

JIM STRIPE | OBERG LAKE AUTUMN COLORS | TOFTE, MN

ARTISTS MEET FALL AT OBERG MOUNTAIN



Each year on September 25, landscape painters, photographers and others mesmerized by nature's annual show of autumn colors, gather to experience the fleeting pleasure near Minnesota's North Shore. This special place called Oberg Mountain is near Tofte, and it does involve some strenuous trail walking to see the views of Lake Superior and surrounding hillsides covered with sugar maples, moose maples and more. This autumn splendor draped in reds, burnt-oranges and golden yellows should last a few days – in case you prefer to wait for the crowds to disperse.

FRESHWATER

HELP PROTECT WATER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The **Minnesota Water Stewards** certification program offers a great opportunity to join a network of energized volunteer leaders to tackle water challenges in your community. Stewards learn about Minnesota's water science and water issues, and they explore how to engage friends and neighbors in work for healthy water. From whiskey barrels turned rain barrels to schoolyard gardens, shoreline restorations to winter salt use legislation reform, stewards' projects reflect their passions.

Through our Art for Water program, artists explore new and vibrant ways to engage people to protect water. Muralist Geno Okok's bright, multi-colored fish stop people on the street, reminding them that storm drains flow directly into our lakes and rivers. Other recent projects include sculptures, music, coloring books and puppets.

Learn more and apply at minnesotawaterstewards.org.

SEPTEMBER PHENOLOGY

Jim Gilbert's Nature Notes

First week of September

This is peak time for garden-ripe tomato production. Enjoy eating wild plums and wild grapes. Water temperatures in Minnesota and Wisconsin lakes are mostly around 70 degrees and good for swimming, but that won't last long. A good share of Baltimore orioles leave for Central America by September 3 each year. They are among the night migrants. In northern Minnesota, fireweed only has a few flowers left on top of its clusters, signaling summer's end. Along the North Shore of Lake Superior, find some orange and red fall leaf colors on moose maples and some golden-yellow leaves on paper birches.

September 5, 2023, was day number 32 with 90 degrees or above in the Twin Cities; normal is 13 days each year. Art and Barb Straub, nature observers and writers, counted 906 chimney swifts enter the chimney at old St. Ann's School in LeSueur that evening. The first swifts entered the chimney at 7:47 p.m., and the last bird was in at 8:11 p.m. Soon, these birds will leave to winter in western South America.

Second week of September

Apple growers are harvesting SweetTango, Honeycrisp and Minjon, plus Chestnut crabs. Look for giant puffball mushrooms in the woods. The first common milkweed pods have begun opening and shedding seeds on silvery parachutes. The beautiful shiny-brown seeds from Ohio buckeye trees are falling. Most ruby-throated hummingbirds leave northern Minnesota by September 12 and the southern part of the state by September 25. Keep those sugar water feeders clean and at least partly filled into October in southern Minnesota for late migrants.

Third week of September

Some sweet corn is still available. Gardeners are harvesting carrots, beets, pumpkins, squash and much more. Plant crocus and daffodil bulbs now for bloom next spring. Bumble bees visit cosmos, turtlehead, petunias and hosta flowers. American bittersweet vines now have showy orange fruit. Annual cicadas continue buzzing. Newly hatched tiny snapping turtles head for a nearby lake. Northern flickers are migrating through. Watch for flotillas of migrating American coots on many southern Minnesota lakes. Wild cranberries are ripe in northern Minnesota and Wisconsin bogs.

Fourth week of September

We are now seeing the first scrapes and rubs from buck white-tailed deer. Migrating dark-eyed juncos and white-throated sparrows arrive at feeding stations. Black walnuts fall on blustery days, and gray squirrels bury these nuts, often in

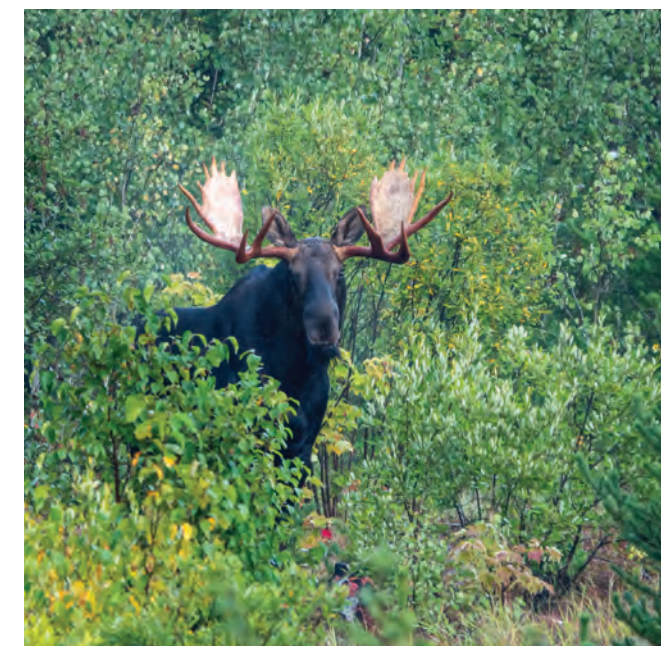
LOOK FOR ...



Last Baltimore oriole leaves to winter in Central America (from Minnetonka):

2023	Aug. 31
2022	Sept. 10
2021	Sept. 7
2020	Sept. 7
2019	Sept. 10
2018	Sept. 16
2017	Sept. 15
2016	Sept. 14
2015	Sept. 9
2014	Sept. 17

lawns. In the garden, ever-bearing strawberries and fall-bearing raspberries are producing ripe fruit. Moose in northern Minnesota are in their rutting season from mid-September to mid-October. On September 25 each year, on Oberg Mountain above Lake Superior near Tofte, photographers, landscape painters and others mesmerized by nature's handiwork gather to experience the fleeting pleasure of spectacular Minnesota foliage colors, especially from the sugar maples in the surrounding forests. Farmers have begun combining soybeans; best done at about 13 percent moisture. Soybeans are grown across southern Minnesota and along the western border all the way to Canada. Minnesota ranks third in soybean production behind Illinois and Iowa.



PAUL SUNDBERG | BULL MOOSE | GUNFLINT TRAIL, MN

