hard-working interns work til 10 pm getting the Christmas tree in the Dining Hall ready for the staff party! The results are lovely. A bald eagle is perched on a snag north of Hwy 210, hunched against the cold.

12.05.02

An Aitkin County employee reports encountering a large moose standing on the shoulder of Hwy 200 between Hill City and Jacobson. Mega-storm towards the east coast dumps snow and ice, and causes several deaths. Temperatures in some parts of Minnesota plunge to the double digits below zero.

12.04.02

Keith drills and measures 8 inches of ice on Long Lake. . . and increasing. Temperatures remain in the single digits on either side of 0° F.

12.03.02

A.M. Reports of a vehicle on Pickerel Lake (west of Aitkin) and fish houses on several other lakes (Mille Lacs included) do not necessarily mean that the ice is universally safe. "Cold cold!" say the interns. Enough said.

12.02.02

First sub-zero temperature of the 2002-2003 winter season arrives when the mercury hit -2° F. Schwampy makes a lucky guess.

12.01.02

Clouds keep temperatures in the above zero range. 7° F is the low.

November 2002

11.29.02

The biggest shopping day of the year (a.k.a. "Buy Nothing Day") is cloudy and very, very windy. Speeds up to 50 mph are recorded in western Minnesota.

11.28.02

Happy Thanksgiving! Mild temperatures and clouds give us that late November look.

11.26.02

10:30 p.m. Fancy display of northern lights. Wonderful view down by the lake!
Pileated woodpecker hangs on the suet feeder for a few goodies.

11.25.02

A.M. The bat that has been hanging out in the Dining Hall entrance way has disappeared. Was it warm enough for him to fly away, or did a "mysterious something" capture him?
10:30 a.m. Three female grouse wander across Hwy 210/169 near the flats northeast of Aitkin.

11.23.02

Overnight snow and ice. . . but just the nuisance variety.

11.22.02

Cloudy all day with southeast wind. Then, "Red sky at night, Schwampy's delight!"

11.21.02

4 p.m. Eight grosbeaks visit Chris' house.
Overnight snow, about 1".

11.19.02

Leonid meteor report. . . at midnight: clear! At 4 a.m., peak of shower: cloudy! At 5:30, clear!
Bah!
3:25 p.m. Nine gold finches visit the feeder at Chris' house.
4 p.m. Anne and Roosevelt students on the Lake Hike spy a porcupine climbing a red pine at the edge of the pine plantation.
Six gold finches visit the feeder at Schwampy's house.

11.18.02

3:15 Two bald eagles on the edge of Hwy 169 ditch.

11.17.02

4 p.m. Sharp-tailed grouse on poplar tree in Chris' front yard.

11.15.02

4 p.m. Two wild turkeys alongside road near Princeton.

11.14.02

After freezing once, then thawing, the lake is iced over again. This time for good?

11.09.02

A bat (hoary?) has seemingly taken up a comfortable perch in the main entry to the Dining Hall. The lake is open again. The ice simply couldn't bear the warm temperatures and a warm breeze.

11.08.02

Gold finches at Pat's feeder.

What's this? A mosquito is flying in the Dining Hall!

2:30 p.m. The interns see a bald eagle flying above Hwy 210.

11.07.02

A.M. An LLCC visitor reports seeing a timber wolf along County Road 3 west of Palisade.

Mid-afternoon: November (or is it the long-lost October?) heat wave! The thermometer tops out at 64° on this sunny afternoon. Open water in the middle of the lake.

11.05.02

10 a.m. A light snow fall makes the lake almost entirely white.

Schwampy reports two purple finches as well as several gold finches at his feeder.

11.04.02

5:45 a.m. Nice eight-point buck crosses Chris' path on Co. Rd. 5.

Long Lake is 90% frozen; covered with a thin skin of ice except for a "puddle" at the center and toward the south.

An otter tests the ice by exploring near the open water.

11.03.02

Tamaracks have reached their last stage of color--smoky orange-gold--and have lost about half of their needles.

October 2002

10.31.02

Say, what's that blinding light in the southern sky? Why, it's (gasp!) the SUN!!

After four days of clouds, various forms of precipitation, and a low of 17°, it is finally bright and breezy.

10.30.02

A former LLCC naturalist reports hearing a loon this morning at the narrows of Big Sandy Lake.

1 p.m. A quartet of buffleheads (three females, one male) are diving on the lake.

3 p.m. Cherith's bog class saw 3 white-tailed deer at the end of the boardwalk.

10.29.02

6:55 a.m. Two deer cross a path in the woods.

Another drab, drippy day. Rainy and cloudy.

4:15 p.m. Schwampy encounters a very, very, VERY chilled mink frog on the walkway.

9:45 p.m. Meanwhile, a frog hops (with great difficulty!) in front of Anne's car. A chilly day for amphibians on the move.

10.28.02

5:05 p.m. A great gray owl and a moose spotted at Willow Wildlife Refuge, Hill City.

10 p.m. A fox crosses the path near the Dining Hall.

10:30 p.m. Staff frightens a deer just behind the Marcum House.

10.27.02

Three white-tails, one wood chuck.

10.26.02

Millie saw a fox on Co. Rd. 5.

Two white-tail deer are seen in the early a.m.

10.25.02

At 10:22 a.m. a plane crash near Eveleth took the lives of Senator Paul Wellstone, his wife Sheila, daughter Marcia, three campaign staffers, and two pilots. Minnesota and the nation mourn.

It is a dark, dreary, drippy day. Cloudy and misty all day.

10.24.02

Cool but lovely day: 16° low, bright and sunny.

Millie saw a bobcat on Co. Rd. 5.

12:50 p.m. Three magpies in Washburn State Forest.

10.23.02

8 a.m. A pair of hooded mergansers are swimming in the middle of the lake.

A.M. Two crows are roaming around on the newly-formed ice.

A light blanket of snow still covers the ground.

A little brown bat is found snoozing in the entrance of the North Star Lodge.

3:10 p.m. A large bald eagle is fishing in the Hill River.

4:25 p.m. 18 trees in the 3 to 4 inch diameter range have been taken down by beavers in the past six days, at Chris' pond in northern Aitkin County. (Does that mean a long winter ahead?)

10.22.02

By morning, ice has formed on Long Lake's south shore. As the chilly day progresses, more ice fills in along the north shore and the narrows.

A great blue heron strolls the beach, fishing (or wishing) for minnows.

Pat sights a flock of snow buntings northeast of Aitkin.

6:10 p.m. Barred owl lands in a tree, Washburn State Forest. It's calling to an owl in another part of the forest.

More robins--dozens of them--have gathered just outside LLCC's gate.

A few straggling geese show up on Long Lake.

Last-but-not-least, students and education staff report two stray kittens under the Marcum House deck. Who wants to take them home?

10.21.02

Overnight, LLCC gets a couple inches of nice, fluffy snow. Meanwhile, Little Falls gets 9" (Puh-leeze, let's not start this pattern again!)

3 p.m. Students in Katie's Thicket class find a porcupine and den beside the Alpha Wolf trail.

Robins are still migrating. Perhaps they noticed the snow?

10.20.02

Red-tailed hawk on powerline along Hwy 169/210, northeast of Aitkin.

10.18.02

Two inches of snow in northern Aitkin County.

10.15.02

AM Student and teacher find a squished red-bellied snake (10" long) on the road.

3:20 p.m. One adult and one immature bald eagle in field, on the west side of Palisade.

A little brown bat, roosting in the soffit outside Marcum House room 6, is found by students from Clearwater Middle School. It suddenly finds itself the star of the Tuesday evening BATS! class.

10.14.02

Oak colors peak. More wind and a few showers at noon.

Early A.M. Tower, Minnesota, reports the nation's low temperature, at 8 degrees Fahrenheit.

