

2003 LLCC Phenology:

01.03.03

A shrike is on a power line along Hwy 210, just west of Co. Rd. 5.

1.07.03

5:40 a.m. Warm weather brings out a fox, two raccoons, and a weasel this morning on Co. Rd. 5.

Records fall around the region as a heat wave invades Minnesota. A warm, sunny, (unusual) day reaches 42° Fahrenheit by 10:30 a.m., and reaches 50° by the afternoon.

6:00 p.m. A moth is spotted near the North Star Lodge!

1.08.03

1:30 p.m. It's 53° (!!) early in the afternoon. A thoroughly confused moth is flying around outside the dining hall. What can we say?

01.09.03

After two days of record warmth, we wake up to snow on the ground but just a light dusting.

01.10.03

And now winter begins. . . a low of 2° with pretty cold conditions forecasted for the next several days.

01.13.03

3:45 p.m. Two otters playing in the Hill River (in northern Aitkin County.)

-9° F Overnight. Pretty chilly. . . Alberta clipper sails southeast along a dome of high pressure cold air mass, completely missing LLCC (Grrr. . .!)

4:25 p.m. Sharp-tailed grouse visit Chris' feeder.

01.15.03

The ides of March. . . um, January. Feels like March. High of 20°.

01.18.03

The ratta-tat-tat of a pileated woodpecker is heard early in the morning.

01.21.03

Mature eagle flying over Co. Rd. 5 at 8 a.m.

Overnight, it's -11° F at LLCC. Tower and Brimson hit -30°.

01.22.03

This weather qualifies as bone-chilling! We wake up to -14° this morning.

Cold? What cold? Chickadees singing "Cheeseburger" song.

01.23.03

Another morning in the deep cold: -18° F and -30° C in Hill City at 5:10 a.m., 35 miles north of LLCC.

01.27.03

3 pm: More than 30 cedar waxwings at Chris' house, 38 miles north of LLCC.

01.28.03

4:40 pm: Four sharptail grouse at Chris' feeder.

A raven in a tree near Co.Rd. 5 and Hwy 210.

01.30.03

Slight freezing rain, a dusting of snow, and hoar frost. The trees look beautiful sparkling in the moonlight.

01.31.03

Squirrels galore! The treetops are like a three-ring circus.

More "frizzle" . . . meanwhile, weather folks are watching a developing snowstorm. Balmy-- temperatures hover around freezing all day long.

February 2003

02.01.03

7:30 am: A pileated woodpecker is drilling for breakfast.

Abundant deer tracks on the footpaths early this morning, in the teeny-tiny little few flakes of snow that fell over night. Still not enough snow for cross-country skiing, even on the lake.

Distinctive tracks reveal that a muskrat has been wandering around campus (it drops its tail.)

02.02.03

Ground hog sees its shadow. . . six more weeks (months?) of winter?

Remember that snowstorm? It dropped 4 inches to 12 inches in a swath across central Minnesota. LLCC? Only one inch.

Then it cuts across northern Wisconsin and dumps up to 2 feet of snow in the snow belt. Grrr. . .

02.10.03

3 bald eagles spotted within two miles, north of Co. Rd. 3 on Hwy 169 at 2:45 p.m.

02.11.03

Two red foxes cross Hwy 169 at 5:40 a.m.

Light snow.

02.19.03

Three raccoons in Chris' yard by the birdfeeder, northern Aitkin County, 6:20 p.m.

02.20.03

Clear, calm, and chilly (21° F) with lots of hoar frost. Temperature soars to 49° by early afternoon!

02.21.03

Here comes the other shoe! Alberta Clipper delivers just a little—about 0.75 inches—of snow.

02.22.03

G.W.'s birthday. Calm, clear, and cool. -5° for the low and 24° for the high.

02.24.03

Cold morning (-9°). Cold and windy day, but the sun is shining.

02.25.03

What global warming? -14° at LLCC; -35° at Brimson, Tower, and Embarrass, Minnesota. Meanwhile, some places get at least a foot of snow, like Tulsa, Oklahoma. Jerusalem, Israel; Amman, Jordan; and Beirut, Lebanon all got more than three feet of snow!

Here in MN, red fox, skunk, fisher, and wolf tracks found around the LLCC campus.

02.26.03

Stop the presses, we did not go below zero (2° F).

02.27.03

Coyote crosses Hwy 210 just south of LLCC around 9 p.m.

02.28.03

Lots of purple finches this morning at the LLCC feeder.

March 2003

03.01.03

Another cold (& dry) front plows across Minnesota.

03.02.03

Eagle sitting in a tree four miles north of Aitkin.

-16° overnight at LLCC. International Falls hits -30° and does not break 0°!

03.04.03

7 a.m. A coyote is trotting along Co. Rd. 5

3:10 p.m. Three large bald eagles are seen along Hwy 169.

