

Wildtales' Country Journal

by Heather A. Wallis Murphy ©2003



April: The hopeful period of life, the season of sprouting vegetation, and changeable weather (*Webster's Dictionary*). April comes from the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite (*Harris' Farmers' Almanac*). April's birth flower is Sweet Pea, and the birthstone is the Diamond.

April Dates to Celebrate:

1st of April, April Fools Day,
3rd Jane Goodall born 1934,
6th 2:00 a.m. Pacific Daylight Savings,
16th North Pole by Peary & Henson 1909,

13th Thomas Jefferson born 1743,
15th Leonardo da Vinci born 1452,
16th Full Moon,
18th Good Friday,

20th Easter Sunday,
21st John Muir born 1838,
22nd Earth Day,
23rd William Shakespeare born 1564,

26th John J. Audubon born 1780,
28th Take Our Daughters To Work Day,
29th Lewis & Clark killed a grizzly bear in Montana 1805

Nature Tales:

Ahhh, beautiful April!
Take a deep look around the out-of-doors. Feel the wings of the swallowtail butterfly as it brushes by. Breathe in the fresh smells of cottonwood in leaf or soils warmed by sun. Take a moment to "Be Still" and listen for the song of the finch or the dance of the hummingbird. Gaze upon the quilted colors of trillium, lupine, balsamroot, sweet pea, skunk cabbage and pussy willows.

Wildlife is in full motion, with promises to keep us company for months to come. They are nestling into their

their ponds; and lizards to their rocks.

Spring is a great time to begin keeping wildlife records. There are many lessons from the out of doors – animal behavior, weather, plant adaptation, migration, history. Start recording simple things. What flowers do butterflies favor? What time of day do the hummingbirds feed? Which plant species do deer eat? How old was that tree? How many species of birds do you see on a special day (like a wedding anniversary)?

Lewis and Clark's expedition to the west was based on field observations. They faithfully recorded the date, name, weather, soils and minerals, plants, animals, as well as maps and illustrations. The April species observed by their expedition included: pocket gopher April 9th; Montana horned owl April 14th; Oregon pronghorn April 16th; and a western fence lizard April 24th.

The most dramatic April entry for Lewis and Clark was for April 29th 1805 at the Big Muddy in Montana.

On this date they encountered, described, and "collected" their first grizzly bear. Captain Meriwether Lewis wrote: "The legs of this bear are somewhat longer than those of the black, as are it's tallons and tusks incomparably longer"; "it's colour is yellowish brown, the eyes small, black, and piercing"; "the fur is finer thicker and deeper than that of black bear", as noted in the book *Lewis & Clark Pioneering Naturalists* by P.R. Cutright.

April, the month of hope for new life, of "sprouting vegetation and changeable weather", and this year the host of Easter Sunday. Keep a watchful vigil for all that alters, during this time of renewal and understanding.

Heather is a feature writer from *Leavenworth, Washington*, sharing her field travels as an artist, nature writer and practicing wildlife biologist. See her cards in stores across the Northwest OR visit her cards online at www.wildtales.com "Walleye Cards" a naturalist notecard, & journal business.



Four Friends For All Seasons: Spring

Springs' Verdant Spirit joins swallows, nuthatch, wildrose in full moon mornings.

Cascading flowers, and waters, tumble through highland scree, with fresh air's hopes and dreams.

Boreal solitude shows luminous rainbows unfolding Spring-beauties, waterfalls, and soaring birds.

She seeks God's mountains, where-in lies her strength. Awash with wildflower memories.

~ Heather A. Wallis Murphy, 1995©



homes: blue birds to their snag cavities; bats to their caves; deer to their shrubs; bear to their spring meadows; Pacific chorus tree frogs to



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Birds
H.A. MURPHY 1998

Butterfly
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White Breasted Nuthatch
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Rainbow
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Spring, Tundra
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Wildflowers
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