# From the North Shore of Little Rock Lake in Benton Co. MN
# May 2013 WEATHER & PHENOLOGY IN REVIEW

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**WEATHER:** Another month of "where do I start" weather. A warm Minnesota spring just does not seem to be in the cards.

The low and high averages (41.77 and 64.71 degrees (F) respectively give a good picture of why we had jackets and warm clothing on most of the month. Both averages were below nearly all the averages for the past ten years that I have been recording this information. Let's keep in mind that it was cloudy most of the time too. The lowest temperature occurred on the 3rd when I recorded 27.1 degrees (F) that produced a lot of ice in the bird bath. We had a very short spell of warm weather mid-month when I recorded a balmy 88.5 degrees (F) on the 15th. I recorded only eleven days when the temperature made it to 70 degrees.

Add the nineteen days it rained to the mix of low temperatures made it seem even colder. The stretch of six days (18th – 23rd) that produced 2.96 inches of rain helped bolster the 4.69 inches I recorded for the month. Well above an average May. The most rain, .95 inches fell on the 20th. If you will remember, last year by the 10th 4.66 inches doused us with two-thirds of the month to go. It was a lot warmer too. Total rainfall for the year is 12.63 inches. For all our doom and gloom over the aforementioned, it is a lot better than the weather in Oklahoma and Kansas.

**LOCAL WEATHER RECORDS IN MAY:** On the 3rd in 1907 the mercury dipped to 18 degrees (F) then in 1934 it made it to 105 degrees (F). It's been awhile since the thermometer made it to 100 degrees (F) here at the N. end of Little Rock Lake. Our measly 4.69 inches did not even come close to the monthly total of 9.69 inches last year. Yes, there was recorded SNOW in 1971 when 3.2 inches greeted our residents.

**PHENOLOGY:** ICE OUT ON LITTLE ROCK LAKE ON MAY 2ND. Tragedy and triumph for some of our migratory birds. Because of the cool weather and strange weather patterns in the Central U.S., only the very hardy survived the long trip to Minnesota from the Southern U.S. and South America. Most notable to Jan and I were the purple martins that first arrived on the 28th of MARCH and a few more scouts after. Then the cold weather here. Many died in route due to snow and cold as well as the very cold weather here. Because the purple martins depend on insects for food, many starved. Others such as tree swallows and humming birds fared a little better. It wasn't until the 29th that the martins arrived back at their houses near the lake. So far there only three pair are here. Normally I have fourteen pair. The late comers and most hardy of the species triumph. Arriving late by date were: Pelicans and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on the 7th, on the 8th the first Northern Oriole arrived, Ruby-throated Humming Birds on the 10th, an Osprey on the 12th, a Grey Catbird on the 15th, Jan observed the arrival of the Blue Indigo Buntings on the 19th with many more arriving later on, Scarlet Tanagers along with

several American Redstarts and more Indigo Buntings arrived on the 21st, more Purple Martins and a Whip-por-will showed up on the 29th and the first House Wren arriving on the 30th.

Even with the cold and cloudy weather, the green things were not to be denied. The grass really started turning green on the 9th. Last year I already mowed several times. Hasta's started sprouting on the 14th, first lawn mowing on the 15th, the service berry and apple trees were in full bloom on the 29th and Little Rock Lake saw no significant rise in the water level. The water temperature was 47 degrees (F) on the 11th and had warmed to 60 degrees (F) by the 31st.

**RESIDENT OBSERVATIONS:** I'll do them by date. Emil Williams reports that his Rufous-sided Tohee arrived on the 3rd, on the 4th Conrad Urbik of Royalton spotted his first Yellow-rumped Warbler and a Brown Thrasher and Eastern Bluebird on the 5th. Dr. Ray Merritt spotted his first oriole on the 8th in his yard in Rice along with Debbie from Foley who also observed her first oriole and Red-breasted Grosbeak, on the 13th Steve Bogie of Rice observed a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (I've not seen one is a few years) on the 14th, Debbie from Foley reported sighting her first Ruby-throated Hummingbird and on the 18th Emil Williams was on the phone again to report his first Orchard Oriole. I always get a lot of calls in the spring with these reports. Most I forward to Jim Gilbert our Minnesota noted naturalist. He keeps extensive records of the arrival and departure of our flying friends.

**NATURE NOTE:** Be sure to keep your hummingbird feeders and birdbath clean. When the weather warms up (if it ever does) washing out the hummingbird feeders with a bleach solution will go a long way to keeping our orioles and hummingbirds healthy. Don't forget that a few pennies (Prior to 1980) in the birdbath will help keep allege in check. Newer pennies do not have the copper content needed. An inch or two of copper tubing will also do the trick. It is the copper that is needed.