

Nature's Events - September

Fall is here!

What kind of things will be taking place in nature over the next few weeks?

PLANTS:

A spectacular change that takes place in the fall is the change in color of the leaves. Deciduous trees will lose their leaves, and before they do some will change color.

Some questions:

Why do deciduous trees spend an enormous amount of energy growing a green photosynthetic factory all summer, only to throw it away when winter approaches?

Isn't there going to be any sunlight in the winter?

Do all trees do it?

Why do the leaves change color? Do different species have specific colors or are they all the same? Do individual trees of the same species change in exactly the same way?

For thousands of years humans living in the temperate zones thought of fall in the same way.....it was HARVEST TIME!

Plants that haven't already formed fruit or seeds will be doing it right now. And if you are a human planning to hang around for the winter and hope to survive to spring you had better store enough food, right now, to get you through the winter.

And other animals will be doing the same. Some will store food. Examples:

Others will store fat, and reduce energy expenditure to make the fat last the winter and early spring. Examples:

Most however will die - think insects. How do insect species survive if all of the adults present in the fall die off? Examples:

A few animals, including insects, will survive the winter by migrating to warmer temperatures. Examples:

One of the most spectacular migrations that occur in our area is that of the hawks.

THOUSANDS of hawks pass over NYC every year. And a few hundred humans, take the time in their busy lives, to make sure that they get out on a few of the best days to observe this yearly spectacle.

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What species of hawks, if any, breed in the NY metro area?

What species of hawks, if any, live here year round?

When do they migrate through the area? Do they all come at once? Does it differ by species? Does it differ by age & sex of the individuals? Do they all use the same routes?

Lots of questions occur. As you consider them you might sort them into categories like:

- 1) I bet I could look that up on the web/in the library.
- 2) I think I know who I could ask that would know the answer to that question.
- 3) I think that the answer to that question is so obvious that I could guess the answer myself.
- 4) I figure nobody knows the answer to that question and there's no way to find out.
- 5) I figure nobody knows the answer to that question but it could be found out if you went out and collected the following data, a)....., b)....., c)....., etc.

Would you expect that the Young of the Year (YOY) migrate with the adults or before or after?

Would you expect that the females of a particular species would migrate with the males or before or after?

Could a person identify the species of hawk as it flies overhead 1000 feet up?

What are the best places to go in the Metro area to see migrating hawks?

When is the best time to go?

Why do hawks migrate?

