



Eventful August

CU Maurice River provides a natural history calendar by month.

Often folks ask us at CU Maurice River about what is happening in the natural world during specific time frames. So over the years we have developed a Natural History Calendar by Month. It contains some fun highlights about what you might expect to observe during a given period. Sometimes this calendar will provide insight into things you might be observing without

necessarily knowing why you are seeing them.

At the end of May our members often become concerned about the lack of action at their hummingbird nectar feeders. This occurs when the honeysuckle blooms; the birds leave the feeders to feed on these sweet blossoms. Take note that Japanese honeysuckle is an invasive species that will crowd out desirable native plants. So if you plant honeysuckle, get a native coral honeysuckle from a reputable native plant nursery. Reading our calendar online also gives you insight into when the birds arrive from their breeding grounds in Central America so you know when to start putting feeders out.

As the season progresses, you may have noticed that in August your hummingbird feeders look a bit like Grand Central Station compared to springtime. A number of factors are at work here. First of all, a female hummingbird may raise up to three broods (offspring from one hatching) a season, and by now you are witnessing the fruits of her labors. Also, in August

the southward migration of hummingbirds brings birds that nested north of us to our feeders. These birds are also ravenous and must sustain energy needed for their long journey south.

Our August calendar also talks about other migrations, like shorebirds passing through on their return trip from the Arctic to their wintering grounds in Southern America. The birds are more widely distributed than on their northward migration in May when they feast on horseshoe crab eggs on the Delaware Bay beaches.

Also beginning in August, adult ospreys start their treks to Brazil; their young mysteriously find their way south unescorted weeks later. Other things of note for August are the Perseid meteor shower; the blooming of goldenrod, cardinal flower, aster, and other latesummer native plants; fruits appearing on dogwood trees and Virginia creeper; and squirrels' second brood.

September is right around the corner and there are lots of fun nature notes to check out for this coming month. Hawk movements reach peak numbers. And one of the most celebrated regional migrations is that of the monarch butterflies along the NJ Delaware Bayshore. We hope you will join us to see some of these phenomena.

To learn more about seasonal happenings, go to CUMauriceRiver.org and select Calendar of Events. The top of the page outlines things you can do with other nature enthusiasts. Beneath it is the Natural History Calendar by Month. A screen shot of the September calendar is shown above. Enjoy and CU on the River.