10.13.02

Overnight, 27° F, leaves a light coating of snow on roofs, vehicles, decks, etc.

Fall colors are just past their peak (a late peak this year). Strong winds all weekend have ripped at least 25% of the leaves off the trees.

10.12.02

. . . And the thermometer keeps dropping! Major cold front plows through and prognosticators promise solid precipitation (that's snow to the uninitiated)!!

5:30 p.m. 41° F with snow showers. (Yesss!!)

10.11.02

P.M. Strong south winds bring warmth and humidity. It's 73° F at LLCC.

The thermometer drops to 61° at midnight, and we get 0.28" of rain.

10.09.02

2:45 p.m. A large great gray owl lands on a powerline pole, along Hwy 169.

7:45 a.m. Belted kingfisher on power line, along Hwy 210.

5:45 p.m. Five deer feeding along Co. Rd. 5.

10.08.02

5 a.m. to 6 a.m. Sixteen deer, 2 foxes, one skunk, and 2 raccoons are sighted during one 35 mile drive.

7:30 a.m. Six deer outside Dining Hall.

10.07.02

4:30 a.m. 27° F in Hill City, 20° F at Millie's house.

Yellow-rumped warblers visit Schwampy's feeder.

2:50 p.m. Two eagles along Hwy 169 by Soo Line trail.

10.06.02

Snow showers in the northern part of Minnesota.

10.04.02

P.M. A flock of 60 or 70 cormorants flies over, high enough to be well above a bald eagle that was also in the sky.

10.03.02

Schwampy observes a flock of 200 to 300 crows.

10.02.02

Coyote scat--lots of it--on foot bridge at the east end of Long Lake.

4:25 p.m. Four swans on Washburn Lake (Washburn State Forest) off east Hwy 200.

6 p.m. Doe with twins feeding on Britt's lawn.

Five deer in broad daylight browsing along Co. Rd. 5 and 88. All deer now sport their new winter coats.

10.01.02

Bright, clear day to welcome October. Sumac in ditches is rich red, numerous maples are at peak color, popples are going gold, and tamarack in the bog are just starting to turn a bit.

11:30 a.m. A bald eagle is perched on the osprey nest along Hwy. 210/169 northeast of Aitkin.

4:30 p.m. The Bog Trek class scares up a white-tailed deer in the pine plantation, and catches a glimpse of a porcupine ambling past the entrance to the Bog boardwalk.

2 p.m. A 10 inch garter snake stops by the Dining Hall for lunch.

3 p.m. Barb sees a red-bellied snake near the North Star Lodge.

5:45 p.m. A major cold front plows south-east across Minnesota. Temperatures drop 10° in 15 minutes!

10 to 11 p.m. Fantastic show of northern lights, reported by at least three people.

The interns hear a lone wolf howl.

September 2002

09.30.02

A.M. Schwampy observes a hawk--Cooper's or sharp-shinned --harassing a pileated woodpecker. Score: pileated=1, hawk=0.

2:30 p.m. Kids on Bog Trek find a small garter snake (about 6 or 8 inches long) in the pine plantation and a silver-dollar-sized snapping turtle between the lab and the Marcum House.

9:45 p.m. Lots of frogs crossing the road tonight, as well as two raccoons, under thick cover of fog.

Pam spies a timber wolf on Hwy 169, 1.5 miles south of the Mississippi bridge.

Heat and humidity return: LLCC hits 79° with 65° dew point (88% humidity). . . G-A-A-C-K!

Warmth allows clouds of bees, mosquitoes, dragonflies, and butterflies to come "back to life."

09.29.02

A pileated woodpecker is tapping slowly at an aspen snag by the Long Lake parking lot.

09.27.02

6:30 p.m. Four or five pie-billed grebes are fishing, diving constantly, near the Long Lake beach. Snow geese, in two separate flocks, fly over Long Lake.

09.26.02

A broad-winged hawk along Co. Rd. 5, near Fleming Church.

Several butterflies are fluttering around campus this afternoon, including one red admiral at rest on the pump house.

Eastern bluebird visits Schwampy's thistle feeder.

09.25.02

4:25 p.m. 10 adult and 7 young bald eagles, north Aitkin County line road.

7:30 p.m. Kids report seeing at least five mice during the Thicket game.

09.24.02

5:45 a.m. Large snowshoe hare crosses Co. Rd. 5, in full winter dress.

First frost! And bog rosemary is still blooming!

09.19.02

5 a.m. to 6 a.m. Lots of frogs on the highway this morning.

5 p.m. A snowy egret is fishing, motionless, along the north shore of Long Lake. First time Schwampy has ever seen one here.

Overnight: first cold front moves through at 3:30 a.m. rather noisily, with plenty of thunder and lightning. LLCC gets 0.43" of rain.

09.18.02

Three trumpeter swans are on Hill River, Hwy 169, north Aitkin County.

6 p.m. LLCC is swarming with flickers! They're everywhere you look.

8 a.m. About 40 crows convened on Co.Rd. 5 appeared to be blockading the road.

8:15 a.m. A king fisher is perched on the ladder to the swimming raft, at the shore of Long Lake.

10 a.m. A large flock of 80 to 90 Canada geese arrive at Long Lake.

12 p.m. A monarch butterfly is fluttering around the heads of the St. Augustine kids as they load the buses to leave.

P.M. Bees and other nectar-gathering insects are busy around the asters in the Butterfly Garden.

09.17.02

10:45 a.m. A solitary sandhill crane circles over Long Lake looking for a thermal updraft.

2:30 p.m. Five sandhill cranes are in the field by the peat plant, Hwy 169.

7 p.m. Mosquitoes are still out in force as the kids play games on the Orienteering Field.

10 p.m. Several frogs hop across the road in front of Anne's car.

09.16.02

8:15 a.m. Raccoon family, mama and 4 babies, out for a walk on Co. Rd. 5.

2:40 p.m. Two red tailed hawks, corner of Co. Rd. 3 and Hwy 169.

P.M. Small groups of geese occasionally make a racket flying over campus.

A dozen Canada geese have taken up "grazing" on the far side of Long Lake.

09.15.02

7:30 a.m. Spotted on Co. Rd. 3, an eight-point buck, black-face, with 4 inch brow tines and no velvet.

09.14.02

A.M. A loon, dressed in drab winter garb, is diving on a lake near Princeton, MN.

Blue jays arrive with their usual raucous exuberance.

09.13.02

A.M. A bald eagle is soaring over campus.

09.12.02

Anne spies a single blueberry in the bog, near the teaching square in the boardwalk.

P.M. Dragonflies mating on the Oar House offend the sensibilities of visiting 7th graders.

A woolie bear caterpillar was crossing Co. Rd. 5 at noon.

During LBO, we caught two baby snapping turtles.

09.11.02

Of the 11 "minnows" caught in the minnow trap this afternoon, 9 of them were sunnies! Yes, 9!

Two foxes on Co. Rd 5, at 5:50 am.

A coyote on Co. Rd 3, 5:45 am.

09.10.02

Overnight rains move across the state. 0.81" precip at LLCC. An F1 tornado causes damage in Albertville.

Eight to ten Canada geese are on Long Lake.

Britt finds a small painted turtle on the sidewalk.

Numerous flickers are seen on campus.

09.09.02

More heat and humidity. LLCC hits 90°, southwest Minnesota records 99°F!!
Canada geese are crowding on the Mississippi in St. Cloud, and making a racket. Numerous monarchs are flying around.

09.08.02

More northern lights. . . an incredible display of greenish "streakers."
Major heat and dewpoints: Ortonville hits 95° F, Minneapolis 91°, Duluth 86°. LLCC reaches 89°.

09.06.02

Northern goshawk in a field, along Hwy 169.
A mink crosses 438th Lane near the LLCC property line.
A teeny, tiny snapping turtle, about 1.5 inches across, found near the Mississippi in Aitkin.

