

May

May brings more birds and flowers, and long days. Every open space parcel in Falmouth is a pleasure at this time of year, so choose several and go. Trail maps for more than 20 sites are at www.300committee.org. Whether you go for a lunch-hour breather, an early-morning walk or an evening stroll, here are some of the things to be watching for in May:



Baltimore and Orchard Orioles return to Falmouth just as the Crabapples and other flowering trees begin to bloom. Often you can hear their melodious song, but you must look carefully to see them. Although the males are colorful, they are surprisingly difficult to see in the high treetops.

The runs of **Herring** (and in other places, Shad) reach their peak about the same time the eponymous **Shadbush** (also called Shadblow, or Serviceberry) blooms in the woods. In recent years the Herring runs are depleted, but the Shadbush still decorates the woodlands with lacy blooms.

Fog becomes more common as warm air brought by southerly winds blows over our cool coastal waters.

Beach Plums and **Lady's Slipper Orchids** bloom. Look for Beach Plums in sandy soil, for instance: along the bikepath Salt Pond westward towards Nobska Point. Lady Slippers can be found in many woodlands, but they are especially abundant at the north end of Long Pond.

Female **Snapping Turtles** leave their ponds looking for soft soil in which to lay their eggs. They can be quite large (up to 24" of shell diameter) and can seem prehistorically intimidating, but if you leave them alone they will peacefully lay their eggs and return to their ponds.

The **Trees** come into full leaf, creating shade and the rustle of leaves in the breeze for the first time since late summer. Look for the many colors of new leaves, especially among the oaks.

The **peak of the spring songbird migration** occurs during May. After a night of southerly winds you may find a new flight of colorful warblers in the thickets eating as fast as they can to fuel the next flight on to the north woods where they nest.



*Male Yellow Warbler. Photo by Craig Gibson
Calendar by Beth Schwarzman*

The first **Canada Goose** goslings hatch. They soon can be seen paddling frantically to keep up with their parents on training runs around ponds on calm mornings.

Resident birds are **building nests**, and the first broods of the early nesters hatch—many birds can be seen carrying either nesting materials or food to nestlings.

Preserving Open Space for Falmouth

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