

Climate Diary

[phenology: the study of recurring seasonal events in plants and animals,
and the timing of these events in relation to weather and climate]



Dear Islanders,

FULL NAME: _____

(L1) ADDRESS: _____

(L2) ADDRESS *if applicable*: _____



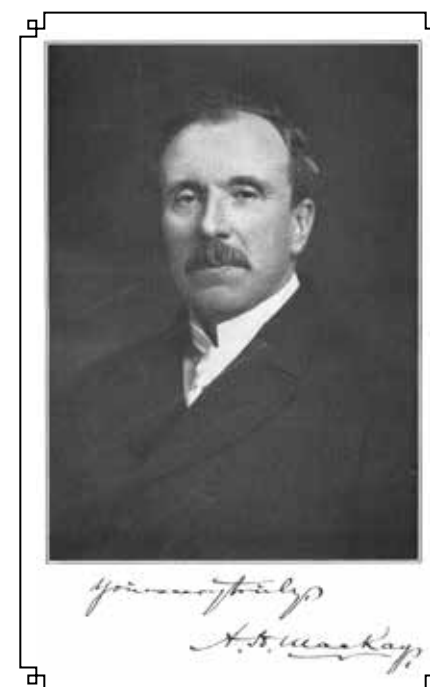
PHOTO CREDITS (LEFT TO RIGHT): Gabriel Gallant, Don Jardine, Dwaine Oakley, Don Jardine.

IF YOU RELOCATE/MOVE PLEASE GIVE DETAILS BELOW

(L1) ADDRESS (*indicate year & month*): _____

(L2) ADDRESS (*indicate year & month*): _____

You are holding in your hands a *Climate Diary* to identify and record observations of naturally-occurring plant and animal life cycle events over time on Prince Edward Island. As the years roll on, this *Climate Diary* will provide a written record of changes in the environment as they occur year-to-year. These small changes can be insidious over time, creeping up with an element of surprise unless we have this written account. These records will help scientists understand changes in the climate system and how these events are influenced by seasonal and interannual variations in climate. And eventually, these records will be a written testament to the effects of global climate change as temperatures warm through the decades, and precipitation patterns change.



The inspiration for this *Climate Diary* comes from Alexander Mackay, the superintendent of Nova Scotia schools from 1897 to 1924. Mackay enlisted the help of teachers and school children from across the province to collect observations of over 100 plants, animals and features of the physical environment, many of which are included in this *Climate Diary*. From 1901 to 1923, Mackay mandated schools to teach natural history through his program of phenological observations, that is, the study of the synchronization of developmental stages of plants and animals with the seasons. The timing of these cycles depends on climate factors such as temperature, moisture and day length. The phenological events of plants, which are easily observed such as the timing of buds opening or plants leafing out, can be used to characterize climate for a region for any given year.

This *Climate Diary* could not have been accomplished without the time and attention given to developing a list of observations by many natural history experts across the province including all of those recognized in the acknowledgements. Derek Ellis of the UPEI Climate Lab led this initiative, and has committed many hours to ensuring its delivery. Debbie Brady has again designed a wonderful product. But the most thanks need to go to Environment Canada for sponsoring the development of the *Climate Diary*, and to the Toronto Dominion Bank for sponsoring the printing of the *Climate Diary*.

Prince Edward Islanders have a long tradition of keeping a personal diary of climate events, farming events and environmental changes. This *Climate Diary* is but a continuation of that tradition. A tradition that hopefully will continue at least for the next twenty-five years with this *Climate Diary*.

We hope that you enjoy using this *Climate Diary* as much as we enjoyed producing it for you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Adam Fenech
Director, Climate Research Lab
University of Prince Edward Island

Instructions

This *Climate Diary* is a means of helping you, the observer, to familiarize yourself with a number of environmental changes on PEI, while providing space to record these events as they occur year-to-year.

Upon receiving your *Climate Diary*, be sure to write your name and address (L1) on the inside cover. If you anticipate making observations at a second location, such as a cottage or place of work, record this address as well (L2). When recording observations in your climate diary, remember to indicate your observation location by checking the box beside (L1) or (L2).

L1	<input type="checkbox"/>
L2	<input type="checkbox"/>

We have avoided using complex language in this field guide. Descriptions are provided to help identify species and what to look for, but should not be relied upon as your only means of identification. Exhaustive descriptions of birds, trees, wildflowers, fish, mammals and insects are available on the web and in print and should be consulted if needed. A few of these field guides are listed in the reference section.

