

The Naturalist's Summer Almanac

By Field Naturalist Andy Kapinos

June

3 **BLACKPOLL WARBLERS** and **BICKNELL'S THRUSHES** have returned to their breeding territories on Maine's highest peaks. Both species are listed on Maine's Endangered Species Act list as threatened. Their subalpine habitat in Maine is some of the most at-risk due to climate change.



15 Adults of many species of moths and butterflies, like **WHITE ADMIRALS**, are flying now, looking for mates and host plants to lay their eggs on. White Admirals in Maine usually lay their eggs on birch species, like Yellow Birch.

20 **WOOD FROGS** are often seen around this time on the forest floor. This species only breeds in vernal pools, and is nearly always found within a quarter-mile of a vernal pool site.



July

4 **FIREFLIES** or lightning bugs are at their peak around now. They are neither flies, nor bugs, but beetles; 11 night-flashing species can be found in Maine. They spend their larval stages in the soil, and require healthy soils and an abundance of leaf litter.

11 Now is a good time to find **SNAKES**, especially on hot days. Garter Snakes, Red-bellied Snakes, Milk Snakes, and Smooth Green Snakes are the most common throughout Maine, and are most frequently found around habitat edges.



Photo: Nick Lund

28 By July, **SHOREBIRDS** are already starting to migrate back south to their non-breeding territories. Species like Least Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers breed in the brief Arctic summer, taking advantage of 20+ hours of sunlight per day and the abundance of insects that fosters.



NEW ENGLAND BLAZING-STAR

Photo: Arthur Haines

August

2 **NEW ENGLAND BLAZING-STAR** (*Liatris novae-angliae*), threatened in Maine, is blooming now in York County. This species is endemic to (only found in) the Northeast, and the largest population anywhere is found on and near the Kennebunk Sand Plains.

7 This is probably the best time to see young **LEAST BITTERN**, if you're both lucky and patient. They are among the most difficult birds to see, as they spend nearly all their time hiding in cattails, but their young sometimes pick poor hiding spots and can be seen in late summer. Endangered in Maine, this species only nests in extensive cattail patches.



15 **HARBOR SEALS** are feeding in coastal waters throughout the summer. They frequently chase schools of small fish and squid into shallow water, often accompanied by gulls, terns, or Striped Bass.