



SEPTEMBER PHENOLOGY

A reflective look at 2015

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

September is a major migration month, with great numbers of birds and butterflies leaving Minnesota for their wintering territories. 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 2015 with last year.

September 1 * Today is the first day of meteorological autumn. In Duluth, where the high today is 84°F, there's a mass bird migration, stunning the counters at Hawk Ridge; they count 91,667 migrating non-raptors at Hawk Ridge and on the nearby shore of Lake Superior. Highlights include: 28,054 Common Nighthawks, 12,842 Cedar Waxwings, 33,758 warblers (including 19 species), and 1,085 Blue Jays. Also, 19 species of migrating warblers move through the Twin Cities area.

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Blooming Canada goldenrod paints the landscape yellow. Fall-bearing raspberry canes produce ripe fruit.

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Monarch butterflies head south one by one, dining on garden and wild flowers.



September 5 * Beekeepers extract honey. Lake water temperatures are mostly in the 70°Fs and still good for swimming.

September 6 * The green prime is passing. Golden-yellow fall color appears on leaves of native basswoods, green ashes and eastern cottonwoods. Touches of red accent the landscape from sugar maples, staghorn sumac shrubs and the foliage of Virginia creeper vines.

September 7 * By now, nearly all Baltimore Orioles head for their wintering territories, mostly in Central America. They migrate at night.

September 9 * Orb spider webs sparkle on dewy mornings. Jerusalem artichoke, a wildflower growing in clumps and colonies, reaches its showy bloom peak.

September 10 * Sweetango, McIntosh and Honeycrisp apple varieties are ready to pick.

September 12 * Most Ruby-throated Hummingbirds leave

northern MN by this date and the southern part of the state by Sept. 25th. But keep hummingbird feeders up until you're sure they've all left—that could be into October.

September 13 * A late-to-migrate Baltimore Oriole visits Golden Valley. More than two dozen mushroom species populate Twin Cities area woodlands.

September 15 * The first milkweed pods open, shedding seeds on silver carriers.

September 17 * Many Ruby-throated Hummingbirds show up at feeders.

September 18 * Today very few hummingbirds visit nectar feeders. A first raft of American Coots arrives on Lake Waconia.

September 19 * The first-of-the-season Dark-eyed Junco arrives in Mankato. The peak count of Broad-winged Hawks occurs over Hawk Ridge today: 6,815 total.

September 21 * Soybean harvest begins.

September 23 * Dahlias, mums and garden roses burst with magnificent blooms.

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The first-of-the-fall White-throated Sparrows arrive in Golden Valley. A few hummingbirds still linger at feeders. Spotters count 1,993 Broad-winged Hawks over Mankato.



September 28 * It's grape harvest time.

September 29 * A late annual cicada still buzzes. Fall colors peak across extreme northern MN.

September 30 * At least 1,000 migrating American Coots gather now on the southwest side of Lake Waconia. We just ended the second warmest September on record for the Twin Cities: 1897 was 0.1°F warmer.