



AUGUST PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2013

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

August's light winds and sunny skies make for perfect cabin and boating weather. Meanwhile, early signs predict the fall migration. Listed below are a few observations from a year ago in the Twin Cities Metro area, Waconia and areas beyond when indicated. These events can be used to anticipate upcoming happenings and will help you compare this year with last.

August 1 * Increasing numbers of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds at feeding stations make this a good time to put up more nectar feeders. Hummingbirds also sip nectar from plants like wild jewelweed and hosta flowers.

AUGUST

3

Osprey young begin to leave their nests. Gardeners harvest peppers, beets, cucumbers and the first ripe tomatoes.



August 4 * Common and great ragweed begin to shed pollen, contributing to the pollen count.

August 6 * Fewer birds sing in the mornings, now that a good share of the nesting season is over. Joe Pye weed and boneset begin to bloom in wetlands.

August 9 * The first viceroy butterflies take flight. Snowy tree crickets and katydids start calling at night. The number of hummingbirds coming to feeding stations in southern Minnesota is double what it was on August 1. The numbers reflect newly fledged young and some migrants from the North.

August 11 * The second generation of eastern tiger swallowtail butterflies flit over gardens.

August 13 * Early-season apples such as Quinte, Oriole and Viking are ready to pick. Farmers combine wheat and cut alfalfa.

August 15 * Wild cucumber, an annual vine, is at peak bloom.

AUGUST

16

The first flock of Franklin's Gulls return to Lake Waconia for the fall season.



August 17 * European mountain ash trees have bright orange clusters of fruit that American Robins and other birds relish. Wild blueberry picking continues in parts of northern Minnesota.

August 18 * Zigzag goldenrod and white snakeroot begin to bloom. Wild grapes ripen; they are eaten by Wood Ducks, Wild Turkeys, Northern Cardinals and dozens of other birds.

August

21

Reports of over 30,000 Common Nighthawks above and through Duluth signal a strong migration.



August 23 * Wood Ducks fly into yards to feed on acorns. Recently fledged American Goldfinches visit feeding stations with their parents. Young Northern Cardinals and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks also go to feeders, especially those with sunflower seeds. Quite a few Baltimore Orioles still visit grape jelly feeders.

August 25 * Warblers, flycatchers and shorebirds are among the birds migrating through the state.

August 27 * We are in a heat wave. With a high temperature of 96°F plus the highest dew point ever recorded at the Minnesota State Fair, it feels like 107°F today. The surface temperature of Lake Waconia is a warm 84°F. Zestar apples are ripe, sweet and tasty.

August

28

Colonies of Jerusalem artichoke and fields of Canada goldenrod display showy golden-yellow flowers.



August 29 * Meteorological summer (June–August) ends, 1.6°F above normal in the Twin Cities.