6:30 p.m. A great horned owl is roosting in a tree along Hwy 210.

03.05.03

5:45 a.m. A red fox is on Co. Rd. 3 near Palisade.

Cold, cold early March morning: -22° in Palisade. -39° in Tower just misses the all-time record of -40°!)

03.06.03

Eric and Ray from Bertha-Hewitt Elementary see a porcupine in a tree, 200 yards east of the tower and about 8 feet from the road.

9:45 a.m. A timberwolf is seen crossing Hwy 210.

03.10.03

11:45 a.m. A horned lark is seen near Co. Rd. 1 north of Aitkin.

03.11.03

5:40 a.m. Five deer are enjoying the lovely morning along Co. Rd. 88.

03.12.03

A shrike on the powerline on Hwy 210, a few miles from Co. Rd. 5.

2:45 p.m. A rough-legged hawk perches on a telephone pole along Hwy 169.

6:40 p.m. A great horned owl in pine trees north of the northern Aitkin County line.

03.13.03

It's official--you were cold for a reason! Of the 173 days since the beginning of autumn, 114 of them (66%) had below normal temperatures.

7:00 a.m. A red fox with two babies is seen on South Waukenabo Lake Road.

03.14.03

From a low of 3° yesterday, temperatures soar to 60° at noon today.

03.15.03

A chipmunk was seen staggering around Bob's yard. (Wake up and smell the mud pies!)

Ides of March. . . temperatures up to 62° at 2 p.m. Tops out at 67°, which is a record high!

Records fall at International Falls & Duluth as gulf air and humidity invade from the south.

Joe Deden at Eagle Bluff ELC in Lanesboro (southern Minnesota) reports sighting robins, bluebirds, and redwing blackbirds. They're late!

03.16.03

St. Urho's Day sees more warmth and falling records—LLCC is 65°

Snow, snow, snow!! Winter finally came, but, uhm, it's a little late? Four inches has fallen, west of Palisade at 10 p.m.

Three baby squirrels in the nest next to the Energy Center give into "lemming envy" and jump thirty feet to the ground--all survive.

03.29.03

Roxy and Katie see a heron, Hwy 169 near Mille Lacs Lake.

03.31.03

The first robin at LLCC is here—calling in the evening.

April 2003

04.01.03

A sharp-shinned hawk is preying on juncos at Sally's, north of Aitkin.

04.03.03

7:45 a.m. An osprey sitting along Co. Rd. 5 enjoying a road-side breakfast.

"It's not nice to fool (with) Mother Nature!" Major storm whips up and broadsides the Dakotas, Minnesota, and northwest half of Wisconsin. ENE winds are clocked at 60 mph in Duluth and near 45 mph at LLCC. Sleet, ice balls, and freezing rain combine with lots of snow, including 5 inches at LLCC. (0.27" moisture.) In Duluth, a 1000 foot ore boat ties up the aerial lift bridge for 75 minutes as it tries to bash its way through the wind-blown ice. No luck—it is ice-bound in harbor for three days.

04.04.03

Another inch of snow overnight. LLCC's total is five inches, and the temperature is down to 13°.

04.05.03

Even though temperatures barely clear 39°, high sun angle melts most of the snow.

04.06.03

Pat hears a flicker and sees a horned lark.

It is coolish and clear again: low 16°, and the sun melts the rest of the snow.

04.07.03

Chilly and clear overnight—sunny and mild with highs of 45° at LLCC. Meanwhile, the southern 1/3 Minnesota and the northern 1/3 of Iowa (from Des Moines to Mankato) get clobbered with a major snowfall. At Albert Lea, MN, snow is 15 inches deep.

"Pair day" on Hill River: trumpeter swans = 2 pair; mallards = 1 pair; buffleheads = 1 pair; Canada geese = 2 pair.

The ice is off the Mississippi River at Palisade.

04.08.03

Bill Berg, "charismatic megafauna" guru of the MN DNR (retired), reports observing the following: just north of Palisade, two sandhill cranes are feeding (in Sherman's field). To the south (50 to 70 feet) they are being stalked by a coyote. To the north ((65 to 90 feet), a bobcat slinks in the grass. The coyote runs at the cranes several times, driving them closer to the bobcat each time, but the cranes prove too wiley. Score? Cranes 2; Predators 0.

04.09.03

Dog days of April? Temperatures soar to 71° in International Falls. LLCC reaches 67°. The Mississippi opens under US 169. Some Aitkin area lakes ("I'm melting. . ."), notably Pickerel Lake, are close to being open. Schwampy and Farid observe one of the ospreys close to the nest on the flats NE of Aitkin.

04.10.03

5 p.m. An otter is having fun atop melting ice.

A frog was calling at Pat's, and a killdeer was also around.

Katie hears a barred owl calling at 1:15 a.m.

04.13.03

74° at 3:30 p.m.

04.14.03

Three swans fly over Long Lake, and a yellow-bellied sapsucker is sited.