09.05.02

In Aitkin: a very small woolly bear caterpillar, 0.5 inch, black with a brown band.

09.04.02

Twelve double-crested cormorants on Hill Lake in Hill City.

09.03.02

7 a.m. Anne has a walking stick on her car in the morning. "Look it's a twig with legs!"
It's a perfect September day for the Aitkin County Friendship Club picnic. Blue skies, northwest wind, low humidity, and a high of 75°.
It's a perfect September day for the Aitkin County Friendship Club picnic. Blue skies, northwest wind, low humidity, and a high of 75°.
10:30 p.m. Bright dome of northern lights.

09.02.02

Sphinx moths are visiting flower beds in Palisade.
Another confused meteorological event: a Labor Day tornado of at least F-3 intensity broadsides Ladysmith, Wisconsin, after rains and strong winds scour northern Minnesota. Many injured; fortunately, no fatalities.

09.01.02

Overnight storms produce prodigious amounts of lightning and wind, and a quarter inch of rain.
Later in the day, a major storm dumps nearly 5" rain over Southern Aitkin, Kanabec, and Pine Counties. LLCC gets half an inch.

August 2002

08.31.02

August feels more like June! (In fact, we got 4 times as much rain in August [9.84"] than June [2.28"]).

08.28.02

Acorns are raining down in St. Cloud. Almost need a hard hat.

08.27.02

11 a.m. A hummingbird zooms by the staff room window. . . seeking lunch?

08.26.02

Blackbirds are grouping and flocking around power lines.

08.23.02

11 a.m. A huge turkey vulture is sitting on a fence post along Co. Rd. 5 south of LLCC.
The Schwaderers see a flock of nighthawks migrating.

08.22.02

5:45 p.m. A newly-emerged monarch is drying its wings while dangling from what is left of its
chrysalis, just in front of the Dining Hall.

08.21.02

A tall, leggy fawn crosses the road by the orienteering field. His spots are fading and he is
roaming quite a distance from his mama.

08.20.02

Another chilly morning, at 47°.

A green heron is wading along the beach, waiting for minnows.

A few oak leaves are tipped in red.

08.19.02

Sumac along Hwy 210/169, northeast of Aitkin, is going orange.

The morning dawns at 44° F. Autumn is coming!

08.17.02

Schwampy sees a solitary nighthawk migrating in Wisconsin.

08.15.02

5:31 a.m. Adult fox with two babies is out for a morning walk along CR 5.

08.14.02

7:45 a.m. A red-tailed hawk waves his tail at passers-by on Hwy 210/169 east of Aitkin.

Pitcher plant flowers are maturing in the bog.

A few precocious green acorns are beginning to drop.

08.15.02

5:31 a.m. Adult fox with two babies is out for a morning walk along CR 5.

08.13.02

A pair of ruby-throated hummingbirds is checking out the alluring red of. . . the "Typar" wrap
that's covering the School House during remodeling.

A little brown bat, hanging by his toe-nails above the office door, finally loses patience with our
coming and going and zooms away.

Mosquitoes are easing up (by which we mean that they are still bad, but not nearly as bad as
they were two or three weeks ago).

08.12.02

Early a.m. Severe thunderstorms pass through and dump about 3 inches of rain, and lightning
fries several phones on campus.

2:15 p.m. 5 sandhill cranes are standing in the old rice paddies on CR 5.

3 p.m. A belted kingfisher is skimming the water by the beach.

Golden rod is in full bloom, milkweed pods are forming, and basswood fruits are ripening.

The maple just east of the School House is turning red on the tips.

The two osprey fledglings are perched at the edge of their nest on Hwy 169.

A.M. Millie notices numerous monarch chrysalises near the butterfly garden, around the front
door of the Dining Hall. They are even dangling from the beams of the building.

8:30 a.m. Three does with fawns are busy grazing a mile west of Palisade on Co. Rd. 5; one of the fawns is nursing.

08.09.02

A barred owl is out near the white trail.

Large-leaved aster blossoms are beyond their peak.

Monarch caterpillars by the dozen are munching through swamp milkweed in the butterfly garden.

08.06.02

Indian pipe is blooming in the small bog near Bird-on-a-Wire.

A ruby-throated hummingbird is hovering at the monarda in the butterfly garden.

08.05.02

"Early autumn" flowers like mums and hostas are blooming in Pam's garden.

A whole maple tree is going red on the road between Aitkin and Brainerd. One branch of a maple tree is blaze red along Hwy 210. Can fall be coming so quickly?

A red fox is hunting in the field along Hwy 5.

Chris sees a black bear across Hwy 169 at 5:35 a.m. Fantastic sighting!

From his perch on a bale, a red-tailed hawk keeps an eye on a hay field along Hwy 5.

Mid-afternoon: an osprey glides high over campus.

7:30 p.m. A male indigo bunting feeds some choice morsel to a fledged young un' in the Dining Hall parking lot.

Signs of fall: Britt sees her breath at the Laurentian Divide rest stop, on the way to the Boundary Waters.

Another member of the staff notes that some maples are starting to change color.

We're losing three minutes of daylight every day!

08.04.02

A red-tailed hawk is soaring south of Aitkin.

08.01.02

July rainfall totals 9.64". That compares with 10+ for the entire first half of 2002.

Cool, crisp, dry (!!) air blowing in from Canada, Thanks, eh?

4:40 p.m. A bat was flying over the lake, caught a minnow and flew into the woods.

July 2002

07.31.02

Campers saw Roberta the Toad peel her shedding skin off with her hind feet and eat it!!

Another monarch emerged from its chrysalis in the Lakeside Lab.

Morning storm roars across Central Minnesota with wind, hail, and torrents of rain.

Nor-son crew reports twister-like cloud swirling north of LLCC. During the same storm, LLCC received 0.34" in the rain gauge.

07.30.02

Evening: hummingbird flying around NSL.

7:30 p.m. A skunk is crossing the Great River Road. Between 7 pm and sunset, more than dozen deer make appearances.

P.M. Britt saw a red fox on Gun Lake Road.

07.29.02

8:45 a.m. Mama doe and fawn are grazing outside the LLCC gate, as they often are these days.

Joe Pye weed is beginning to bloom.

1 p.m. The butterfly garden is swarming with activity: three monarch butterflies, a sulphur butterfly, and numerous honey bees are feeding on the swamp milkweed and heliopsis. The monarda is in full bloom.

07.28.02

Two rose-breasted grosbeaks are at Pat's feeder.

Major storms clobber the entire southern half of Minnesota. LLCC gets "nicked," and receives 0.02" rain.

Monarchs are seen flying in tandem, their mating ritual.

Can deer flies be waning? Just might be true.

07.27.02

Thunderstorms rumble through LLCC, delivering 0.90" of rain.

07.26.02

A pair of hummingbirds is in the midst of mating activity.

07.25.02

9:30 p.m. Kt scared up a deer by the North Star Lodge. It remained browsing on the path for 10 minutes.

07.23.02

Evening: A red fox is crossing Co. Rd. 5. We also saw 7 deer between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m.

7:30 a.m. Two osprey young are in the nest along Hwy 169, and one adult is perched on the edge of the platform.

07.22.02

The heat breaks, a cold front moves in, and we cannot believe how perfect the weather is! Blue skies, 70 degrees, light breeze.

Pitcher plants are still blooming in the bog.

07.21.02

A baby snapping turtle is crossing the path near the Energy Center.

07.20.02

2:30 p.m. A great blue heron flies over the west end of the lake as the Carleton Environmental Science student are getting into canoes.

In the hot, humid, cloudy weather, mosquitoes seem almost to be as thick as rain.

A doe and her fawn are grazing on the Orienteering Field while a ground hog observes them.

07.19.02

2 p.m. A porcupine scurried behind the Energy Center

Near dusk, several osprey are visible on their nest along Hwy 169.

