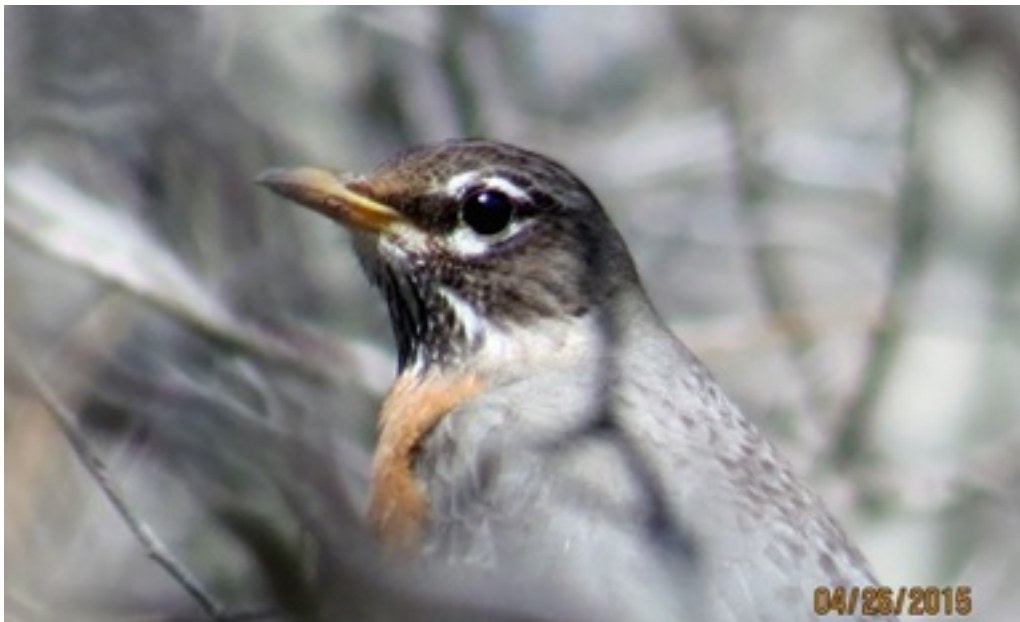


**Date and time:** Sunday April 26 2015 1:55 - 4:15 pm

**Weather:** Pr 17 mm; RH 49%; BP 101.4 kPa; clear; N 10-15 kmh; T 14° C

**Activity:** Checking on spring ephemerals and other signs of spring.

My son Jonathan and I were surprised to find the property mostly dry with an easy drive down to the trailer. Before long Steward Darren Jacobs joined us and out of the back of his Jeep climbed Steve and Karen Logan. This would be my first time on the property since the operation on my aorta. It was, admittedly, a little early in my convalescence to be out in the woods but I was very careful about exertion and stayed close to the trailer for the most part, while Jonathan and Darren made off for the river. Steve and Karen exchanged Spring Salutations and news from the Rez, then returned to their van parked in the Upper Meadow.



This spectacular telephoto shot of an American Robin was taken by Darren Jacobs during his outing with Jonathan today. Dead vegetation in foreground makes Robin appear partly albino.

Hanging around the trailer area, I found insects to be few and far between: a miniature bee (possibly a Digger Bee), a small Beefly sp, and a few Muscid flies made up the “community”. I photographed the only Trout Lily that happened to be in bloom in a patch nearby. Then I made my way by easy stages down to the Hole in the Blind Creek Forest, with some vernal ponds just beyond to record their condi-

tion: full, with cottony green colonies of the alga known as *Mogeotia* crowding the bottom amidst last year's leaf-fall.

Meanwhile, Darren and Jonathan had made their way to the Virginia Bluebells in the Riverside Forest. Small clusters of purple buttons told of full emergence in about two weeks, just in time for the Annual Spring Flower Walk (still being organized). Further on, they found Spring Beauties, Bloodroot, and more Trout Lilies entering their bloom. In the Blind Creek Forest Skunk Cabbage plants with bulbous spathes concealed their flowers. And everywhere were Wild Onions and Leeks. "Here, Try this!" Darren offered one. Hmm! That'd go well with pastrami.

As the pair descended the Hogsback into the Blind Creek Forest, the frog chorus was in full swing. The best find of the day came at the vernal ponds that are strung through the Blind Creek Forest like beads on a necklace. Hundreds of early-instar Fairy Shrimp (*Branchippus vernalis*) swam about just below the surface. Looking deeper Darren and Jonathan would have seen many Casemaker Caddisflies dragging their retreats along the bottom.

Back in camp, I bemoaned the lack of birdseed in the feeder. How many species had we missed? Four? Five? It was time to leave. I had already extended myself somewhat beyond my planned time on site. Jonathan drove us out.

**Phenology:** Trout Lilies just starting to bloom; Virginia Bluebell blooms in button stage; Bloodroot out; Spring Beauty out; Yellow Wood Violets and Cream Violets in bloom; Skunk Cabbage in early spathe stage.

**Birds:** (8)

American Crow (RB); American Robin (RB); Blue Jay (BCF); Common Flicker (BCF); Eastern Kingbird\* (UM); Northern Cardinal (EW); Turkey Vulture (LM); Wild Turkey (Rd) **Notes:** Not a good birding day, chill north wind — plus we forgot to fill the feeder.

\*a bit early for Kingbirds, but within variation.

**Spring Wildflower Walk:** This year's walk will be held on Sunday, May 10, starting at 1:00 pm. That happens to be Mother's Day, so bring your mother! A further announcement will be coming.

**IMAGES:**



A White Trout Lily nods over two strap-like leaves, while a cluster of purple nubbins foretells a gorgeous Virginia Bluebell.



Spring Beauty opens shyly (left) while a Bloodroot opens boldly (right).