It's 85° and the ice is out!!

Wood frogs are singing, and one was hopping on a walkway. Mallards and buffleheads are swimming on Long Lake.

04.15.03

Chance of snow. Yes, snow.

A loon arrives at 9 a.m.--noisily!

6:45 p.m. A northern goshawk flies over a field on Co. Rd. 5 south of LLCC.

9:15 p.m. A raccoon visits the compost bucket outside the intern apartment back door.

Sited at Blind Lake: a pair of trumpeter swans, kingfisher, lots and lots of blue bills, ring necks, common and hooded mergansers, and a pair of wood ducks.

04.16.03

Early morning freezing rain coats trees, decks, east-facing windows, cars. . . everything.

An osprey flies over Aitkin.

04.18.03

11 a.m. Trumpeter swans and Canada geese (with goslings) on lake off Co. Rd. 3 near Emily.

Afternoon: Three flocks of tundra swans, with 15 to 20 birds per flock, are seen near the Mississippi bridge on Hwy 169 north of Aitkin.

04.20.03

Total precipitation to date = 1.88', and vestiges of plowed "sneet" on roadsides; "herds" of robins "grazing" on semi-drowned earthworms. Anybody have a clue where the drought went?

04.21.03

An osprey flies over the Aitkin County courthouse with a good-sized fish in its talons.

04.22.03

Three barred owls called back and forth with us on a night hike at the archery field with Wenonah students.

04.25.03

Another lovely day--fifth in a row. Has Murphy overlooked something?

A pair of ospreys fly over Co. Rd. 5 from Fleming Lake, and one has sticks in its talons--getting ready for nesting.

04.28.03

One turkey vulture, northern Aitkin County line road.

04.29.03

Great northern lights display, until clouds moved in.

A porcupine is visiting Pine Island students on the orienteering field.

04.30.03

Nankin cherry tree in full blossom at Pam's house.

May 2003

05.02.03

Red and white pines are candling.

A magpie, with distinctive black and white wings and long tail, is seen at Hwy 210 and Co. Rd.
54/56.

05.04.03

Pussy toes are pushing up through the duff near the pump house.

05.06.03

Four eagles flew over Chris' house in northern Aitkin County.

Seven inches of rain between Sunday and this morning, Tuesday.

05.07.03

Heating season officially ends, with no heating today and the pumps are turned off.

Five sandpipers pause for a quick bite and a nap at LLCC.

05.08.03

DNR drops their fire danger rating from "very high," which it had been for 6 days, to "high."

05.09.03

Eight turkey vultures on northern Aitkin County line road.

05.13.03

2 p.m. Turtle sunning on a log during the canoe demonstration.

05.14.03

Geese are nesting in BJ's front yard.

05.15.03

Stand by for the lunar eclipse: 10:14 to 10:50 p.m.

A pair of Baltimore orioles arrives at Chris', in northern Aitkin County.

05.16.03

Billions and billions of trilliums at Chris' 40 acres.

Marsh marigolds are in full bloom—look for them in ditches and swamps.

05.18.03

Four different geese with goslings; babies in groups of 4, 5, 8, and 10.

05.19.03

Overnight rain delivers 0.48" at LLCC; parts of the Arrowhead get up to 2".

Hummingbirds are hovering, looking for the feeders. It's time!

Indigo bunting, and incredible iridescent blue, at Schwampy's.

05.20.03

Trees are all in full-dress green.

A ruffed grouse is drumming on the woodcock hike.

05.22.03

2:25 p.m. A red-tailed hawk come out of the ditch with a frog in its talons.

05.23.03

4:45 to 5:30 p.m. Fog is very thick for 40 miles.

05.25.03

Veery calls at twilight.

05.26.03

Counting on our hands again: it's the fifth beautiful day in a row.

05.27.03

Light showers knock down the dust.

A dragon fly is seen zooming around near the parking lot, and robins have nestlings now.

05.28.03

Lightning bugs are seen around Big Sandy Lake.

7:45 a.m. A moose puts in an appearance at Washburn State Forest, Hwy 200 East.

05.30.03

Mosquitoes are starting to become an issue, and ticks are abundant.

Overnight storm produces sound and fury, but only a trace (0.05") of rain.

05.31.03

Swallowtail butterflies are spotted at Long Lake.

June 2003

06.26.03

After several days of muggy temperatures and tropical dew points, a cold front brings strong NW winds (gusts to 30 mph +), clear blue skies, and wind chill!

06.27.03

A beautiful, clear, cool, and low humidity day for Hmong group.

06.28.03

Solstice plus one week: lovely a.m. gives way to gathering clouds and a spate of severe storms. A water spout southeast of Emily travels SE and just misses LLCC. Lots of deadfall. BJ reports "piles" of hail alongside Hwy 169 south of Co. Rd. 3.

A least bittern flies over the lake.