07.17.02

10 p.m. Two porcupines are behind the Marcum House.

5 p.m. A pair of twin fawns scampers across the Long Lake road.

07.15.02

7:45 a.m. A red fox with something in its mouth is trotting along Hwy 232 near Palisade.

8:30 a.m. A Tadpole Camper spots a fawn hiding in the grass along the Co. Rd. 5.

Heidi finds a painted turtle in the walkway near the Marcum House.

7:30 p.m. We hear the loon calling, but cannot see it.

07.14.02

6:45 p.m. Doe and fawn at the Orienteering Course.

07.12.02

The first monarch butterflies begin emerging in the Lab.

07.11.02

Frittillary butterflies are zooming around the butterfly garden. A white admiral butterfly is hanging out in the bushes outside the office.

6:45 pm: A mama skunk has two or three babies rolling and bouncing around behind her like pool balls, near the Airport Road outside Aitkin. Aren't they cute?

07.10.02

Gosh, just what we need: more rain! 0.38" overnight and all morning.

Tent caterpillar moths emerge in mass numbers, and cover the sides of buildings, here and elsewhere.

In just 90 minutes, we got 0.20" rain; 1.20" so far at 5 p.m.

07.09.02

"April showers bring May flowers," and. . . July monsoonal downpours bring. . . billions and billions of mosquitoes!!

Spotted on the road between Aitkin and Palisade: a very large house moving very slowly.

Mosquitoes are out in force, freshly hatched after the generous shot of moisture from all the rain. How many can you swat in a day?

Lots of butterflies are flitting around the butterfly garden, and the Energy Center is covered in moths.

Large buck in field; its rack is covered in velvet.

Three red fox cross a field near Co. Rd. 5.

The Mississippi River in Palisade is up 7 or 8 feet with just one day's rain (7/7/02).

5:45 am: A mother skunk crosses Hwy. 3 with three little ones at her side. We'll leave her alone.

07.08.02

"Rainy Days and Mondays. . ." Cloudy, wet, and very humid. We're waiting for the cold front.

07.07.02

The season's first summer campers show up on a rainy day. All afternoon it's cloudy with sprinkles. All evening it thunderstorms, with much drama of crashing and flashing, including torrential rainfalls.

Total precipitation accumulation at LLCC? 4.75 inches! Brainerd is left sopping wet under 5.25".

07.06.02

8:30 pm: Thunderstorm rolls in, bringing the first rain in two weeks. 1.48" total at LLCC.

07.02.02

Every a.m. the summer staff wakes up to see a doe near the North Star Lodge.

After 4 days of heat and humidity, we get a real Minnesota mid-summer day. Clear sky, cool temperatures, and low dew point.

06.30.02

A beaver is swimming around at 8:30 pm.

On Old River Road, a young buck with 6" antlers in velvet.

LLCC's CLS summer staffers report for duty.

06.28.02

Seventeen deer within 30 miles; 8 babies.

5:40 pm: On Long Lake, a baby fawn is wandering alone. No doe in sight.

06.27.02

Mallard drake turns up leading 10 babies.

A mid-sized, non-bullhead was caught in Long Lake by the Hmong group.

06.26.02

PM: Mother raccoon with eight babies came to the bird feeder.

06.24.02

Deer flies are absolutely, indisputably out!

Early morning storms dump 0.93 inches into LLCC's rain gauge. The mosquitoes are really going to become an issue now that we've gotten some moisture!

06.23.02

LLCC receives 1.40 inches of rain during late-night and early-morning storms. Mercifully, Norman and Mahnomen Counties get some, but not an overwhelming amount of rain. Severe storms rake the Duluth-Superior area, leaving wind and hail damage in Duluth suburbs and knocking out Superior's 911 service.

06.22.02

Norman and Mahnomen Counties receive up to 12 + inches rain during an all-day deluge. LLCC gets a paltry 0.15 inches.

06.21.02

Lots of monarch caterpillars have hatched from their eggs and are crawling onto milkweed plants to begin their feeding frenzy.

06.20.02

7:30 am: A large snapping turtle is busy laying eggs along the walkway between the Office and Dining Hall. Do not disturb her!

Yet more rain, as 0.55 inches accumulates. Meanwhile, Norman and Mahnomen Counties are measuring their rainfall totals with a yard-stick. The city of Mahnomen experiences localized flooding from the Wild Rice River.

A mourning cloak butterfly is fluttering along the road near IC house.

Pitcher plants are in full bloom in the bog. Bog laurel is nearing the end of its blooming period, and lady slippers are fading.

06.19.02

After 34 days of drought-like conditions, LLCC receives the first significant rainfall as 0.8 inches fills the rain gauge.

4 pm: A giant green Luna moth is spotted "roosting" at the Energy Center.

5:45 pm: Two painted turtles are laying eggs in the sand near the Energy Center.

06.18.02

11:30 am: Horseflies are out in force near the archery field.

06.17.02

2:30 Found turtle in the Dining Hall.

06.14.02

4:30 pm: Huge snapping turtle on the beach. Lots of smaller turtles (several painted turtles) too. One was observed crawling up to lay eggs.

06.12.02

Blooming in the bog: cotton grass, stemless ladyslipper, false lily-of-the-valley, and laborador tea. Pitcher plant blossoms are up on their stalks, though not open.

There are a few deer flies around.

06.11.02

Dragonflies are thick everywhere you look.

Parts of far northern and western Minnesota received more than eight inches of rain over the weekend. Rosseau swims in the worst flood in the town's history, seven feet above flood stage on the Rosseau River. Meanwhile, fire bans remain in place around the Grand Rapids area because of minimal rainfall over the past month. The Mississippi in Aitkin is several feet lower than its usual levels. (And it's June!)

06.10.02

A tiger swallowtail butterfly is fluttering around campus.

4:15 pm: A loon on Long Lake is swimming quite near a bald eagle, who is perched low to the water. The loon wails occasionally, and then breaks into warning tremolos when the eagle takes off and circles the lake.

06.07.02

A kestrel is perched on a power line several miles south of Palisade.

06.06.02

A healthy crop of dragonflies has emerged.

06.04.02

Grasshoppers are hopping around on campus. . . the frogs in the lab sure enjoyed them! (Eating them, that is.)

06.03.02

A Canada goose is sleeping near the beach.

AM: A pair of geese with three goslings are swimming near the beach.

06.02.02

Bob sees a coyote on County Road 5.

May 2002

05.31.02

PM: While canoeing on Long Lake, Britt and Adam observe 2 otters, 2 loons, and a deer.

Bob spots a goshawk in the dead oak behind the Dining Hall.

05.30.02

A toddler red squirrel follows kids and adults between the dorms.

Monarchs are seen around LLCC campus.

A very vivid indigo bunting is at Pat's.

A pair of trumpeter swans in nesting at Rice Lake Wildlife Refuge.

05.29.02

Nighthawks (22) are seen migrating over the Marcum House around 8 pm.

PM: Monarch butterfly in front of DH.

7:30: Pair of geese with 5 goslings, South Waukenabo Road.

Nearly all trees are leafed out, though leaves are still small and pale.

Yellow violets are blooming.

An oriole flies in front on Anne in Aitkin.

05.28.02

Angelo, Stefano, and Schwampy see a gray wolf! A lucky sighting for the Sardinians on their last drive across Minnesota (between Giese and Finlayson on Hwy 18) just before flying home.

A solitary nighthawk is making a beeline northward at dusk.

A ruby-throated hummingbird is spotted behind the DH.

Cotton grass is in full bloom in the bog.

A single loon greets Lincoln Elementary students with occasional yodeling.

Mosquitoes are hatching in droves every day. They've been terrorizing the bog for several days now and have begun to turn up in the office.

05.27.02

Lilacs are appearing in Aitkin.

3 sets of mallards with babies.

