

Are you observant? If you are, you might be interested in a phenological calendar.

Phe-nol-o-gy is the study of changes in plants and animals as they respond to weather, climate, and the seasons. Each spring we anxiously await the first returning Bluebird in the hope of warmer weather. That is a phenological event. It happens every year but the return date depends a lot on the weather. Migration and flowering are two more examples of phenological events.

Here's your challenge. Look around for the seasonal/phenological changes. Have you noticed the daylight hours are getting longer? What about the following:

- Last call for migrants: watch for the whooping cranes, swans, hawks, Canada geese and cedar wax-wings heading north. Tundra swans are one of the earliest waterfowl to migrate and can be seen flying along Lake Ontario through early April.
- While some birds return to the area, as spring approaches, the dark-eyed junco arrives in our backyards and parks first. You may want to feed birds so that you can watch them throughout the spring.
- May marks the time that white-tailed deer does are getting ready to birth their fawns.
- Snowshoe hares exchange their thick white coat for a dull brown coat.
- Slugs and snails burrow out from under their log burrows for the new spring.
- Turkeys are scrounging for food, eating acorns, and seed cones, maple keys and small insects.
- Fish are on the move as they migrate to new feeding areas in their stream. The redds or nests of many fish such as brown trout will be empty as their eggs have already hatched.
- Black bears begin ranging out of their dens from a long winter's nap.

What are 6 signs of spring that you have seen?

Hint: Check gardens, look at trees, listen for sounds, watch special activity such as nest building, etc.