



# SEPTEMBER PHENOLOGY

*A reflective look at 2010*

by Jim Gilbert, Naturalist

*September is a transition month,* leading to summer's end. Usually the first half of the month is summery but the last days are true autumn. Listed below are a few observations from a year ago in the Twin Cities Metro area, Waconia and areas beyond. These events can be used to anticipate upcoming happenings and will help you compare this year with last.

**September 1** \* The landscape looks like early autumn, with some yellow on eastern cottonwoods and basswoods and red just starting to appear on sumacs and sugar maples. A few Baltimore Orioles stop at feeding stations; a good share of them headed south (among the night migrants) over the past couple of days.

**September 3** \* Numerous Ruby-throated Hummingbirds continue to fuel up at sugar-water feeders for their long migration south. Large monarch flutters, with up to 2,000 butterflies, roost in Carver County; these wisps of life are moving out of Minnesota and are on their long journey to Mexico.

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**White-throated Sparrows appear. Acorns continue to fall, providing vital food for many animals, including Wood Ducks, Wild Turkeys, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, white-tailed deer and black bears.**



**September 6** \* Barn Swallows line up on utility wires, staging for migration. It's time to begin picking Honeycrisp, SweeTango® and Wealthy apples!

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**A late brood of Eastern Bluebird young fledges. The warbler migration continues, including Golden-winged, Black-and-white, Nashville and other species.**

**September 13** \* The first migrating American Coots return to Lake Waconia for the fall season (same date as in 2009). White-lined sphinx moths, also known as "hummingbird moths," feed on garden impatiens nectar.

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**A total of 7,612 Blue Jays fly over Hawk Ridge in Duluth—the single largest one day count in Minnesota, ever! This is a great day for hawkwatching, too; a total of 7,646 hawks pass over the same ridge.**



**September 20** \* A late Ruby-throated Hummingbird is seen at Lutsen (most have left northern Minnesota by Sept. 12, and the southern part of the state by Sept. 25).

**September 25** \* Apple growers and orchard-going families pick Cortlands, McIntoshes and Haralsons.

**September 26** \* Fall colors peak across the northern one-third of Minnesota.

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**Dark-eyed Juncos arrive at some feeding stations. Native sugar maples display reds, yellows and burnt oranges.**

**September 30** \* Wild grape leaves exhibit a sunny yellow, while the vines continue to produce bunches of purple fruit. Corn chopping and soybean harvesting is in full swing across southern Minnesota.