06.29.03

Rain gauge yields 0.87", mostly between 4 p.m. and midnight yesterday. Today, however, is another "chamber of commerce" day.

Finally! Schwampy spots a mourning cloak butterfly among Carolyn's daisies (fire + 10 years since last observation).

Lots of green frogs on the shore of Loon Lake in Savannah Portage State Park. Puff ball fungi on trail in Remote Lake Solitude Area.

06.30.03

Lots of green herons observed yesterday and today. Bumper crop?

December 2003

12.30.03

Todd and Pat find fisher tracks in the woods adjoining the Big Bog, and cottontail tracks in brush next to the cut woodpile.

Wolf kill on Mandy Lake.

A porcupine is eating daily in tree. . . so cute!

12.26.03

Nine squirrels (fat squirrels!) at Pat's feeder.

A mature bald eagle sitting in an osprey nest on High Line Road.

12.24.03

Two evening grosbeaks at Pam's house.

Three coyotes played and groomed themselves about 20 yards from Pat's house. They appear to have mange.

12.18.03

9:30 a.m. Big female snowy owl on a power pole 3 and a half miles north of Aitkin, on CR 1.

12.16.03

A much-touted snow storm passes through overnight, dropping a measly 1.5 inches of snow at LLCC.

Early a.m. A weasel has been scurrying around outside the IC house, leaving tracks.

Lots of mouse tunnels under the snow by the wood pile.

A porcupine is in a den, alongside the road near the archery field. He put on an appearance for Cambridge students.

12.13.03

AM. On the drive to Duluth, interns saw 3 bald eagles, 1 hawk, 1 murder of crows. (Which one of the interns knew that a group of crows is called a "murder?")

12.12.03

11 a.m. An ermine shoots across Hwy 210/169 and leaps into a deep ditch, just in front of Schwampy (as he comes to LLCC for his last—we repeat, last—day of work as our executive director).

1 p.m. A lone deer crosses the ice on Long Lake at the narrows.

12.11.03

1 p.m. Grouse tracks in the thicket.

12.08.03

3:25 p.m. A large eagle perched in a pine, along Hwy 169.

12.07.03

A.M. "A mosquito landed on me in 'Loon Heaven!'"

2 p.m. Many chickadees, squirrels, and a couple of white-breasted nut hatches visit the new intern bird feeder.

12.06.03

12:15 p.m. Bald eagle in snag along Hwy. 210 near Co. Rd. 5.

12.04.03

2:10 p.m. Mosquitoes in bog!

12.03.03

Barb and Pat again report seeing pheasant roosters between Aitkin and LLCC.

5:10 p.m. A barred owl visits Chris' feeder and waits for mice.

12.02.03

8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Four separate sightings of ring-necked pheasant roosters along Hwy 210, a few miles east of Hwy 169. Perhaps they have been recently released?

3:50 p.m. A saw whet owl is seen by the Mississippi bridge on Co. Rd. 3.

November 2003

11.30.03

P.M. Holy cow! Two moose are sighted crossing Highway 200 west of Hill City.

12:30 p.m. A bald eagle is soaring over the North Star Lodge.

4 p.m. A bald eagle munches on a deer carcass on Co. Rd. 5, two miles south of Palisade.

11.26.03

A. M. Todd notes the tracks of a large long-tailed weasel along the lake shore.

11.23.03

First big snow of the year at Long Lake. Eleven inches falls between Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon.

11.21.03

9 a.m. 6-point buck standing by the archery range!

The otters are out on the ice, in the water, hunting and playing, from 10 a.m. well into the afternoon. They are feeding hard before the storm.

11.20.03

Aurora borealis is visible in the north and the east, all colors.

11.18.03

The lake-ice, almost two weeks old, sports a substantial hole on the north side. Will we have open water again? It's a warm (approaching 50° F), sunny day after yesterday's blustery rain.

A.M. A semi-mature bald eagle flies straight down 2nd Avenue in Aitkin.

11.17.03

A chipmunk, slightly groggy but very much not hibernating, finds its way into a residence on campus and has to be gently trapped with a bucket and fancy foot-work.

3:30 p.m. A large snowshoe hare in northern Aitkin County. (One difference between a hare and a rabbit is that hare-babies are born active and with eyes open, while rabbit-babies are born helpless with eyes closed.)

P.M. Schwampy sees two bald eagles, an adult and an immature, on the ice of Pickerel Lake, gorging themselves on what appear to be fish guts--the leavings of ice-fisherpeople?

11.16.03

4:50 p.m. Two red fox cross Chris' yard.

11.15.03

Very strange. . . Schwampy reports a mosquito zooming around him on campus.

4:25 p.m. Two gray jays at Chris' feeder.

11.14.03

3:20 p.m. Bald eagle in pine tree along Hwy 169.

AM. Large pileated woodpecker is flying (very undulating flight, with distinctive red head out front) across an open field along 210/169.

