

# The Naturalist's Fall Almanac

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## September

**3** Watch for migrating **MONARCH BUTTERFLIES** feeding on the nectar of goldenrods and asters in meadows and other open habitats. Monarchs that migrate along the coast are especially reliant on Seaside Goldenrod, often the most abundant wildflower still in bloom.

**8** **SNAPPING TURTLE** eggs may be hatching now, depending on the weather. Earlier in the summer, female Snapping Turtles laid eggs in sandy or gravelly areas, often near roads or other human development. All the eggs hatch at approximately the same time, and the tiny turtles dig their way out and begin crawling to find a water body where they will spend the winter.



**17** Now is usually when the fall **WARBLER** migration peaks, though identifying them in their nonbreeding plumages can be a challenge! Look for these active birds wherever there is an abundance of insects: the canopy of native trees like oaks, pines, and maples, thickets of shrubs like viburnums and blackberries, or meadows of goldenrod.

## October

**3** The **MOOSE** rut is generally occurring around this time, depending on local conditions. This period, when the females (cows) are in estrus (heat), lasts approximately 7-12 days and is usually synchronized among most females in a given area.

**14** A partial **SOLAR ECLIPSE** may be viewable in Maine this evening. This will be an annular eclipse, where the Moon is too far away to completely eclipse the Sun, resulting in a bright ring around the dark shape of the Moon.

**21** Oak species have ripe **ACORNS** by now, an important source of food for many animals, including Blue Jays, Wild Turkeys, and White-tailed Deer. Blue Jays are the most effective seed dispersal mechanism for oak species; they will sometimes carry acorns miles from the parent tree and bury them whole, providing ideal conditions for some acorns to germinate and grow into new oak trees.

**27** **HARLEQUIN DUCKS**, state-listed as Threatened, have begun to return to wintering grounds in coastal Maine. These extraordinary ducks breed on fast-moving rivers in Labrador and Quebec, diving for insect larvae and other arthropods. In Maine, you can find them diving among the equally-turbulent water of our rocky coastline.

## November

**13** The cones of **ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR** (state-listed Special Concern) are ripe now in a few bogs and swamps in coastal Maine. These habitats are especially vulnerable to disturbance from development, and host multiple rare, threatened, or endangered species. Hessel's Hairstreak larvae only feed on Atlantic White Cedar foliage.

**18** This is an ideal time to spot **BALTIMORE ORIOLE** nests hanging in the canopy of bare trees, especially maples, elms, or oaks near water bodies. Though the orioles are long gone, their pendulous, gourd-shaped nests can remain in trees into the winter.



**25** Maine's endangered and threatened **BAT** species, Little Brown Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat, and Eastern Small-footed Bat, are inside hibernacula for the winter. These crevices in caves or talus slopes are rocky and moist enough to stay relatively warm throughout the winter.