**From the North Shore of Little Rock Lake in Benton Co. MN**
**NOVEMBER 2013 WEATHER AND PHENOLOGY IN REVIEW**

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**WEATHER:** Cooler and dryer than last year. Our low temperatures of 1.4 degrees (F) on the 26th and our high of 53 degrees (F) were our low and high benchmarks for this month. Our average low and high were 19.74 and 38.69 degrees (F). It was about three degrees cooler than last year and, for that matter, the past several years.

Precipitation (no measurable snow) was about an inch below the average at only .38 inch on the five occasions that there was measurable rainfall. Yes, it was a dry month. So far this year I've measured 31.98 inches of precipitation and only .8 of snow for this snow season. It was an uneventful weather month.

**LOCAL WEATHER RECORDS IN NOVEMBER:** The record low of -23 degrees below zero (F) in 1905 reflect that November can be a real winter month. Just not this year! Only a few years ago in 1999 a temperature of 75 degrees (F) demonstrated just the opposite. We did not break the precipitation record of 4.16 inches set in 1922 or snowfall of 25 inches in 1983.

Although not a record, my barometer recorded a barometric high reading of 30.94 (inHG) at 10:30 A.M. on the 24th. My barometer may be .05 plus. This high raised a few eyebrows in weather circles.

**PHENOLOGY:** A mundane month for reporting birds and "critters." By date Pat Cairns reported a sighting of an albino Finch at his feeder and the maple leaves really started falling on the 2nd. On the 7th it was time to install the birdbath heater. Enough chopping ice from the birdbath! On the 14th Little Rock Lake was 95% ice covered. It would not last long as the lake was ice-free only a couple days later. Our usual winter birds, the four species of woodpeckers that included the return of two Pileated at the suet. Juncos, Blue Jays, a variety of finches, Mourning Doves and four Red Cardinals paint our bird picture.

Of note, still no squirrels. I can't for the life of me figure out what happened to them or where they have gone too.

**LITTLE ROCK LAKE PHENOLOGY:** For those of you not acquainted with LRL, it is the largest of only two lakes in Benton County just south of Rice. Several creeks feed the lake that eventually runs into the Mississippi River. It is a shallow lake with seventeen feet the deepest. The lake has a nitrate issue.

This year in review is in order. Ice-out occurred on May 2nd and after freezing over and reopening a couple of times**, ice covered the lake for good on the 23rd of Nov.** No significant high water this year. The high water temperature was in August when I recorded 80 degrees (F). Water clarity was not good.

On the 15th of this month a man went through the ice at the south end of the lake. Little Rock Lake has a lot of flowage through the lake. Ice thickness is unpredictable, even after a bout of very cold weather. On the 28th two fish houses were on the ice in the N end of the lake and on the 29th 4-wheelers were venturing on the lake.

Two very important safety reminders: (1) Don't ice fish alone and (2) have a screwdriver or something sharp so you can get yourself out of the water if you go thru the ice. Water temperature near the surface is only in the high 30's. You don't have much time to save yourself. At this time of the year, Morey's might be a better choice for fish…