11.13.03

A magpie flashes its black-and-white wings and long, fancy tail near the flats outside Aitkin.

1 p.m. Bob and Todd scare up a chipmunk near the office, still awake and scurrying despite the cold. Kitchen folks also report a chipmunk nibbling at the compost pile.

11.12.03

PM. Large male roughed grouse on Co. Rd. 88, at the edge of Center land.

11.11.03

PM. A timber wolf has been killed on the road, about 4 miles north of Aitkin on Hwy 210.

11.10.03

An otter has met an unfortunate death along Hwy 210.

11.08.03

Frigid morning: Pam records -10° Fahrenheit in Palisade; -3° in Aitkin.

Embarrass, Minnesota, breaks record low and takes national honors as the coldest place in the country: -19° F.

A full lunar eclipse graces a clear evening sky.

11.07.03

7:55 a.m. Young bald eagle is soaring low over the intersection of Co. Rd. 88 and Co. Rd. 5.

Afternoon: 6 pine grosbeaks are "dining" at Carlson's feeder in Palisade.

11.06.03

3 p.m. Wolf tracks spotted in the bog.

11.05.03

Early a.m. 8° F according to LLCC thermometer. Long Lake is completely covered with a thin layer of ice. Schampy's prediction came true. (Now, will it be the last time the lake freezes over this fall?)

11.04.03

8:20 a.m. A mature bald eagle soars over Co. Rd. 5 toward Fleming Lake.

Snow slows and nearly stops during the morning hours, with accumulation hovering around 4 inches.

2:45 p.m. Bald eagle in a tree along Hwy 169.

3 p.m. Barred owl flushes from a black spruce just next to the bog boardwalk.

5 p.m. Fox tracks by the Marcum House.

7 p.m. 5 deer are right in front of the main gate to the Center: 2 does and 3 fawns.

11.03.03

A cold morning lays a skin of ice across at least half of Long Lake's surface. Schwampy predicts complete ice cover by Friday.

Moderate snow begins to fall early in the afternoon and continues through the evening.

Schwampy spies a bald eagle along Hwy 210, in the gawky stages of adolescence: it has a snow-white tail, but its head remains brown.

Evening: hundreds of whistling swans are in migration over Pat's farm.

October 2003

10.31.03

A flock of snow buntings takes off from Co. Rd. 5 near the LLCC road (Co. Rd. 88).

A fisher has been killed on Hwy. 210 just east of Hwy169.

10.30.03

A pileated woodpecker is seen near the Energy Center.

4:45 p.m. STMA students spot a low-flying heron over the North Star Lodge.

10.29.03

10:30 p.m. STMA staff spook a doe and fawn just behind the Marcum House.

A cardinal is in Pat's yard.

10.28.03

A coyote is seen at the intersection of Co. Rd. 5 and Co. Rd. 88.

5:40 a.m. A skunk family is out for a walk along Co. Rd. 5.

10.27 to 28. 03

The mink was right: at 3 p.m. on the 27th snow began to fall, and continued through the next morning. 2.5 inches in Hill City at 6 a.m.

Big Fork gets 8 inches of snow in 8 hours.

LLCC records around 3 inches, plus or minus.

10.27.03

9 a.m. A mink is snooping around the boats at the lake shore. It's a good sign that a weather front is coming in.

10.26.03

Jason reports seeing four bald eagles, two mature and two immature, and they put on a show for him: a mature and an immature fly at each other and lock talons in mid-air.

10.25.03

In the afternoon, the first genuine snowflakes fall over campus.

10.23.03

9 a.m. A mature bald eagle dive-bombs some ducks at the far (eastern) end of Long Lake. A lone wood duck takes the hint and flies over campus.

1 p.m. Get out the binoculars! The otters are back! Three otters swim and dive (dining on baby bullheads?) just lake-ward from the beach.

Look, there are a couple of otters. . . uh, I mean sixth-graders. . .sliding down the School House slope on the leaves.

2:15 p.m. Todd flushes a wood cock on the white trail at the southeast end of Long Lake.

Active beaver lodge is discovered on the middle of the south side of Long Lake. Recent otter activity is evident around the abandoned beaver lodge on the north side of the lake.

3 p.m. A kingfisher is swooping across the lake.

10.22.03

Raccoon footprints on the beach.

Barred owl road kill on Hwy 169/210 near Rice River bridge.

10.21.03

Chickadees on oaks outside the office.

10:20 a.m. Black squirrel in front of Dining Hall.

Immature red-tailed hawk is sitting on power lines again, near the flats along Hwy 169/210.

10.20.03

A family of otters is frolicking and playing on the beach of Long Lake.

The lake is full of Canada geese. What a carnival!

1:30 p.m. A pileated woodpecker is investigates the oaks outside the office.

5:45 p.m. Two swans on Washburn Lake, northern Aitkin County.

