

Spring is literally in the air

By Ken Reddig

A sure sign of spring is to look up into the trees and sky to see the return of the migrating birds. But do we know that Spring is also the time of the absence of birds?

We all are familiar with the return of geese and crows. They usher in spring for many of us and give our spirits that boost of hope and energy signalling that we just may have made it through the long winter as the season is about to change.

However, there is another side of spring that most of us are not familiar with. Just as the migrating birds return in order to nest, the birds that have been with us all winter long begin to disappear into the forest around us and seek places for their own nests. This becomes most apparent to those who have been feeding birds all winter long. They muse as to why the birds they have fed daily no longer are coming to their feeders. They are close by, but we just don't see them very easily.

"Not to worry," Pinawa birder Linda Huisman noted. "About now is 'happy time' for many local birds that do not migrate."

We may not readily notice the local birds are very active.

If you are observant, you will see these birds engage in frantic activity as they flit, fly and dance collecting branches and other organic matter to build the "perfect" nest for their eggs and young.

The Gray Jays, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks will almost totally disappear as they head from

town into the forest to have their young.

But then, a few months later, you will see strange masked bandits fly into your yards. At first you will be puzzled by these unfamiliar birds, but you soon realize this is the initial colouration of the young Gray Jays.

Just as homemakers get that instinct to clean house every spring, so too the nuthatches scout their nesting places and clean out the old stuff and bring in the new, in preparation for that cozy spot to have their young.

Geese arrive in the immediate Winnipeg region the first few weeks of March. From there they begin to fan out into areas around Winnipeg. Soon they will fly out to patches of open water in our region and we will not only see them in the water but walking on the ice. It always gives the impression of walking barefoot on ice and we become thankful for good boots.

At one point there will be a large influx of black birds such as crows, grackles, red-winged blackbirds and cowbirds. With each influx comes more sound as many of these birds are also engaging in courtship - for which they feel the need to be noisy.

Then come April and May the trees will be filled with the arrival of many sparrows, warblers, ducks and a host of other birds. As you step out of your house early in the morning they will greet you with their constant chatter from sunrise to sunset! When that happens then you know that spring definitely has arrived and the cycle of life is beginning once again.



Photo by Ken Reddig

Pine Grosbeaks will almost totally disappear as they head into the forest to have their young.

LdB Foundation rises to the challenge

The Lac du Bonnet and District Charitable Foundation has responded to the Pinawa Challenge to Sign Up For Life on March 27.

The Pinawa Foundation partnered with Transplant Manitoba to promote the cause of organ donation by registering 500 Pinawa residents to be organ and tissue donors at SignUpForLife.ca.

In initiating this "Drive to 500 Campaign" they have issued a challenge to neighbouring communities to match or exceed the goal of 500 registered tissue donors.

The Lac du Bonnet and District Charitable Foundation supports the cause of tissue donor registration and urges you take up the Pinawa Foundation's challenge.

Organ donation saves and improves the quality of life for thousands of Canadians every year. Registering your wishes to be an organ and tissue donor not only helps someone else, it helps your family as well. When you register your wishes, this information is made available to your family at the right time, ensuring that your donation decision is known and respected. By making a donation decision today, you relieve your family of the burden to make this decision without your input.

To assist in this objective the two foundations, in collaboration with the Canadian Blood Services and Transplant Manitoba will be holding a registration drive at the next Lac du Bonnet Blood Donor Clinic scheduled for March 27 at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre. Computer access for immediate online registration will be provided and personnel will be available to help you register as a tissue donor and insure that your community is credited with your registration in the drive for 500 challenge.

For More Information go to: www.transplantmanitoba.ca or www.signupforlife.ca or on Facebook and Twitter at [@TransplantMB](http://www.facebook.com/transplantmanitoba)

You do not have to wait until March 27

to be included in the "Drive to 500." You can register now to be a donor at www.signupforlife.ca. You will be issued a donor card, which you can print out at that time. Once you register, you need to e-mail a copy of your donor card directly to info@signupforlife.ca. In the subject line of the e-mail, just say: Lac du Bonnet Resident.

If you have previously registered to be a donor, you can still be part of our campaign by e-mailing a scanned copy of your donor card to the e-mail address above with your town or municipality of residence in the subject line.

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