05.26.02

Two turkey vultures are roosting in a tree on Hwy 169.

05.25.02

Wood anemones and wild strawberries are blooming.

05.24.02

An indigo bunting arrives at Pat's bird feeder for the first time ever.

Also, a lactating red squirrel is keeping close company with the sunflower seeds.

A mama ground hog and six youngsters are playing and nursing at the edge of an electrical substation in Aitkin.

05.23.02

An indigo bunting blew in overnight and arrived at Schwampy's bird feeder this morning.

A yellow-headed blackbird is near Chris' pond.

05.22.02

Ant hills are appearing all around the LLCC campus.

Two woodchuck burrows found behind Energy Center.

Yellow-rumped warbler at Sandy Lake Rec. Park.

Mallard with 7 babies: very yellow and fuzzy "new-borns."

Marsh marigold and leather leaf are blooming in the bog.

05.21.02

The night is not so cold: 38° F. Strong NW winds presage a warming pattern.

In Palisade this morning: in the sky and treetops, half a dozen blackbirds harry and hound a crow into giving up his breakfast.

05.20.02

Post-midnight: northern lights make an appearance on a drive from Brainerd.

Bonus round: yet another cold morning--28° and frosty--precedes a clear, cool day.

A turkey vulture slows to circle above Anne's head as she walks to the dining hall. Checking out the prospects for carrion? Nothing to scavenge here--I'm still alive, thank you.

Two great blue herons winged a loop over the water near the swimming beach.

The popples have put out baby leaves, and the woods around the lake are soft and green.

Angelo watches a mole exiting from its tunnel near the North Star Lodge.

A red-tailed hawk flies low in front of Angelo and Schwampy over "prairie."

05.19.02

More of the same: cold frosty nights and records in Grand Marais and International Falls.

Meanwhile, the intervening days are gorgeous! Beautiful, clear, cool, with low humidity and. . . best of all. . . no bugs! (Yet.)

Eleven male gold finches and two male purple finches (the females were thought to be somewhere nearby) visited Carlson's feeder in Palisade. Two rose-breasted grosbeaks stopped in as well.

A red-breasted nuthatch visits Schampy's sunflower feeder.

05.18.02

Another chilly morning: 29°. Grand Marais and International Falls set record lows. More ice in the bird bath.

Schwampy sees several Tennessee warblers and two pairs of orioles.

05.17.02

A male pheasant was displaying in Pat's front yard at 6:30 am.

Brr. . . a chilly Settendei Mai. International Falls sets 27° F as a record low. It was 19° in Embarrass, and 29° at LLCC. Schwampy's birdbath is frozen solid.

Two sand pipers were probing the beach for their supper.

05.16.02

A bobolink was seen on Co. Rd. 5.

A bat was flying around the Energy Center around 9:30 pm.

Great outside campfire with Delano students. . . and no mosquitoes!

05.15.02

Finally!! After 28 days of below-normal temperatures and bizzarra weather, all of Minnesota goes above average. LLCC tops out at 78° F.

So long, Mercury. Two weeks of planet-watching end as Mercury dips below the horizon. Saturn is soon to follow.

Britt plays with a red-bellied snake on the LLCC road.

05.14.02

Britt observes a gold finch at the feeder out her window and a turtle on the lake, as well as a hooded merganser.

A very, very faint, misty green is visible on some of the trees around the lake. We might just get leaves yet.

05.13.02

AM Thundershowers, scattered rainshowers, and strong northwest winds.

9 am: a loon is calling over the lake. . . can't see him though.

9:30 am: Three loons now are on Long Lake, synchronized swimming and diving. Meanwhile a great blue heron passes over, and a couple Canada geese graze on the north shore of Long Lake.

9:45 am: Pam sees a hummingbird outside the office window.

A neighbor in Palisade reports hearing orioles.

Barb heard an ovenbird singing while doing CCC.

5 pm: a pair of turkey vultures drifted low on shifting winds over campus.

05.12.02

Rainy weekend produces 0.70" in rain gauge.

05.10.02

Barred owl female at Chris' feeder.

05.09.02

Stong, gusty north-west winds make canoeing an adventure for St. Joe's 7th graders!
Snow showers today! 1.12" rain/snow/hail/gloom etc. etc. etc. has fallen in the last 48 hours.
AM: swallows are swarming the lake grabbing insects off the surface.
Rose-breasted grosbeak at Pat's feeder.
A black and white warbler was in the woods behind the Marcum House.
At Chris' feeder (N. edge of Aitkin County): white-throated sparrow (f), purple finch (f), chipping sparrow (f), and gold crowned kinglet (f).
Two male rose-breasted grosbeaks were at Pam's feeder in Palisade.

05.08.02

Mama black bear and two little teddies crossed Hwy. 169, mile marker 178.
Rose-breasted grosbeak at Schwampy's.
Gold finch at bird feeder in northern Aitkin County (3:50 pm).
Laura and students see a woodchuck on the archery field.
9:45 pm: A snow shower hits LLCC.

05.06.02

Myrtle warblers are bobbing up and down in the air over the beach, nabbing lunch off the surface of the lake.

05.05.02

"Weather's changin'. . . ." Clouds gather, producing thunder and pea-sized hail.
Wildlife watch on Long Lake: hooded mergansers, 2 pair (M/F); ring-billed ducks, 2 pair; 2 Canada geese; and one woodchuck nattering on the shore.
A red-breasted nuthatch was at Pat's feeder (for the first time).
Heard a grouse drumming in the woods southwest of Aitkin.

05.04.02

Early morning rains leave 0.33" in the rain gauge.
Clear evening skies give Stitchery Retreaters a chance to "ooh" and "aah," over the five visible planets and other celestial bodies.

05.03.02

Spring returns. . . for keeps? 60°s in Minneapolis-St. Paul; 59° at LLCC.

05.02.02

Frog eggs, collected 4/25, are releasing tadpoles.
Sand Creek students awaken to see a porcupine feeding outside the Marcum House.
Hepaticas are blooming in LLCC's woods; violets are beginning to show in places, and Schwampy reports seeing trillia south of Aitkin.
All this while the weather remains chilly and snow flurries threaten all afternoon?

05.01.02

A life-and-death struggle takes place between a crow and a red-tailed hawk in the skies over I-694 in Brooklyn Center.
Yellow-rumped warblers are out at Rice Lake Wildlife Refuge.
Owl pellets are spotted in the LLCC bog. Wasps also show themselves.

April 2002

04.30.02

Angelo sees an eagle on the lake.
A huge woodchuck greets Britt from the orienteering field.

04.29.02

Spruce and pine trees are just beginning to "candle" (show signs of spring growth).

Rain overnight of 0.18"

White-throated sparrows are singing up a storm.

Red-winged blackbirds are dive-bombing crows.

04.28.02

Another snowstorm! LLCC gets 2" of snow, totalling 0.2" of precipitation. More snow falls farther south and east; Rhinelander, Wisconsin, gets 20"!!

The interns find a new and active beaver lodge on the southwest end of Long Lake.

04.26.02

Another frosty morning--ditches, vernal ponds, and bird bath are all frozen.

Laura and Stef see a great blue heron on the lake.

02.25.02. . . Oh, wait! 04.25.02

No, really, it's April. It's cold again. Interns don't understand it.

04.25.02

Schwampy's yard is crawling with song sparrows, white-throated sparrows (singing) and juncos.

AM: A light dusting of snow sticks in the grass and on gravel. Flurries stay in the air all morning.

(We native Minnesotans are victim to sarcastic remarks about "springtime" from those from warmer climes.)

On Long Lake this morning: 3 pairs ring-necked ducks, 3 pairs blue-winged teal, a single mallard drake, one pair of Canada geese, and a pair of wood ducks.

Ditch water along Hwy 210 is frozen. The spring pond across the road from the parking lot is half iced over; a mallard is floating in the other half.