6 p.m. A barred owl at Chris' house, northern Aitkin County.

9 p.m. Northern lights are "on."

8 p.m. to 11 p.m. Scattered meteors light up the sky. Tails blaze across the sky southeast to northeast. Amazing!

10.19.03

A family of five buffleheads has stopped to rest in the lake, along with several dozen Canada geese. The grebe is here as well.

10.18.03

4 p.m. A pileated wood pecker is searching big maple trees in Aitkin.

Half a dozen robins are still biding time in Anne & Jeff's back yard.

10.17.03 and 10.20.03

8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Two young otters play with Mom otter on Long Lake's shore (for the entertainment of the office staff?)

A.M. a large pileated woodpecker investigates the oaks outside the office.

10.17.03

9 a.m. Six ruffed grouse visit the IC residence.

10.16.03

Large pileated woodpecker on oak tree outside the office.

10.15.03

A king-fisher is hanging out along the beach, by the swimming raft.

10.14.03

5:45 a.m. 2 red fox on Co. Rd. 5. (Pat, Barb, and Anne saw a dead one. . . does that count?)

A pie-billed grebe is diving just along the shore of the lake.

Great blue heron perched on telephone pole on Co. Rd. 5.

Tamaracks have turned a beautiful dusty gold.

10.13.03

5:25 p.m. Great-horned owl in Washburn State Forest.

Red-tail hawk and adult bald eagle soaring over the intersection of County Road 5 and Hwy 210.

10.10.03

Major wind from the south rakes leaves off trees and shrubs. High color gives way to russet browns and smoky gold.

10.09.03

6 a.m. Brilliant orange moon just setting.

Peak fall colors: the oaks have exploded into orange and gold; the quaking aspen are bright yellow.

10.08.03

4:45 a.m. Harvest moon, bright orange in a clear morning sky.

10.07.03

8:30 a.m. A ruffed grouse is ambling along the road near LLCC's gate.

An L.O. Jacob student finds a 6" red-bellied snake.

3:50 p.m. 2 gray jays in Washburn State Forest, northern Aitkin County.

At 4:10 p.m. it is 79°. Fantastic autumn day! Heckuva wind.

A squashed garter snake. . . unfortunate road kill on Co. Rd. 88.

There is a plague upon our house! Asian lady beetles/lady bugs cover the intern apartment. . . both inside and out! Get out the vacuum.

10.06.03

8:15 a.m. A mature bald eagle is perched on the very tip-top of a snag along Hwy 210.

"Japanese multicolored lady beetles," those non-native lady bugs, are thick, both indoors and out. They're clinging to shirts and sweaters, and hitch-hiking into buildings. They are harmless but a little smelly.

2 p.m. A young garter snake, about 10 inches long, crosses the path outside the Lab.

Afternoon temperatures reach 80° F.

10.05.03

Dozens of lady bugs are swarming by the intern apartment, getting ready to hibernate in an unused wasps' nest.

4:30 p.m. A barred owl watches the world go by from a tree stump near the LLCC entrance.

4:30 p.m. A large doe and nearly-grown fawn cross Co. Rd. 88.

10.04.03

A chilly autumn warms up. Peak fall colors are a little late and modest, with a few showy maples here and there, red-gold oaks, and yellow aspens. The dry summer has somewhat muted the usual glorious colors of fall.

10.03.03

A bald eagle is soaring over campus.

10.02.03

A large-ish garter snake (30" long) slithers across the sidewalk by the office.

10.01.03

12:45 p.m. A robin shivers in an oak tree near the Dining Hall. What are you still doing here?

7:45 p.m. First chickadee of the season puts in an appearance by the director's residence.

September 2003

09.30.03

"Little brown birds" everywhere: the juncos are back.

10:30 a.m. A pair of bucks causes a ruckus passing between the office and the beach. One is a 6-point, and the following has a broken antler.

3:30 p.m. First snow showers of the year. It's cold!

5:45 a.m. Two red fox cross Co. Rd. 5.

09.29.03

Red-tailed hawk does a poor kestrel imitation on a power line wire along Hwy 210/169.

A yellow-rumped warbler appears near the butterfly garden.

6 p.m.-ish: group of deer out on trail beside the archery field.

09.28.03

Three ruffed grouse at Remote Lake.

9:30 p.m. at the Orienteering field: coyotes are heard, and possibly wolves, "arguing."

09.27.03

Afternoon: turkey vultures are still moving through the area.

09.25.03

5:45 a.m. Coyote crosses Co.Rd. 5 at the Soo Line Trail.

09.24.03

A.M. Lots of woolly bear caterpillars crossing the roads.

A brief rain shower leads to a double rainbow over the lake.

A blue jay checks Anne's (empty) birdfeeder impatiently.

9 p.m. Spectacular, colorful northern lights, in full motion, viewed from the Mille Lacs Lake area as well as north of Aitkin.