You, the observer, are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible in the comment section when recording observations. It can be particularly useful for bird sightings, for example, to note time of day, number of birds spotted, feeders present, and so forth. There is a large notes section at the back of the book for additional comments and observation details.

If you've finished recording observations in your diary without plans to record more, please mail your diary to the UPEI address listed below or search "UPEI Climate Diary" for our web application and upload your observation data for analysis.

Climate Research
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 4P3

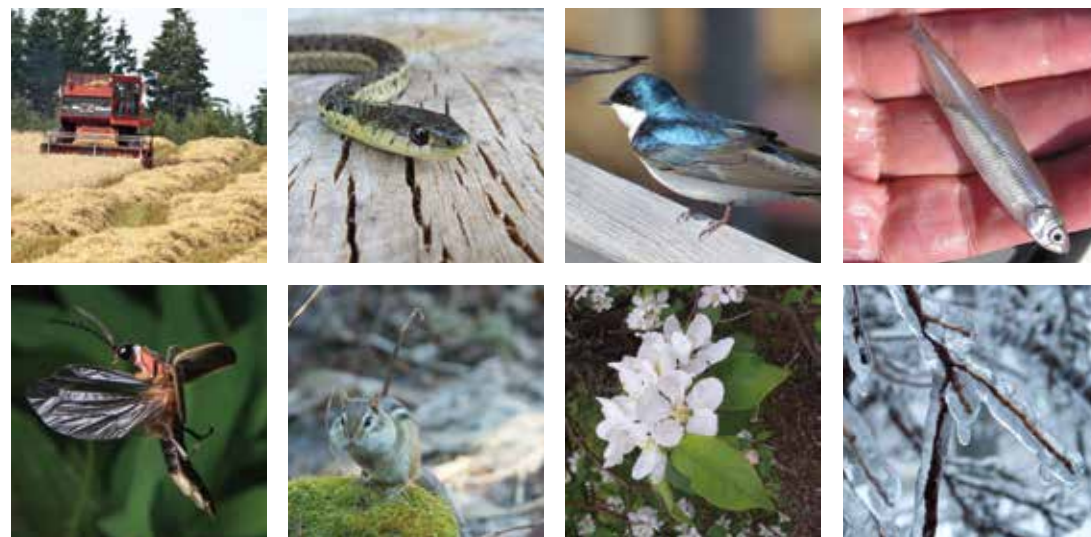


PHOTO CREDITS (LEFT TO RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM): Don Jardine, Gabriel Gallant, Gabriel Gallant, Public Domain, Terry Priest. Don Jardine, Dwaine Oakley, Don Jardine.

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What to look for:

GRAIN CUTTING

Keep an eye on mature grains late in the growing season, as they will soon be harvested. Record the date when the crop is cut, as it is an indicator of growing conditions that year and be sure to note the variety of grain if you can. Early harvest will suggest ideal growing conditions—a combination of ample sunlight, rainfall, and stable temperature.

PHOTO BY DON JARDINE



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What to look for:

PLOUGHING — FIRST OF SEASON

In early spring, look for bright red soil turned up in fields across the island. Ploughing allows for loose, nutrient-rich soil to reach the surface so seeds can quickly take root. Keep an eye on one field in particular, record the date of ploughing and note the crop if you can identify it.



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What to look for:

POTATO-PLANTING/ FLOWERING/DIGGING

Potato fields a common sight across the island, as it is the province's primary crop. Keep an eye on one particular potato field and record the dates of planting (green leaves appearing in furrows), flowering (look for their white flowers with yellow stamens), and digging (harvesting). Generally speaking, potato crops are do not grow beyond 1 m in height.

PHOTO BY DON JARDINE



Did you know?

Not all potato flowers are white. Some are purple and others have varying shades of blue.

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What to look for:

SHEEP-SHEARING

Prince Edward Island is home to many breeds of sheep, all of which grow thick wool coats that must be sheared periodically. Keep an eye on a sheep pasture and record the date of sheep shearing. You'll notice a number of scrawny-looking sheep compared to weeks previous as they graze in embarrassment.



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What to look for:

SOWING

Sowing is the process of planting seeds, which usually follows ploughing. Several crops, such as canola, barley, oats, corn, wheat, and soy, are grown on Prince Edward Island. In the spring of the year, take note of a particular field and record the date of sowing (or planting). Remember to note the crop variety if possible.

