

Wissahickon Nature Club

GUEST SPEAKER

DECEMBER 19, THURSDAY, 7:30 P.M. WASHINGTON STATE ECOSYSTEMS, BY MIKE FIALKOVICH. THIS PROGRAM WILL ENCOMPASS THE ECOLOGY OF THE DESERTS IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE STATE, THE RECOVERING ECOSYSTEM OF MT. ST. HELENS, THE HIGH MOUNTAINS OF MT. RAINIER NATIONAL PARK, THE COASTAL RAIN FORESTS, BEACHES AND HIGH MOUNTAINS OF OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK.



Red-necked Phalarope, "Phalaropus lobatus"

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT MEETING. MARCH 13, TRACKING, BY DAVID ROHM AND MELISSA ROHM. DAVID ROHM STUDIED TRACKING UNDER TOM BROWN, JR., AND HAS TAUGHT MORE THAN 50 PROGRAMS FOR STATE AND COUNTY PARKS, SCHOOLS, AND SCOUT GROUPS. HIS PRESENTATION WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO IDENTIFY TRACKS, NOT ONLY BY APPEARANCE, BUT ALSO BY HABITAT AND BEHAVIORAL CLUES. KNOWING WHO MADE WHAT TRACK CAN MAKE YOUR TIME IN THE OUTDOORS EVEN MORE ENJOYABLE BY GIVING YOU AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT THE LIVES OF ANIMALS. DAVID AND MELISSA ROHM WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSING THEIR WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP WORK. THEY ARE AVID BIRDERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, AND KAYAKERS, AND THEY FOUNDED THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION PADDLE WITHOUT POLLUTION, WHICH REMOVES TONS OF LITTER AND ILLEGALLY DUMPED DEBRIS FROM PA'S WATERWAYS USING KAYAKS AND CANOES.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TREASURER'S REPORT

ACCORDING TO TREASURER
DIANNE MACHESNEY:

DUES DEPOSIT	\$34.00
NEW BALANCE	\$807.15

DECEMBER 19 WILL BE OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY PARTY AND COOKIE EXCHANGE. THERE IS NO REQUIRED MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM DOZENS OF COOKIES FOR YOU TO BRING. TAKE HOME AS MANY COOKIES AS YOU BRING. BRING YOUR FRIENDS. THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO INTRODUCE NEW FOLKS TO OUR CLUB. IN HONOR OF OUR TRADITION CHRISS O'LAKE CRAFTED OUR FAVORS. WE NEED A FEW MEMBERS TO COME UP WITH SOME SILLY GAMES.

A COOL WEBSITE

[HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/EMBED/2CFCKJFP-1E](http://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/EMBED/2CFCKJFP-1E)

Photos by Chuck Tague

What to look for:

Winter and mild, dry weather.

BY CHUCK TAGUE

A PHENOLOGIC PERSPECTIVE: DECEMBER 12, 1998
THROUGH JANUARY 8, 1999.

THE WINTER SOLSTICE OCCURS AT 8:56 P.M. ON DECEMBER 21. CELEBRATE THE SOLSTICE AND THE SEASON.

The Weather Report for December. As of December 8 at 4:00 P.M. 0.19 inches of precipitation had been recorded for December at the Pittsburgh International Airport. This is .52 inches below normal. 32.58 inches of precipitation has been

recorded for the year, 2.15 inches less than is expected. Since July the rain deficit is much greater than this record indicates and many reservoirs are virtually empty. Groundwater and stream levels are also declining.

Normal temperature for December 12 is 32°F, with a high of 39°F and a low of 25°F.

Record high was 65°F (1965); record low -5°F (1962). Normal temperature for December is 31.4°F. Normal snowfall in December is 8.1 inches. 2.57 inches of precipitation is expected in Pittsburgh during December. Expect the sun to shine a dismal 29% of the time.

(continued)

ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK CLUB
KIM METHENY

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CHRISS O'LAKE COLARE@COMCAST.NET
MEET AT THE PANERA ON MCKNIGHT
ROAD THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH AT
7:30 P.M.

UPCOMING BOOK

**JANUARY 20, 2014, AMERICAN
CANOPY: TREES, FORESTS, AND THE
MAKING OF A NATION / ERIC RUTKOW**

THREE RIVERS BIRDING CLUB

JIM VALIMONT, PRESIDENT

412.828.5338

WWW.3RBC.ORG

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

ELEVEN OTHER CBC'S ARE CONDUCTED
WITHIN WESTERN PA, FIND THE CBCS,
DATES, AND COMPILERS AT
[WWW.ASWP.ORG/BIRDING/
CHRISTMASBIRDCOUNT.HTML](http://WWW.ASWP.ORG/BIRDING/CHRISTMASBIRDCOUNT.HTML).



