

October

Nature Through the Seasons

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One of the many things that fascinates me about nature is the predictability of seasonally-occurring natural events like bird migration, flowering, and the calling of frogs. Nature Through the Seasons is based on observations recorded over the past nine years in Medina County.

First Week

Birds - Northern Harriers are often observed during this month and early November cruising over open fields.

Large flocks of red-winged blackbirds pass through from Canada on their way to southern states. They fuel up on several berries and fruits including wild grape.

Eastern Phoebe is usually gone by this week for southern states and Mexico.

Mammals - Big brown and little brown bats are gone by the end of the first week. We believe they hibernate in mines and caves of southern Ohio and Kentucky.

Second Week

Birds - White-throated sparrows and white-crowned sparrows appear during this week scratching through the leaves for insects. The first dark-eyed juncos return to the bird sanctuary at Wolf Creek.

Mammals - Groundhogs are waddling fat as they pack on the pounds for their long winter's nap.

Wildflowers - Purple, blue and white asters give a splash of meadow color to add to the fall foliage.



Aster



Peak color arrives during the second and third weeks of October.

Trees - The peak fall color of leaves is the second and third weeks. The brilliant scarlet of the red maples and the reds, oranges and yellows of the sugar maples are the most dominant in our area.

Third Week

Birds - Migrating robins and cedar waxwings can be seen striping the purple pokeberries.

Insects - The last monarch butterflies are seen during this week. Evenings become quiet as the insect symphony has almost fallen silent.

Reptiles - Warm days bring out a variety of snakes including garter snakes, milk snakes, and northern brown snakes. This is their last chance to store fat for winter hibernation.

Fourth Week

Birds - Look for tundra swans on Lake Medina and Chippewa Lake. Downy and red-bellied woodpeckers return to suet feeders.

Mammals - White-tailed deer begin the breeding season that can last until January. Caution should be taken when driving during the evenings as the bucks will be following does across roads.

Insects - The flies that are hovering in "dancing" swarms along forest trails and edges are appropriately called dance flies.

Wildflowers - Milkweed pods burst open this week sending their silky-plumed seeds floating on the breeze.

Trees - As the leaves of maple, ash and hickory begin to fall, the leaves of oaks turn various shades of red. This is your last chance to view color before November winds strip the leaves.