PHOTO BY DON JARDINE



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What to look for:

EASTERN AMERICAN TOAD (*Bufo americanus*)

As with all members of this family, the American toad is best distinguished by its rough, warty skin, and the two kidney shaped paratid glands located behind the eyes. Toads average about 5 cm in length. This species is entirely terrestrial as an adult. It is found in virtually all types of terrestrial habitats. Toads also have voracious appetites and consume, large numbers of insects and other invertebrates. Toads breed in the spring in quiet waters (temporary or permanent), with the eggs being laid in long strings. The resulting tadpoles will transform into adults in early summer.

PHOTO BY SIMON PIERRE BARRETTE



Did you know?

The Eastern American Toad's paratid gland secretes a toxin which makes toads inedible to most other animals.

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What to look for:

MARITIME GARTER SNAKE (*Thamnophis sirtalis pallidulus*)

Their colour can vary a lot, from brown to grey or yellowish, with lighter stripe or row of spots along the sides. A few are just about all black.

Garter Snakes usually come out of winter hibernation in April. They are common near pond and lakeshores, as well as woodlands, roadsides, farmlands, and abandoned buildings. Daytime is their active period. You may see the same snake each sunny day basking in a warm spot. They eat a variety of small animals such as salamanders, fishes, frogs, worms and mice.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL GALLANT



Did you know?

Garters are excellent swimmers too, moving over the surface of the water with an undulating motion.

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What to look for:

SPRING PEEPER (*Pseudacris crucifer*)

Spring Peepers belong to a group called the tree frogs and are well suited for arboreal life with adhesive disks at the end of their toes, long limbs and digits to cling to twigs and bark. Spring peepers are small, about 2–3.5 cm long, and light brown in color, which can be easily identified by the dark cross, or “X” marking on its back. Usually found in thick brush, swampland vegetation and moist woodlands, very rarely high in trees. Listen for the males calling in spring and record the first time you hear them. Each call is a high-pitched whistle but many together sound like jingling bells.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL GALLANT

Did you know?

In spring, during mating, Spring Peepers can be found in temporary ponds, preferring abundant emergent or shrubby vegetation.



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What to look for:

WOOD FROG (*Rana sylvatica*)

This sleek looking frog is grey, brown or red in base color, often with dark spots on the sides and back. A dark racoon-like face mask is conspicuous in all specimens. This is the smallest true frog on PEI, rarely exceeding 6 cm.

Wood Frogs are very hardy and have the furthest northern range of any other species of amphibian or reptile. Locally, they are quite terrestrial and will inhabit most types of moist woods. Their diet consists of invertebrates. Listen for the males calling in spring and record the first time you hear them. They sound a bit like clucking chickens.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL GALLANT

Did you know?

Wood Frog breeding occurs in early spring meltwater, usually when snow is still present.



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What to look for:

EASTERN CHIPMUNK (*Tamias striatus*)

The eastern chipmunk has a similar silhouette to the red squirrel, except for its tail, which is only a third as long its body. The light brown body, striped on the back by five black lines, is about half the size of a red squirrel. Due to the small size and quickness, chipmunks have a more harried manner. Chipmunks often live at the edges of woodlands, in areas dry enough to make digging an easy task.

PHOTO BY DON JARDINE



Did you know?

Chipmunks live in burrows with entrance tunnels up to 3 metres long. For this reason, they are sometimes called ground squirrels, since they not only store food underground but live there as well.

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What to look for:

FOX PUPS (*Vulpes vulpes*)

Red foxes are very common throughout the province. Despite its name, the Red Fox actually comes in three basic colours, with the red being the most common. They can also appear brownish, silver or black. Record the earliest sighting of pups in spring.

PHOTO BY DWAIN OAKLEY



Did you know?

Red Fox numbers temporarily declined in the 1970s due to high pelt prices and the resulting increase in trapping.

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What to look for:

LITTLE BROWN BAT (*Myotis* spp.)

The Little Brown Bat is of medium size and is olive brown, reddish brown, or yellowish brown with a darker area on the shoulder. The underparts are washed with buffy tones. The ears, wings, and interfemoral membranes are dark brown (sometimes almost black) and completely or nearly devoid of hair. Not to be confused with the similar Eastern Long-eared Bat, which is generally slate in colour.

PHOTO BY US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



Did you know?

The Little Brown Bat has undergone severe population decline due to White Nose Syndrome (WNS).

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TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



Environment Canada

Environnement Canada



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OUR CONTRIBUTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

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Extra Observations