04.24.02

Say, what's that white stuff flying out of the sky? Why it's (gasp!). . . snow!

Two wood ducks (M/F) and three blue-winged teals (2 M/ 1F) swimming in a convoy on Long Lake.

04.23.02

A single loon is paddling and diving on Long Lake.

Garter snakes are spied during Wilderness Meal.

2:45 pm: Painted turtle on Hwy 169.

New arrivals: American gold finches are scarfing down thistle at Schwampy's feeders.

Pussy toes are starting to show.

04.22.02

Field Middle School (West House) celebrates Earth Day by being the first school to canoe on Long Lake.

Many deer are seen along the road on the way to Long Lake.

A small, immature eagle is on Waukenabo.

04.21.02

Heat wave to snowflakes in 7 days. . . southern Minnesota gets snowstorms; LLCC, flurries.

8 am: A blue bird is fraternizing with sparrows near the LLCC parking lot.

04.20.02

A birder visiting with the stamping group woke up early to take note of the natives. This is her list of birds seen and/or heard, between 5:45 am and 6:55 am:

saw-whet owl, Swainson's thrush, junco, purple finch, blue jay, fox sparrow, yellow-bellied sap sucker, yellow-rumped warbler, song sparrow, crossbill sparrow, robin, evening

grosbeak, bluebird, tree swallow, red-winged black bird, crow, raven, flicker, kinglet sparrow, pileated woodpecker, downy woodpecker, rusty blackbird, brown-headed cowbird, black-capped chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, mallard, hooded merganser, and ring-necked duck.

At noon, between Aitkin and LLCC, Anne sees two red-tailed hawks, a turkey vulture, and a great blue heron, as well as a clamboring flock of sea gulls on the flats.

Angelo spies a wood chuck in the clearing before the Orienteering Field.

8:30 pm: The stampers witness the woodcock mating display at dusk.

04.19.02

Not so fast, frost-free lips! Overnight temperatures of 26° F freeze water in the bird bath.

On Long Lake: ring-necked ducks, two pair; hooded mergansers, one pair; Canada geese, three or four pair.

Pretty decent display of Aurora borealis (Northern lights) all night.

04.18.02

It was a bumpy night: storms soak LLCC with 0.27" of rain. The perfect conclusion to the perfect burn.

A sure sign that frost is coming out of the ground: worms are showing up on the wet walkways.

A tadpole pulled from Long Lake is undergoing its metamorphosis.

A white-throated sparrow is foraging for food at Schwampy's.

04.17.02

Two loons on the little pond on Hwy 210, by Barb Schmidt's house.

Huge bald eagle on Lake Waukenabo.

LLCC's rain gauge collects a mere 0.13" rain. Much more falls in St. Cloud and points south and west.

The maple outside the School House is in full flower.

King fisher on the power lines on 169 between Aitkin and Hassman.

2:30 pm: A bluebird is flitting around outside the office window.

Three trumpeter swans on Blind Lake, Aitkin County.

"Saw a field, burned it." Palisade Fire Department helps Schwampy, Angelo, Laura and Mollie do a perfect burn.

04.16.02

Swallows flying over Bohl's field (adjacent to LLCC).

Meadowlarks east of Aitkin (seen by Britt and Schwampy).

Pussy willows are blooming and quaking aspen catkins are distending.

Chorus frogs are singing outside the North Star Lodge.

More heat (88° at LLCC), record highs (Fargo and International Falls), and strong winds. All this leads to. . . what else? Severe storms! Major winds, lightning, and hail (but no tornadoes).

It's official! Long Lake is open and the ice is almost gone. Kevin wins bragging rights. (Sorry, Rene!)

Three mourning doves are in Schwampy's yard at day-break, grazing on the ground.

11:30 am. A northern flicker announces its arrival to Schwampy and Stefano.

10:30 am. Pam sees the kingfisher above the beach again.

04.15.02

A loon on Blind Lake, Aitkin County.

Keith finds baby squirrels, with eyes still closed, in a nest in the archery shed.

Yahoo! Let the canoeing season begin! Rene and Mollie paddle out on Long Lake and break up the ice.

One dragonfly was cruising the beach area, and another great big dragonfly was hovering over Co. Rd. 88 just outside the Long Lake gate.

A hooded merganser and two Canada geese in open water along shore of Long Lake. Grackles are spotted in Schwampy's yard, and brown-headed cowbirds in the oak tree by the office.

PM: The day swings from 43° F in the morning to 84° in the afternoon. Forty-one degrees difference, and lake ice retreats. In southern Minnesota, all kinds of records are set for high temperatures: 91° F in Minneapolis.

PM: By 5:30 pm huge cracks have grown in the lake ice. LLCC's version of plate tectonics! Pickerel Lake is entirely open water on the west side of Aitkin. Other lakes on the way to Brainerd are open as well. (Less than two weeks ago we saw an ice-fisherman sitting in the middle of Pickerel.)

The yellow-bellied sap sucker is rat-tat-tatting in the woods.

The ice on Long Lake looks black in the sun, except the sparkles of the crystalline surface. Open water at the edge is still a fairly narrow strip.

The sun is out and sky is clear. . . record highs are predicted for some areas in Minnesota as temperatures approach 80° F.

A king fisher is dodging between the trees over the swimming beach.

6 pm: Anne sees two magpies near the curve just northeast of Aitkin.

04.14.02

As dawn breaks, the air is filled with bird calls, songs, and twitters. True signs that spring has sprung!

The day has a drippy start: it's downright raining. 0.12" in gauge. The sun breaks out of the clouds at 9 am, however, with signs that it could be a warm one!

Common (Wilson's) snipe flying at Bohl's field (same field as woodcock).

Song sparrows trilling in clearings.

Angelo sees a turkey vulture circling above the Dining Hall, and a pair of mallards over the North Star Lodge, and, on the hike, stumbled upon a raccoon.

3:45 pm: 18 trumpeter swans at Rice Lake, Cass County.

Wood ducks seen and heard near intersection of Co. Rd. 5 and 88.

Chorus frogs and spring peepers are tuning up and ing their songs.

Barred owl is still "who-o-o-o-ing".

A thrush is seen at Pat's.

A great blue heron is spotted near Aitkin. Also, wood ducks.

04.13.02

Tundra swans fly over Schwampy's house at daybreak.

AM: A bluebird is spotted 2 miles north of Garrison on Hwy 169.

Phoebe arrived overnight.

Spring peeper frogs are warming themselves on the asphalt.

Woodcock "peenting" on Bohl's field adjacent to LLCC.

Drippy end to a beautiful day: high today was 70°.

PM: Frogs are singing at Pat's house!

A barred owl is calling in the woods on the south end of Long Lake.

BJ reports that ice fishermen are still out on Waukenabo.

04.12.02

Even the weather has decided that spring is here? Sunny and 66° F.

04.11.02

"Julia, Julia." Robins are staking out nesting territory.

04.10.02

Down in a blaze of glory! A truck attempting to drive on Waukenabo Lake fell in near the edge.
Go figure.

Pam and Britt see a fisher on LLCC beach.

Holy cloud-burst, Batman! All-day rain (1.10") leaves LLCC a little soggy.

Dusky-eyed junco trying to feed on the rain-drenched ground.

Mourning dove in Pat's yard.

Both ospreys are on the Townline Road nest in the AM.

Red-winged blackbirds are back!

04.09.02

Flock of robins seen during wilderness meal.

04.08.02

Birds seen and heard at Pat's: V's of whistling swans, 5 vultures, a killdeer, and a red-tailed hawk.

9:30 am: Four deer cross the ice on the east end of Long Lake.

Gray squirrels are going crazy on campus this morning. . . at least eight were visible at one time, rushing around the office.

3 pm: Four trumpeter swans in Hill River, northern Aitkin County.

