

WEEKLY UPDATE - APRIL 17 – 23, 2015

“...proud-pied April, dressed in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything...”
William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 98*

EARTH DAY

Wednesday, April 22, 2015 is the 45th Earth Day celebration. It was founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson and first organized in 1970 to promote ecology and respect for life on the planet as well as to encourage awareness of the growing problems of air, water and soil pollution.

John Muir’s words (which greet us as we walk into the Visitor Center), “When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world,” represent all that Earth Day stands for.

THE APRIL BIRD

Both the Nature Conservancy and Wild Birds Unlimited recognize the beloved black-capped chickadee as the April bird. We are all familiar with this inquisitive, active little creature and its recognizable ‘chick-a-dee’ call as well as its two-noted ‘fee bee’ call. Chickadees are common and widespread; they are not of any immediate conservation concern.

They are the provincial bird of New Brunswick and the state bird of Maine and Massachusetts.

A few “fun facts” about chickadees:

- they weigh less than half an ounce.
- they are generally monogamous and mate for life.
- they do not migrate as they have some powerful survival mechanisms including the following: they cache food and remember where it is, they have dense winter coats; they find well-insulated roosting cavities; and they perform a regulated hypothermia to conserve energy.

As a result, we can enjoy their cheerful presence all year long!

Last year, the black-capped chickadee was voted the City Bird of Vancouver 2015 and its cheeky little head is visible on posters, buttons and parking decals.

SOME WORDS TO GUIDE BY

If you've tuned into "Wolf Hall" on Masterpiece Theatre on PBS, you've encountered Sir Thomas More, councillor to Henry VIII and Lord Chancellor of England from October 1529 to May 1532. It is thought he had a rather lovely sunken garden at Crosby Hall, his family estate. More had this to say about the significance of gardens for humanity.

"The many great gardens of the world, of literature and poetry, of painting and music, of religion and architecture, all make the point as clear as possible: the soul cannot thrive in the absence of a garden."

Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, 1516

"This is an interesting planet. It deserves all the attention you can give it."

Marilynne Robinson, writer (1943-)