



The Ferrum Nature Society Bulletin

Dedicated to the appreciation and conservation of our natural world

Editors: Todd Fredericksen tfedericksen@ferrum.edu
Nell Fredericksen nfedericksen@ferrum.edu

Nature's events:

As the **forest canopy refoliates** this month (assuming it does), the short season for spring ephemeral wildflowers will come to a close. The action will shift to open fields where yarrow and golden ragwort will begin to bloom. Still, keep an eye open for pink ladyslippers in dry oak and pine forests.

May is the beginning of **bird nesting season**. Watch for parents carrying nesting material and food.

Fireflies will emerge toward the end of the month.

Sky calendar:

Full moon - May 2nd marks the full moon known as the Flower Moon.

Planets - Get ready for a parade of planets. Mercury can be seen low in the west during mid-May. Venus can be seen well up in the western sky throughout May and June. Mars can be found low in the east in the mornings. Jupiter will be rising in early evening. Finally, Saturn can be found high in the west in early May.

Volume 5, Issue 5

May 2007

Easter freeze puts a damper on spring foliage

- Todd Fredericksen



Nature pulled a "one-two" punch on the tuliptrees (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) this year. Warm winter and early spring temperatures lured trees into an early budbreak only to be followed by a hard freeze over Easter weekend.

The photo (left) shows the extent of the buds and young foliage killed near the top of the crowns where exposure to cold temperatures was the greatest.

Some recovery seems to be occurring from dormant buds on affected portions of the tree crowns, but summer foliage on the trees may be sparse this year and tree growth will almost certainly be affected.

Mountain Dusky Salamander

- Tiffany Garnett

The mountain dusky salamander, *Desmognathus ochrophaeus*, can reach lengths from 7-10 in. This species has moderately long, and well-developed legs and comes in a variety of color and markings. Some can be plainly colored and others maybe brightly colored. Typically, this species has a reddish-brown stripe that runs from their back to their tail. Males are just slightly larger than females and have a darker body and a more curved jaw. Juveniles have spots on their dorsum and a yellow dorsal band bordered by a dark brown stripe that extends to the tail. The top of the head is dark and the belly is light. Mountain dusky larvae are about 17mm long and have a light stripe that extends from their eyes to their tail.

The range of the mountain dusky salamander extends from northern New York south through the Appalachian highlands, into eastern Kentucky, Tennessee and northern Georgia. Within the Midwest, this species is only found in Ohio. The mountain dusky can be found at the peaks and foothills of mountains and they tend to stay within a

home range of about 1m in radius. It is much rarer than the northern dusky salamander, *Desmognathus fuscus*.

Mountain dusky salamanders are used for scientific research. Biologist use their eggs to study embryonic growth. This salamander also allows scientist to study metamorphosis and life cycles that



involve metamorphic change, which can be used to study genetics, developmental biology, and tissue transplantation.

Even though it is not an endangered species, it is considered to be a vulnerable one. It requires moist, shady areas near clear mountain streams. Development that removes forest land area may restrict the range of this species. Logging should be excluded from riparian areas.

Results of Franklin County Spring Migration Count

April 22, 2007

In Every Crowd, A Clown...

- Nell Fredericksen



I was working in my studio the other day when I heard a lot of noise - loud squawks and such - and when I looked out the window there were about 6-8 common crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) helping themselves to some dogfood.

Crows have often been stereotyped throughout human history. They have an unusual social system with large groups of family members staying together and aiding in raising the young of the dominant pair as well as group foraging. They are opportunistic foragers and the main portion of their diet consists of fruits and grains, corn being a favorite. To many, the crow is not considered to be anything more than a garden pest; hence the scarecrow. However, many a scarecrow has failed in its mission since very few crows are actually scared of them - they do make a great roost between ears of corn! On the flip side - the American crow devours a myriad of insects including many garden pests such as Japanese beetles, thus repaying us for the free corn.

Crows are also known for their penchant for shiny objects. I jokingly state that since I am a jeweler, I must have been a crow in a former life. I have an attraction to shiny objects. Crows have this same attraction and objects such as keys, foil, and jewelry have been found in their nests.

Their intelligence is also well-noted and they are known in many Native American legends as a trickster. Recent stories of their problem solving abilities include using traffic at stop lights to crack walnuts (placing the nut in front of stopped traffic, letting the cars crack the nuts during a green light and enjoying a morsel at the next red light), and stealing food from a gull by pecking at its tail feathers (when the gull loses patience and flies at the crow, the crow hopped over it and grabbed its food).

Crows visit us regularly and are constantly trying to get a tidbit of grain from our chickens or a morsel of dogfood - they can help themselves as long as they eat our bugs too. I will just be careful to keep track of my keys!

1958 birds, 93 species

Species:	#
Great Blue Heron	3
Green Heron	1
Black Vulture	8
Turkey Vulture	56
Canada Goose	11
Mallard	10
American Kestrel	1
Northern Harrier	1
Cooper's Hawk	1
Broad-winged Hawk	9
Red-shouldered Hawk	1
Red-tailed Hawk	5
Wild Turkey	15
Killdeer	3
Solitary Sandpiper	2
Spotted Sandpiper	2
American Woodcock	1
Ring-billed Gull	1
Rock Pigeon	24
Barred Owl	3
Mourning Dove	23
Whippoorwill	2
Chimney Swift	7
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9
Belted Kingfisher	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	29
Downy Woodpecker	22
Hairy Woodpecker	3
Northern Flicker	7
Pileated Woodpecker	10
Eastern Phoebe	18
Eastern Kingbird	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	13
White-eyed Vireo	1
Blue-headed Vireo	11
Red-eyed Vireo	2
Blue Jay	144
American Crow	72
Common Raven	4
Tree Swallow	13
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	9
Cliff Swallow	3
Barn Swallow	47
Carolina Chickadee	56
Tufted Titmouse	64
White-breasted Nuthatch	10
Carolina Wren	26
House Wren	1
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	7
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	39
Eastern Bluebird	33
Hermit Thrush	1
Wood Thrush	3
American Robin	35
Northern Mockingbird	18
Brown Thrasher	15
Starling	37

Species:	#
Blue-winged Warbler	1
Black-throated Green	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	55
Pine Warbler	11
Palm Warbler	2
Prairie Warbler	3
Black-and-White Warbler	2
American Redstart	6
Ovenbird	31
Louisiana Waterthrush	6
Northern Waterthrush	1
Kentucky Warbler	1
Hooded Warbler	1
Common Yellowthroat	5
Canada Warbler	1
Scarlet Tanager	2
Eastern Towhee	49
Chipping Sparrow	152
Field Sparrow	14
Savannah Sparrow	5
Song Sparrow	42
Swamp Sparrow	1
White-crowned Sparrow	2
White-throated Sparrow	147
Dark-eyed Junco	11
Northern Cardinal	104
Indigo Bunting	1
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1
Red-winged Blackbird	48
Eastern Meadowlark	22
Common Grackle	46
Brown-headed Cowbird	20
House Finch	21
American Goldfinch	136
House Sparrow	52