Coyote scat is seen by students in LLCC bog.

04.07.02

Laura and friends hear coyotes to the south of the lake.

Spring has come to the bog, with moths and cotton grass in abundance.

A male pheasant flies up in front of Britt and Adam on LLCC road.

Purple finches in Palisade and at LLCC feeder.

Male and female cardinals at Carlson's house in Palisade.

Mourning doves are cooing in St. Cloud.

04.05.02

A caterpillar is going for a walk on the north driveway of the Marcum House circle. (1 inch, yellow with a black stripe.)

7:15 am: A bald eagle was perched delicately in a tree just south of Hwy 210.

Snowflakes in the morning, sunshine in the afternoon.

04.04.02

5:45 am: A coyote is hunting in a field along Hwy 5.

9:30 am: Angelo sees a chipmunk near the Dining Hall.

A red fox is seen across from Fleming Lake in hay field.

A drive from LLCC to Ada (Norman County), MN, yielded sightings of several red-tailed hawks, a bald eagle, and two kestrels (or the same one twice).

04.03.02

More intermittent snow showers. BJ says "Enough, already!"

11 am: Angelo sees 2 chipmunks near the Great Hall.

04.02.02

Die-hard ice-anglers are still driving on Fleming Lake. Yee-haw!

More "April Foolery" as LLCC awakens to 2" of sloppy white stuff (0.19" precipitation). Snow squalls persist throughout the day.

Schwampy and the interns see kestrels (3), harriers (2), and a bald eagle, on the way back from Minneapolis-St. Paul.

A robin in Aitkin fluffs up his feathers against the cold as he looks down at the blowing snow.

Sorry he came north so soon?

04.01.02

A wood duck is seen flying along a road in northern Aitkin County. No April Fools!

The three to six inches of snow predicted for Aitkin County today did not materialize. April Fools!

But Mother Nature did drop a spring snowstorm on east-central Minnesota and northern Iowa (just 70 mile swath) with up to 7" snow. The mess caused lots and lots of "fender-benders" (250+) and at least 3 fatalities.

LLCC, on the other hand, doesn't receive any snow until evening.

Three Canada geese fly noisily over Long Lake looking for open water--sorry, Charlie!

March 2002

03.31.02

Happy Easter! Bright blue skies but really chilly northwest wind. High of 38° F.

03.30.02

A great blue heron appears in Pat's pasture.

03.28.02

Robins in Pat's yard. . . yeah, spring!

03.27.02

Pat and Laura spot another chipmunk.

Warm weather brings houseflies to life on south-facing surfaces.

Two kestrels and two female northern harriers are seen along back roads just east of Aitkin.

03.26.02

At the Carlson's house in Palisade, robins put in one of their first appearances in the neighborhood. They are squabbling over territory.

It's a nice spring day. . . 38 ° F at 2 pm, and the snow's melting away.

03.25.02

Cold night last night! The radio reports -2 ° F in Brainerd. Most of the past few nights have been similar.

03.24.02

5:35 am: Red fox crossing a field along Hwy 169.

03.22.02

A pileated woodpecker turns up at Chris' feeder.

03.21.02

Mollie's Lake Hike group spots a chipmunk near the office.

03.20.02

Two bald eagles on Hwy 169, mile marker 178.

Two red fox visit Chris' bird feeder, 6:45 pm.

03.19.02

Male and female cardinals visit feeder at Pam's house in Palisade.

The sun is high enough in the sky to melt snow off the shingles early in the day.

03.18.02

8:30 am: Keith sees a pair of wolves tracking half dozen white-tails near the LLCC gate. Pat checks out their tracks, but doesn't find a kill.

A monarch (?) butterfly is fluttering around LLCC's campus.

A black squirrel is spied outside the Dining Hall.

1 pm: Flies (one or two) are buzzing around heads outside the Dining Hall.

5 pm: A grouse crosses Laura's path near the Orienteering Field.

5:15 pm: A grouse (we can only assume the same one) crosses Angelo's path near the Orienteering Field.

03.17.02

5 pm: Very big bald eagle above LLCC.

11:45 pm: Barred owl heard outside the intern apartment.

03.15.02

Two bald eagles on Hwy 169, northern Aitkin County.

03.14.02

8:30 am: Near the office, two chipmunks were out and about.

03.12.02

A myrtle warbler is reported near Osage (Park Rapids area) on KAXE's phenology program.

03.11.02

Strange tracks through deep snow at LLCC leave staff puzzled. We are guessing a porcupine left the trail, though other possibilities are otter and beaver. (Methinks it was a gnome pulling a sled.)

Pat and Schwampy spot a shrike along Co. Rd. 5, just north of the corner (near Fleming Church).

03.10.02

A porcupine is spotted on the red trail.

BJ sees a large bald eagle at her house (near Waukenabo Lake)

A 3-day snowstorm dumps 9.5 inches total of lovely snow on LLCC. Totals range from around 5" in the Twin Cities to 23" on the South Shore of Lake Superior (northwestern Wisconsin). Let the snowshoeing commence! (The end is already in sight, however, with melting temperatures predicted by the middle of the week.)

Anne sees a pair of swans, a little southwest of Aitkin, flying northwest.

03.07.02

1 pm: During Wilderness Meal, we saw a shrew.

Winter came today! Around 5" of snow fell, with more in the forecast for tomorrow.

A bald eagle was spotted along Hwy 210/169 east of Aitkin.

Coyotes answered the kids' howls during Thursday night Alpha Wolf.

03.06.02

A bald eagle is soaring over the lake at LLCC.

A flying squirrel puts in an appearance at the Carlson's birdfeeder.

03.04.02

10 am: Interns spot an ermine from the apartment window.

All weekend has seemed to be a period of high activity for porcupines; a number of them have been spotted around LLCC.

03.01.02

12:45-1:15 pm: 5 mature, one juvenile bald eagles at Hwy 3, 5, and 169.

Brrr! March comes in like an iceberg. -8° F at LLCC, -11° F in Aitkin (-17° says one radio station).

By midday, despite the cold, the strength of the sun melts snow off roofs.

February 2002

02.28.02

Pileated woodpecker spotted near the lake.

2:35 pm: Two bald eagles are playing in mid-air, in northern Aitkin County.

02.27.02

11 am: A bald eagle was flying over the highway as the school pulled in.

Laura and students observe a porcupine feeding close up.

Canada takes the gold and leaves the cold! Lows range from -3° F at LLCC to -19° F in Cook.

02.26.02

Another dusting of snow fell overnight, but now the wind has picked up and the sky is clearing.

It's cold! We had to wait this long for winter to happen?

Noon: a red fox is seen trotting across roads and fields just outside Aitkin.

Sundogs are seen in the afternoon, and moondogs at 11 pm.

02.25.02

Mink tracks are spotted on Long Lake.

02.24.02

Snowstorm streaks through Minnesota. Big potential, (typically) wimpy result. Little Falls gets 9", St. Cloud 7". The big winner is Askov, with 17". LLCC? 3.5"

On the way from Morris to Sauk Center, Schwampy and Carolyn observe hundreds of horned larks. Let the northward migration begin!

Laura and Mollie find new growth of leather leaf in the bog. (Is this due to the recent warm temperatures?)

Around 4 inches of snow falls in Aitkin County. (Little Falls has 9", some areas southwest of MSP get up to 17.)

02.21.02

7:30 pm: During Alpha Wolf, howling was replied to by a wolf or a coyote (?).

02.19.02

2:45 pm: Barred owl at Chris' birdfeeder, northern Aitkin County.

10 pm: Stefano, Angelo, and Mollie see northern lights from LLCC.

We wake up to rain, which changed to slushy snow by 7:00 or 7:30 am. Accumulation of an inch or two of wet snow covers the ground.

02.18.02

Grand Rapids set a record high of 45° F that broke the old record of 41° from 1954.

