

# **From the North Shore of Little Rock Lake in Pristine Benton Co.**

## **NOVEMBER 2012 WEATHER & PHENOLOGY IN REVIEW**

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### **WEATHER:**

November again, turned out to be another mundane weather month. Nothing exciting to report. Started out warm for November, then a late month cold snap, then mild. Our low temperature for the month was a (plus) 0.1 degree above zero (F) on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Interestingly, our first below zero last year occurred on the 21<sup>st</sup> with a -0.1 degree below zero reading. I was in shirt sleeves on the 9<sup>th</sup> when the temperature made it to 58.5 degrees for the high reading. The average low and high were 22.88 and 44.1 degrees (F) respectively.

Lack of rain/snow continued solved this month. Although we received precipitation on ten days, it only totaled 1.02" for the month. The most rain fell on the 11<sup>th</sup> when we received 0.43 inches. Part of the monthly total was 2.7 inches of snow. If you remember, last year we received 10 inches of snow on the 20<sup>th</sup> that melted to only 0.46" of precipitation. It all melted in just a few days. So far this year we have only received 28.88 inches of precip. Professor Bob Weisman (SCSU) reports that June - November has been the driest since records were kept. (1893) When Jan and I went to Minneapolis and crossed the Mississippi at Clear Lake, I think we could have walked across the river the water was so low.

One interesting weather event occurred on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. At 10:45 A.M. it was 50.4 degrees (F). Then it started going down. Really fast. In thirty minutes it had dropped to 41.2 degrees and by 11:45 A.M. it was only 38.8 degrees (F). The wind was howling out of the NW at about 35 mph and it started to rain.

My only weather crisis occurred when getting ready to leave relatives in Brooklyn Center on Thanksgiving, the car windows were covered with a lot of ice. Yes, folks, guess who did not have an ice scraper in the car? Me! This issue is fixed. It was a "white knuckle" drive back to Rice as the roads were all wet and ice. When Jan and I got back to Rice it was only 18.3 degrees (F).

### **LOCAL WEATHER RECORDS IN NOVEMBER:**

Our lowest and highest temperatures were -23 degrees below zero (F) in 1905 and 75 degrees (F) in 1999 respectively. The most precipitation was 4.16" in 1922 (boy, could we have used that) and the most snow fell in 1983 when we received 25 inches.

### **PHENOLOGY:**

First because many want to know, LITTLE ROCK LAKE FROZE OVER ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup>. Although we have had some warm weather and about an inch of water covered the ice on the 30<sup>th</sup>, LRL looked as if it were totally ice free. NOT! About three inches or more of ice covers the lake. Folks are venturing out ice fishing. A meal of fish is not worth the risk of going through the ice. Ice thickness can vary widely. Reports are that fishing is really slow.

Our two chipmunks finally put themselves to bed about the 8<sup>th</sup>. The amount of sunflower seeds they hauled away should keep them happy for the winter. Not forgot are our three bunnies who venture to our feeders in the evening and at night. Not seen for quite awhile, the return of our flying squirrel eating sunflower seeds from our hanging feeder was a welcome observation. Because they are nocturnal, they are not often seen.

Now that I placed large chunks of suet out, the Pileated Woodpecker is back. Its fellow woodpecker friends, Red-bellied, Hairy and Downey are also frequent visitors. Our normal winter birds are everyday visitors. Birds include: Chickadees, Gold Finches, (dark color now) Blue Jays, Red Cardinal, Juncos, Purple Finches, a variety of sparrows, White and Rose-breasted Nuthatches. Observed in the area, Bald Eagles fishing and lots of crows eating road kill.

An interesting observation from Ed Kacures who lives a short distance from me on the 24<sup>th</sup>. He observed flock of more than two dozen Pine Grosbeaks both male and female eating berries off of his flowering crab apple tree. Thanks for the email, Ed. I have not seen that species in quite some time. Yes, they are beautiful birds.

**NATURE NOTE:**

The opossum is special. It's our only North American marsupial. Yes, the female carries her young in a pouch on her abdomen like a kangaroo. *Jim Gilbert's MN Nature Notes pp 269*. They are often seen here in Central MN and range all the way to the Canadian Border.