

Signs of Spring

Have you noticed that spring is in the air? At least in NW Ohio it is. Warmer temperatures, spring flowers blooming, and of course the robins are back.

Being a country boy, I look for a few different signs of spring than most. I noticed that the vultures are circling road kill again. The ducks and geese are congregating in the flooded fields. Animals are out scrounging for food after a having a harder time of it in the winter. And of course the chorus of frogs in and around this areas ponds and swamp area.

I live on the outer edge of what used to be [the Great Black Swamp](#). To the south and east was the main portion of this swamp that covered most of the area around Toledo and Bowling Green Ohio. I live in an area with more high ground than they have in the areas east. There are still places to find some of the swamp that was NW Ohio.

The acreage around my house is one of those places. Just north, as in a few hundred yards, of my house there is about a 6-10 acre area of swampland. This used to be my parents property. I spent many a day in high school trying to explore it. One very hot and dry summer, I was able to make my way deep into the heavy brush. If I could have gotten my hands on a machete, I would have blazed a good path through it. Even without rain for most of that summer, there were still places in that swamp that held a foot or so of water. From what I could tell the deepest parts of the swampland may only be 3 feet deep. These were little pockets about 3 or 4 feet in diameter. My guess is that there were large trees there at one point, and they were blown over by the wind or fell with age. I really don't know since I don't remember seeing any downed trees.

This small swamp holds a variety of small animals. Mostly

frogs and toads, but there are snakes and salamanders, birds of all sorts, various members of the rodent family (Large rat with bushy tale type), raccoons, possums, fox, rabbits, muskrats, deer and of course the insects, lots and lots of insects. Seeing these animals out and about more than usual is a good sign that spring finally made it to NW Ohio. They tend to be less visible in the winter, and when the leave finally fill the trees, they are harder to spot as well. So spring in the swamp is the time to see the wildlife come to life.

Where can you go to see it? Well there is a new state wildlife area (Williams Co Rd J between Co Rds 8 and 9. This is an old stone quarry that is now a fishing and wildlife area. I have been able to see many animals in the early morning or dusk around here. It is only open during daylight hours. You want to be careful because it is a public hunting area (check local hunting seasons) And of course you don't want to bother the fishermen/women. Other good spots are [Goll Woods](#) in Fulton County, [Independence Dam State Park](#) near Defiance OH, Toledo area Metro Parks. The [Toledo area parks](#) are wonderful. It is worth the time (if you are ever in the area) to check them out.