



NOVEMBER PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2014

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

November's cloudy skies give us some of the best sunrises and sunsets of the year. Fall colors linger, dried grasses and herbs stand tall, waterfowl migrate southward, and the first ice appears. Listed below are 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 2015 with last year.

November 1 * Temperatures in the low 20°Fs this morning result in ice-covered birdbaths and small ponds. Norway maples and weeping willows display an abundance of golden-yellow foliage. Native red oaks show dark reds and rich browns.

Huge flocks of Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds meander southward, soon to be out of the state. Rafts of American Coots drift on Lake Waconia and other southern MN lakes. Lawn mowers make final passes.



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November 4 * Mums continue to bloom. Migrating Tundra Swans honk boisterously over Victoria and the Twin Cities area—an unmistakable sound of fall.

Dozens of White Pelicans, a few hundred Tundra Swans, and several species of ducks including Hooded Mergansers and Canvasbacks gather on the Mississippi and backwaters at Minneiska. Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks come to a feeding station along the Caribou Trail near Lutsen.



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November 8 * Flocks of American Robins migrate through the area. Dark-eyed Juncos occupy feeding stations from St. Cloud to Northfield and beyond. From now to the 12th is often the peak of the white-tailed deer rutting season. Weather and other variables can change these dates a bit.

November 10 * Rain turns to sloppy snow as winter weather arrives.

November 11 * About 3 in. of snow covers the Twin Cities and over 7 in. at Duluth. Large flocks of Tundra Swans head SE over the Waconia and Orono areas. Lake Hendricks in SW Minnesota freezes over (Nov. 22, 2013).

November 14 * It's the freeze-up date for Cannon Lake at Faribault and Iowa Lake south of Fairmont. Warn children that it takes at least 4 in. of new solid ice in contact with stationary water to support their weight.

November 15 * This morning's low is 6° F in the Twin Cities. Afton Alps, Buck Hill, Spirit Mountain, Lutsen Mts. and other MN ski/snowboarding areas open for the season.

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17 bird species, including Pine Siskins and Ring-necked Pheasants make visits to a feeding station in Faribault.



November 20 * It's the freeze-up date for Mille Lacs Lake.

November 21 * It's the freeze-up date for Lake Waconia in Carver County, Lake Le Homme Dieu near Alexandria, and Green Lake at Spicer. Birds need water year-round; small immersion heaters keep birdbaths and drinkers ice-free. Deer, red squirrels and gray foxes will come for water too.

November 24 * On these cold mornings, steam fog rising from open water of rivers and lakes is a beautiful sight.

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Early Snowy Owls appear at several locations in both northern and southern Minnesota.

November 27 * It's the freeze-up date for Lake Minnetonka.

November 30 * Flocks of Cedar Waxwings feed on juniper berries and crabapple fruit. About 95 percent of the state's corn is harvested.