Minneapolis set an all-time high for an overnight low (how's that for complicated?) of 36° F.

Bob and Angelo discovered while walking in the Bog that they were surrounded by flying moths.

1:30 pm: While walking around the lake, we saw a grouse.

02.14.02

A bald eagle flies over Long Lake at 12:15 pm.

4:30 pm: Kids observe a vole during Oh Deer!

02.13.02

A snowshoe hare darts across Hwy 210 in front of Britt. She missed it!

02.12.02

Another dusting of snow, followed by a cold front. Star-gazing should be excellent tonight (and - 0° temps in the predawn hours).

Becky and Mollie's Alpha Wolf group hears coyotes yowling and yipping--before the kids even started howling. (Sounded like a real party!)

02.11.02

Major wind. . . Northwestern Minnesota (Red River Valley) records 74 mph. That's one mph shy of a hurricane!

02.10.02

A ruffed grouse flies across the orienteering field clearing.

The sounds of pileated woodpeckers drilling are heard regularly around campus, and the porcupines have been obliging enough to stay in their den for up to four groups of visitors each day to walk by and admire them.

02.09.02

Here it comes. . . there it goes! After days of forecasting a major winter snow storm, it veers south, and LLCC gets. . . a dusting! Bah!

02.08.02

St. Cloud shatters a 109-year old record (44° F) with a high of 46°.

Can spring be far behind? A motorcycle is riding around Aitkin.

02.07.02

2 pm: Kids watched a bald eagle fly above their basketball game.

02.06.02

5:25 am: Timber wolf crosses paths with Hwy 169/210

5:30 am: Snowshoe hare crosses CR 5.

afternoon: A bald eagle is circling Long Lake, diving for prey.

The temperature at LLCC hits 49° F!

7 starlings are fighting over a suet feeder on campus.

Pat spots a dead muskrat along 210 east of Hwy 169.

02.05.02

6 am: A great horned owl is calling 4 miles north of Aitkin.

02.04.02

6:30 am: A bloated, engorged woodtick found on dog in Golden Valley, in the TC Metro area. (It may not be pretty, but it's phenologically significant.)

02.02.02

4:30 pm: A good-sized muskrat scurries along Hwy 169.

02.01.02

5:30 pm: A female snowy owl is perched on a telephone pole 4 miles north of Aitkin.

January 2002

01.29.02

LLCC gets a dusting of snow overnight. Lots of fresh tracks are out in the woods this morning (rabbits, deer, squirrels, mice). There's enough snow now to ski on the lake again.

LLCC's resident porcupine has been spotted with a mate.

Bird count from Monday and Tuesday at Lake Maria State Park (between St. Cloud and Mpls): lots of black-capped chickadees and white-breasted nuthatches, a downy woodpecker, a female red-bellied wood pecker, two female goldfinches, a bald eagle, a barred owl (tentatively), and a small flock of tundra swans. And in St. Cloud, a back-yard sighting of what was probably a sharp-shinned hawk.

01.27.02

"Slip-sliding away. . ." As arctic cold air advances, temperatures decline. LLCC's high "only" 34°.

01.26.02

High temperature records fall in the region. Sioux Falls, SD, hits 71° F.

LLCC reaches 42°.

Motorcycles are spotted in St. Cloud (by Anne, who is on a bike ride.)

01.25.02

5:30 am: lots of deer this morning at Hwy 169, 5 and 3, (35 miles). 13 deer total.

6 am: A skunk ambled across Pat's driveway.

Noonish: 2 pine grosbeaks at Schwampy's feeder (good).

Noonish: 2 starlings at Schwampy's feeder (bad).

PM: Who let the (hot) dogs out? Who, who (etc)? 51°!!

01.24.02AM:

Laura and students get a good look at an ermine on the Lake Hike.

AM: Pretty frosty morning--however, it looks like things will warm up by this weekend.

2:45 pm: A bald eagle is standing guard in a pine tree on Hwy 169, mile marker 272.

01.23.02

8:30 am: A magpie flashes its black and white markings and long tail, near the flats along Hwy 210/169

01.22.02

9:30 am: Two white-tailed deer cross the east end of Long Lake.

AM: Squirrels seem to be delighted with the warm weather and sunshine; up to a dozen are playing together, visible from the office window.

5:45 pm: Barred owl on a telephone along Hwy 210/169 NE of Aitkin.

01.21.02

Red-tailed hawk along Hwy 210 (at Turner's curve).

Barred owls are calling in the moonlight.

01.20.02

A gathering of about 8 blue jays is taking place at the SE corner of the School House.

01.18.02

Brainerd Jaycees fishing contest postponed until February 2. . . the ice is not safe for the January 19 date.

Above-zero record ends with -2° F at about 5 am.

01.17.02

4:30 am: Temperatures drop. It's 8° F on the northern Aitkin County border.

6 am: Barb races a deer on the road by the Orienteering Field.

8 am: Two foxes run across CoRd 5.

10:30 am: A grouse flies past the staff room window during early lunch break.

Yesterday's record plus one. No sub-zero temps yet.

01.16.02

MSP sets a record for the number of days above zero Fahrenheit. The last sub-zero day was 1 March 2001.

01.15.02

10 am: Mollie's AM Thicket groups spots a porcupine up in a white pine, just off the Alpha Wolf trail.

AM: So, how much snow did we receive in the last snowstorm? A dusting. Bah!

01.14.02

4:30 pm: Two ruffed grouse are wandering outside the IC house.

More meteorological indignity: an Alberta (Saskatchewan?) Clipper is forecasted to deliver 2" to 4" of snow to central and northern MN, but it swings a little south. Morris and Madison (west central MN) get 7", MSP gets 4". LLCC gets zip, zilch, nada. Not a flake!

01.11.02

Clear early, with some clouds by mid-day. 37° is above average, but not a record-breaker.

01.10.02

Downy woodpeckers are tapping out territorial messages (rapid rat-tat-tat-tat-tat. . .)

01.09.02

More temperature high records broken in MSP (49°F), Duluth (42°), Eau Claire (48°) and LaCrosse (53°). At LLCC, 48° is all we get.

Another frosty morning. Waning crescent moon lingers in Scorpio.

Spring has sprung! Another day in the forties. At least one person is happy about it.

2-3 fox visit Chris' bird feeder nightly, going on five weeks now. (Northern Aitkin County.)

01.08.02

Hoar frost coats walkways and road surfaces in the morning. As for the day, how warm can it get? LLCC's thermometer topped out at 47°. The snow is limp and soggy. Does anyone else find this unnerving? Records fall in International Falls (43°) and St. James (53°).

A bald eagle was spotted again at the same location along 210/169 east of Aitkin.

"Fee-bee" Chickadees are singing their spring song.

AM. Two deer on are on the north end of Long Lake, on the White Trail.

Big eagle in a pine tree along Hwy 169, 2:30 p.m.

01.07.02

A bald eagle was soaring across Hwy 210/169.

On the Night Trek, Rene and a group of students saw a shooting star.

01.05.02

30°. Ee gads! A little light snow of the Mary Tyler Moore variety.

A grouse was spotted in the maples behind the Dining Hall.

01.04.02

28°. . . anybody know where winter is?

01.03.02

Pam spots a snowy owl cruising south over Co. Rd. 5.

A grouse pretends to be invisible behind the recycling bins.

Three magpies on Hwy 169 feeding on roadkill in the afternoon.

01.02.02

Students go cross country skiing on the lake with about 4 inches of snow--first XC-ski class of the 2001-2002 school year.

10 a.m. An ermine, in its white coat, scurries along the lake in front of the office. Now that there's snow on the ground, he is successfully camouflaged.

01.01.02

Mollie sees six red-tailed hawks on her drive back to LLCC.

A red-bellied wood pecker joins pine and evening grosbeaks at Carlson's feeder in Palisade.