09.23.03

Two aspen have been spotted in the bog. "Is that ok?" wonder the interns.

A red-tailed hawk emerges at roadside with a generous lunch in its talons. . . a thirteen-lined ground squirrel?

09.22.03

5:30 a.m. Two red fox feed on road kill, Co.Rd. 5.

Flocks of Canada geese are everywhere. . . yup, heading south.

Northern flickers are taking R & R.

Bob and Todd spot two sandhill cranes on Co.Rd 3, going to Emily.

09.20.03

A.M. 20 + blue jays turn up at BJ's feeder.

09.18.03

Turkey vultures in full flight--headin' south.

09.17.03

5:30 to 6:00 a.m. Animals are on the move, noted by LLCC's early morning staff (who are on the move too): two foxes, one skunk, four deer, two raccoons, and one rabbit.

09.16.03

Northern flickers have become a very common sight bobbing through the air around campus. Half a dozen were visible on one walk between the Lab and Marcum House. They are distinctive because of their relatively large size, white rumps, and gold highlights beneath their wings as they fly.

09.15.03

11:30 a.m. A red-tailed hawk on power line, Hwy 210/169.

Campus clean-up day pauses several times to watch Canada geese fly in formation toward the south.

Two young bucks cross the road just outside LLCC's gate.

11 p.m. Magnificent aurora display lasts for hours.

09. 14. 03

A great horned owl serenades the Schwaderers in Aitkin.

09.12.03

5:30 a.m. A large population of raccoons is evident while driving our highways: 10 are DOA on Co. Rd. 5 within 2 days.

5:45 a.m. A red fox crosses Co. Rd. 5.

5:50 a.m. Three large bucks cross Co. Rd. 5: two 6-point and one 8-point.

A 4-point buck saunters down the middle of the street in Aitkin, after chowing down on a meal of apples.

09.11.03

After waiting all summer, rain finally falls! 3 plus inches (the gauge overflowed!) at LLCC.

09.10.03

CCC groups finds 5 wood frogs, from ½ inch babies to 2 inch adults.

09.08.03

6 a.m. A wood chuck is dining on greenery behind the intern apartment.

09.04.03

The morning is cool and foggy, with a low of 43 degrees.

09.03.03

It's nearly autumn! Low temperatures coming tonight.

09.02.03

Schwampy hears a great-horned owl in Aitkin

09.01.03

Bottle gentians are blooming in the ditch on Pat's road--for only the 2nd time in 14 years, as far as Pat knows. The last time was in the last severe drought.

Rub-a-dub dub, three hawks in a . . . kettle? Three red-tailed hawks circle in search of an updraft.

A bald eagle flies earnestly with a destination in mind over Hwy 169, south of Aitkin.

7:30 p.m. Nighthawks, swallows, and kingbirds all hunt insects over the same field. Coyotes (lots!) singing (lots!) at Pat's farm.

August 2003

08.30.03

8 a.m. A twelve-point (at least!) buck on the Yellow Medicine Co./Lincoln Co. line, southwestern Minnesota.

08.29.03 and 08.30.03

Temperature cools down at night; days are sunny and warm.

08.28.03

8 a.m. In southwestern Yellow Medicine County, MN, Anne watches for several minutes as a mink chases a jackrabbit in circles and figure-eights. The jack rabbit appears annoyed, but not overly concerned. The mink gives up and goes after a sparrow in desperation.

08.25.03

Wow, what a light show! Mother nature puts on an awesome lightning display as severe storm plows across Aitkin County. Hill City gets 2.25" of rain.

6:45 a.m. An 8-point buck crosses Co. Rd. 88, followed by a female companion.

10 a.m. A spotted sandpiper is walking Long Lake's beach.

08.24.03

10:30 a.m. A ruby-throated hummingbird zooms past the office window and pauses to investigate. No feeder here?

Afternoon: A juvenile yellow-bellied sapsucker collides with the office window (didn't she see our "this is not the sky" stickers?) and recovers for several minutes; she departs apparently unharmed.

08.23.03

Flocks of nighthawks are passing over, heading south.

Groups of grackles and bunches of blackbirds are gathering to be on the move.

Joe pie weeds and milk weeds have finished blossoming on campus, and seeds pods are beginning to fatten.

08.22.03

A fat wood chuck enjoys an evening radio program while grazing on the lawn outside the intern apartment's open windows.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds visit and sip from the monarda in the butterfly garden.

08.21.03

Monarch butterflies are beginning to be more commonly sighted in ditches and meadows, though their numbers still seem lower than in the past years.

A great blue heron takes two laps before settling in the pond along Co. Rd. 5, near Fleming Lake.

08.20.03

Lots of acorn litter on walkways, and busy squirrels and chipmunks are everywhere.

08.19.03

7 a.m. A porcupine saunters across Co. Rd. 5, 4 miles south of Palisade. A hawk cruises over . . . investigating to make sure he's not scavengable?