Greenhouse Frog

What to look for: Winter and mild,

dry weather. (Continued)

Dec. 12, 1998 through Jan. 8, 1999

The driest December on record for Pittsburgh was 1955. Only .40 inches was collected. As of December 7, 1998 only .12 inches has been recorded.

When the cold finally comes listen for singing ice. On calm, cold mornings when the temperature first drops below freezing, singing ice can often be heard on lakes and large ponds. This occurs when a thin even crust of ice forms on the water. Currents in the water bend and distort the ice, causing it to vibrate and make an eerie, high-pitched sound.

Due to the mild weather many species of birds that normally move south of Pennsylvania could still be hanging around. Expect good numbers of waterfowl on the Christmas Bird Counts, as well as Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Hermit Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, Winter Wrens, Yellow-rumped Warblers, possibly Ruby-crowned Kinglets and lots of surprises.

What to look for: icicles, frost, animal tracks and longer, warmer days.

A Phenologic perspective: January 29 through February 25, 2000.

Weather Outlook: On January 29 at Pittsburgh International Airport, normal temperatures range from a high of 34°F to a low of 18°F. Record high and low are 72°F (1914) and -11°F (1977). Average temperature for February at the airport is 28.8°F. 2.40 inches of precipitation is the norm. Expect 9.4 inches of snow in February in Pittsburgh. During February in Western Pennsylvania, the Sun usually shines a dismal 37% of the time.

Snowfall has been quite heavy to all around Western Pennsylvania, but we have escaped most of it. As of January 24, 7.3 inches of snow has fallen in Pittsburgh for the month. Since September, 12.6 inches has been recorded. Currently, (25Jan00) the snow depth is 2.9 inches.

Each day the **Sun shines longer**. Today (January 29) the Sun rose at 7:33 a.m. and sets at 5:34 p.m. for 10 hours and 1 minute of daylight. Compare to:

February 6: 7:25 to 5:44; 10 hours, 21 minutes

February 13: 7:17 to 5:52; 10 hours, 35 minutes

February 20: 7:08 to 6:00; 10 hours, 52 minute

Tired of winter? The Vernal Equinox occurs on March 20, 2000 at 2:35 a.m., 51 days from today.

Bird Sounds: In the mornings, wherever you are in Western Pennsylvania, listen. Increased daylight means an increase in bird sounds. Woodpeckers will soon drum, Mourning Doves "who," starlings squeal and male House Finches sing their chattering song. I've already heard both species of chickadees sing, although neither with much conviction. In Moraine State Park the male Black-capped Chickadees whistle the familiar, two-note "Fee-Bee." To the south, around the woods near Olympia Park in Pittsburgh's Mount Washington, Carolina Chickadees buzz "chick-a-Dee-ee." Two more musical songbirds have begun. Listen for the loud "Peter-peter-peter" of the Tufted Titmouse and the clear whistled "Cheers" of the Northern Cardinal.

Carolina Wrens of course sing almost all year, but soon will be singing more often. At night listen for screech owls trilling.

Now is the time to check, clean and maintain your bird nesting boxes. Pull out last year's nesting material, spider webs, wasp nests or any other debris.

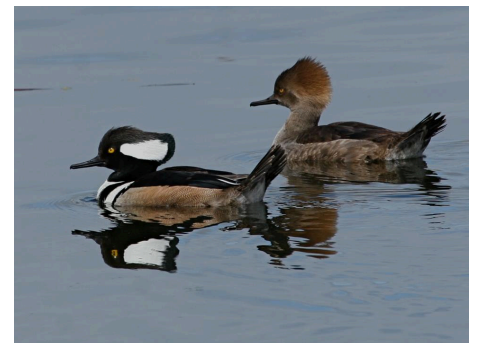
Replace broken pieces, check the drain holes and clean and disinfect the boxes. Songbirds such as bluebirds, wrens and chickadees build a nest in the cavity and prefer an empty box.

Esther's Wildflower Report: Esther Allen

has seen Dandelions and Common Groundsel blooming at Moraine State Park the last few weeks. Look into the tops of Red Maples for their pinkish tint. Crab Apple Trees have a yellowish tinge at the tops of their buds. In 6 weeks from now look for Snow Trillium.

When will the Skunk Cabbage poke through the snow?

Planets: From the *Sky Calendar*, Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University: Four planets line up in a visually impressive array at dusk during the first three weeks of February. Brightest and first to be seen after sunset is Jupiter. Nearby Saturn is to Jupiter's upper left. Look for Mars, to the lower right of Jupiter. Finally Mercury is low to the lower right of Mars. If you observe each evening at the same stage of twilight, you'll find Mercury a little higher each evening until mid-month. A brilliant Venus is very low in SE to ESE at dawn and sinks lower into sunrise glow as February progresses.



Hooded Mergansers

Happy Holidays