

June 20, 2018

This week Ruttger's Nature Trail is all about new life. Thousands of new dragonflies cruise the blue sky overhead and do us a favor by consuming those pesky mosquitos. This beautifully engineered stage may be the shortest duration of their life. Dragonflies spend most of their lives as nymphs underwater before they crawl onto a reed or rock and morph into the beautiful flying creature with which we are most familiar. You may witness a new dragonfly clinging to a reed with wrinkled wings. That dragonfly is newly emerged and waiting for their wings to dry and harden for flight!

Dragonfly species emerge at different times of the summer and may only live a few weeks before they mate and lay eggs for the next generation. In June you'll encounter these species: Halloween Pennants, Four-spotted Skimmers, Blue Dashers (Males have blue tails), Baskettails and more! You may have a damselfly or dragonfly land on you. No worries, they're harmless to humans and do not bite. Damselflies are known by their small size. Some hold their wings parallel over their abdomen. Spreadwing Damselflies hold their wings at an angle.

Also very exciting news, the pair of Trumpeter Swans that call Alec's Nine (Golf Course) home have four new cygnets! You may see this Swan family when you're golfing or hiking. The vigilant parents are very wary and we ask that you give them plenty of space, for your safety and theirs! You may also encounter Canada Geese and their growing goslings. They are also very protective and worthy of your respect by viewing from a distance.

Recent rains brought new mushrooms to the trail, such as Inky Cap and Parasol mushrooms. Look quickly because they don't last long. Southern Blue Flag Iris is in bloom with their beautiful blue and purple flowers. Look for them at the water's edge as they prefer "wet feet". As you hike to view the Blue Flag Irises you may hear Leopard Frogs, Bull Frogs and singing Warblers as they start on their second brood of the season. Many birds will take advantage of Minnesota's bounty of summer and raise two families before they head south in the autumn.

That's it for this week and remember: The Ruttger's Nature Trail is a bountiful short walk through the woods and around Bass Lake. Get outside, slow down, listen and observe!

Ron and LeAnn