08.18.03

Day number 4 of major heat, 90° and above Fahrenheit. Sunday 96° F. Saturday=95° F. Weather gurus are predicting heat indices of 110° to 120° in southern Minnesota.

Basswood "berries" are ripening.

08.17.03

Ka-pwang! Acorns dropping (assisted by squirrels?!) on metal surfaces make memorable ricochet sounds.

08.15.03

Tansy is at full bloom, and goldenrod is thick in the meadows.

08.13.03

11 a.m. Campers scare up a 4-point buck in the field by the archery shed.

Afternoon: Campers and naturalists found "conehead" grasshoppers in their collections during the insect class. These haven't been collected here before, to the knowledge of the naturalists, causing us to wonder whether they are moving up into northern Minnesota.

08.12.03

6: 30 a.m. A bald eagle flies low over Co. Rd. 88 near LLCC.

11:30 a.m. Eight Canada geese visit the Long Lake beach.

08.11.03

A small flock of Canada geese appear to be southbound over Co. Rd. 88.

08.09.03

9:35 a.m. A cooper's hawk perches over chicken pen.

4:30 p.m. A 6-point buck wanders along Co. Rd. 88.

08.08.03

LLCC's Boundary Waters campers see numerous bald eagles and dozens of loons, as well as mergansers and kingfishers during their 5-day trip. They hear tales of moose in the area, but do not catch sight of it.

08.06.03

7 p.m. A single white-tailed deer drinks at Long Lake's southwest shore, oblivious to 17 screaming campers in the water.

10:45 p.m. A great-horned owl is perched in a tree by the bus parking lot.

08.05.03

Sulphur/chicken mushroom popped up on base of a cut trunk on campus.

7 p.m. Barred owl calls in front of approaching storm.

08.04.03

First autumn-like morning; cobwebs glisten with dew.

A pair of trumpeter swans keep their little one under cover, 4 miles north of the Aitkin County line along Hwy 169.

July 200307.31.03

6:45 a.m. A juvenile bald eagle tolerates a whiny crow, as they are perched on the same branch, not more than a wing's-length away from each other (near Fleming Hall).

11:30 a.m. A belted kingfisher is fishing on the beach.

07.30.03

Red maple leaves by the intern apartment are beginning to turn red.

07.28.03

2:30 a.m. Resident woodchuck (woodchucks?) appears and makes a lot of noise.

07.27.03

7 p.m. Rosebreasted grosbeaks check out Carlson's garden in Palisade.

Goldenrod is in full bloom in Schwampy's yard.

07.23.03

8 a.m. Two male gold finches are checking out the flowers in the butterfly garden.

8:30 a.m. A pair of blue birds swoops near the butterfly garden.

Pileated woodpeckers have been calling insistently for several days.

Wood peewee and hermit thrush singing during the day.

07.22.03

A hummingbird whizzes past the office window in late afternoon.

07.21.03

5:40 a.m. Red fox on Soo Line at Co. Rd. 5 and 3.

Trout lilies in ditches west of Palisade.

Major cold front moves s-l-o-w-l-y through Minnesota after "raising Cane" with thunderstorms on Saturday.

Goshawk glides across Co. Rd. 88 right in front of Schwampy.

07.20.03

7:30 p.m. A barred owl is calling outside the apartment.

07.19.03

Proud loon parents with loonlets in lake just west of Aitkin.

07.17.03

7 a.m. Loons, flying east over Fleming Lake, call very loudly.

07.16.03

5:10 a.m. A doe with two fawns in northern Aitkin County.

07.15.03

Wolf scat is found on Co Rd 88, LLCC's "driveway," and neighbors with binoculars claim to have seen either wolves or wild dogs in the adjacent meadow.

07.14.03

7:30 a.m. A camper spotted both doe and fawn tracks on health nut trail.

A woodchuck (and family?) moved into the rock wall behind the intern apartment.

11:00 p.m. A great horned owl calls three times from the woods behind the North Star Lodge.

11:30 p.m. Northern lights are very bright.

07.12.03

9:30 p.m. Close encounter with a 4-point buck near the Marcum House.

07.10.03

5 p.m. A scarlet tanager is in a tree by the North Star Lodge.

Loons fly over, calling at dusk.

07.09.03

A.M. A group of Canada geese stops by the Long Lake beach for lunch.

A small-ish wood chuck scrambles under the pump house.

07.08.03

Very nice lows of 41° overnight.

5:35 a.m. Three fawns and their mama, one mile north of Hill City on Hwy 169.

6:45 a.m. A single loon is calling his tremolo over Long Lake. 6:45 a.m. A single loon is calling his tremolo over Long Lake.

07.07.03

Two trumpeter swans are in a pond along Hwy 169.

07.05-06.03

A mud turtle is laying eggs on BJ's front lawn.