

Provincial Parks - Spring has Sprung

A new spring, a new year! With the warmer weather, snow disappearing (gone?) and a few sprigs of green starting to show, we are all starting to feel a little rejuvenated. Our year may start January 1, the government's April 1, but to our plants and animals it starts with the warm weather of spring.

For many of our birds, spring has meant a flight north to join us in our productive environment. Some of us probably wondered about just how productive our environment was when we were being threatened by blizzards in February, but once our water begins to warm and the snow is gone, life really begins to move, grow and reproduce. To many, if not most, of our birds there is a need for a high protein diet, which insects and other invertebrates fill. This carnivorous diet applies to the young of birds which we would generally think of being exclusively vegetarians such as grouse and dabbling ducks.

For mammals the spring is the time for them to start replenishing their numbers after a cold winter. In the next few months the females of some species will have had dozens of young. To say the least, these females will be busy.

Provincial Parks might be considered something like the animals. With these longer spring days and warmer temperatures park staff know that soon the visitors will descend. Buildings must be painted, campsites cleaned up, recreation facilities readied and the parks generally made shipshape. An important note to remember however is that the parks are always open. Although some of the equipment may not yet be installed, the parks may be used for picnics, walks, etc. For hardy campers, the parks at Mill River, Strathgartney and Brudenell River will open May 16. Have a good spring.