

**From the North Shore of Little Rock Lake in pristine Benton Co.
JULY 2012 WEATHER & PHENOLOGY IN REVIEW**

Jim Hovda, Rice MN 56367-0265 jhovda.rice@jetup.net

Comparisons between last month and this month seem to be in order again. The weather patterns are similar. Again, with the exception of the 3rd when we received .41" of rain, it was dry until the 14th. The grass was turning brown. As with last month, the last half was generous with rain. Enough rain to get "Mr. Dixon" my lawn mower out no less than seven times to ensure a well-groomed lawn.

As I assembled my material for this article, I was confident that this month would be a temperature record setter, at least at the north end of Little Rock Lake. Lo and behold, I was astonished to find that the average high last year was 1.48 degrees warmer than this year. I was so surprised that I ran all the numbers through the machine a second time. The numbers did not change. It must have been the humidity that made us suffer. One thing for sure, East Central Electric nicked me for a much bigger bill this year than last year. All due, I'm sure, to more use of the AC. How many of you readers remember the early years with no AC? Fans and open windows were the order of the day. We just sweltered.

I was able to access the good Professor Bob Weisman's website (SCSU) and quickly linked to his research on our July weather. He noted that all the hype about the record setting heat was focused on the southern third of Minnesota and Minneapolis. Temperature in the city is always warmer. St. Cloud reflects similar numbers when it comes to temperatures. On the 2nd, St Cloud recorded a high of 97 degrees (F) breaking the record of 95 degrees (F) set in 1911. I record temperatures at the north end of Little Rock Lake and garnered some cooling from the breeze that comes off the lake. Even Rice is warmer.

WEATHER LAST JULY:

A little warmer (if you can believe it) and lots more rain. Only seven days with temperatures of 90 degrees or warmer compared to eleven this year. The low and high were 52.5 and 96.4 degrees (F) respectively. Only one day, the 8th, did the high temperature make it down to the 70s. The rest were in the 80s and 90s.

I recorded rainfall on fifteen days with the most rain on the 2nd when I measured 1.80 inches. The month ended with 7.18 inches and 20.98 inches for the year.

WEATHER:

I've said just about all I can about the heat and humidity. Excuse me, HEAT INDEX whatever that means. I guess I'm just too old fashioned. It's humid when it's hot and sticky. Our warm day occurred on the 5th when the digital thermometer displayed 94.8 degrees (F). On the low side of things it only made it to the 50s seven times with the low a good sleeping temperature of 58.1 degrees (F) on the 1st and 25th.

It precipitated on twelve days with the most rain on the 21st when a thunder storm dumped 1.84 inches. As with many of these storms, rain totals varied a lot only short distances from here. We ended the month with 4.87 inches of rain making a total rainfall for the year at 24.97 inches. As of the 31st, **ONLY 46 DAYS UNTIL THE START OF THE POSSIBLE SNOW SEASON!!!**

MN WEATHER RECORDS IN JULY:

Locally our low and high temperatures were 40 and 107 degrees respectively set in 1969 and 1934. Our friends in Greater Minnesota chipped ice off bird baths in 1997 when the temperature plunged to 24 degrees (F) in Tower. Beardsley recorded a blistering 114 degrees (F) in 1917 and Moorehead did the same in 1936. It was a very wet 1897 when St. Cloud recorded no less than 12.91 inches of rain for the month.

PHENOLOGY:

This has been the year (month) of the frogs. Yes, Leopard Frogs, by the hundreds. When I ventured to the driveway at night at least fifty of the little critters were under the security light waiting for their prey. Insects who became victims of the hot light and landed on the driveway.

Neighbors have noted large numbers of the frogs on North Freedom Road at night. Then there is the issue of the tree frogs that climb on the picture window looking for insects. They are very small, all green frogs that have the ability to climb on the glass. They are looking for insects that are attracted to the light. This gets one of our cats (Molly) excited over the movement of the frog on the glass and is successful in knocking items off the inside window shelf trying to attack the tree frog. I'm told that this is a good sign of a healthy environment as frogs are very sensitive to contamination of bad things.

This has been a good year for the Northern Orioles, Red-throated Hummingbirds, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Keeping nectar in the feeders for the "hummers" and orioles has been a challenge. Noting that the wrens have left, the summer season is getting short. Seeing the tree swallows bunching up on the neighbors boat lift cover reinforces this observation.

Lots of rain has made for a great growing season. Our garden and buffer strip by the lake is the best ever. Blooming now are Phlox, Black-eyed Susans, and late blooming hostas. A tinge of orange can be seen on the mountain ash berries and hollyhocks are in their final stages of bloom.

RESIDENT OBSERVATIONS:

Art Linn and Keith and Evie Kirchner of Rice have been observing an albino robin. It's been there for a couple of weeks.

LITTLE ROCK LAKE ITEMS:

Even with all the warm weather, the blue green algae has not been present in the lake. Neighbors are active in the lake with their water toys. At the beginning of the month the lake level was 11.82 feet and measured 10.58 feet at the end of the month. The high temperature for the lake was 83 degrees (F) on the 6th. It dropped to 75 degrees (F) on the 28th. Fishing has been slow.