

# Early Spring Sightings

Words & photos  
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These are some observations about our property from my journal entries from last year.

March 15

A difficult walk through the woods today. Lots of ice and snow but also high water levels everywhere that's a little low. The swamp bridge has vanished under water. I've never seen the swamp as high or broad before. At the back, fast-flowing water has breached the seasonal stream beds. Deer droppings are floating. I was afraid of falling. My snow boots got wet through. I'm glad to be home.

March 18

After yesterday's unpleasant walk on ice, today I wore different icers on my boots. I didn't slip even when I tried to! So that was much better. The ice is starting to rot, though, so I was breaking through, sometimes into watery ground. But I heard a Red-winged Blackbird.

March 19

A lovely warm day. I went around the back, sitting on every bench for a while to enjoy the sun and peace. I heard Robins near the pond and a Cardinal's spring call. In the back corner I heard then saw, a Downy Woodpecker tapping at a tree above where I was sitting. Very relaxing.

March 21, Spring

After lunch I wore rubber boots because of the mud and water, and walked to the pond via the Natural Rock Garden. A whole lot of deer droppings there, including a pile of surprisingly large droppings. Approaching the pond I saw a duck fly up but I couldn't tell if it was male or female. Passed

over the swamp which is almost still completely frozen over, although the pond is more than half clear of ice.

March 28

On the walk today I saw my first Turkey Vulture of the year flying above the forest in a big circle. I've also seen deer teeth marks on the trunks of medium-sized dogwoods, where they nibbled off the bark. They make a distinctive chevron pattern. It's on a few trees. I should photograph them.

April 3

It's so windy today that one of my recycling bins went flying across the road. There have been snow flurries as well. On my walk around the back I was afraid of trees falling on me.

April 8

On the walk today: two female turkeys were between the neighbours' and my house. Just started screaming at Thomas who didn't quite seem to know where they were. He did charge one who flew to the ground from the fence, then up high into an overhead tree. The other flew up as well. They didn't seem afraid of me.

Before this, I heard the Western Chorus Frogs, two of them calling to each other, one higher-voiced than the other. Right before this, I saw a Turkey Vulture flying, three times. Whether the same one three times, or three different ones, I couldn't tell. I think I have to take my camera every time I go outside now. – I thought I was hearing things but two turkeys were just outside my office window and then I went outside on the front porch and one turkey was on the driveway and I got still photos and a video of them!



A Guinea Hen trotting along the fence line.

April 9

After posting photos of the turkeys on our Facebook page, I was informed by several people that they are Guinea Hens. Which had actually been my first thought but I dismissed that as being impossible. And when I Googled the call of turkeys, it sounded just like the birds I saw. Whose they are, is a mystery.

April 10

The tale of the Guinea Hens continues. They're back at the front of my house, they were in my neighbours' rose garden, they've been up the road – all this morning. They are walkers! I just don't want to learn that they've come to harm.

April 20

Rain again today. Chilly. I



A dogwood showing the chevron marks by deer nibbling the bark.

walked with an umbrella to the pond by the Main Path and around the hill. I can walk here under an umbrella because the paths are wide enough. Chorus Frogs were calling at the swamp. Yesterday we heard Spring Peepers at the pond, which I've never heard before, as I've only ever heard them at the swamp. The rain is greening the grass and causing the Garlic Mustard to pop up. This is the time to pull them. I also see *Vinca Minor* growing. So much to do.