

# OUTDOOR ALMANAC

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Many moths and butterfly species hatch a second brood this month, so it's a great time to investigate plants and tree leaves for **caterpillars** and appreciate the amazing variety of protective camouflage. Some look like bird droppings, some like leaves or twigs, and some have large eye spots at the end of their abdomens to confuse predators trying to aim for their heads.



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After dark, look for large, light-green Luna Moths near porch lights; this adult phase only lasts for a week.

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A few days after a rain look for ghost pipe plants blooming among the roots of trees in the forest. These small, colorless, flowering plants have no chlorophyll and get their nutrients from the fungi that live in tree roots.

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Listen for the trills or whinnies of **Eastern Screech-owls** calling as the young of the year search for territories.



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Flocks of sanderlings, returned from breeding grounds in the Arctic, can be seen chasing waves as they feed on tiny crustaceans in the wet sand.

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Full moon



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Peak of the Perseid meteor shower, which can be seen from July 14 to August 24. After midnight, shooting stars, as many as 100 per hour, flare through the darkened sky.

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Monarch butterflies are toxic to birds, and their orange and black coloring serves as a warning to any that have tried to eat one. Check out all the other orange and black insects on milkweeds. Most of them are not toxic, but birds that have eaten a monarch are inclined to avoid all similarly colored insects.

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Tall, bright red **cardinal flowers** blooming in clean freshwater wetlands are an important late-season nectar source for Ruby-throated Hummingbirds as they prepare to migrate



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Unlike most moths, the beautiful clearwing moths are diurnal (daytime feeders) and look more like small hummingbirds or large bumblebees as they fly from flower to flower. Hummingbird Clearwing has pale legs and Snowberry Clearwing has a black band from the eye across the thorax and black legs; they both have two-toned abdomens and see-through wings.

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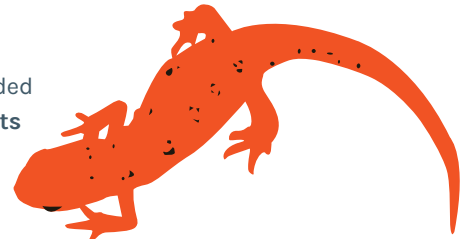
Garter snakes are hatching. These snakes are ovoviviparous, which means the females make eggs but hold them in their bodies until the young hatch, and then release them. A good adaptation for a reptile in a colder climate that can't dig an incubation nest.

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Common Nighthawks are migrating along the river valleys. Search above open fields near water and listen for their raspy peent calls as they hunt night-flying insects.

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On rainy days in wooded areas, look for **Red Efts** (juvenile newts) on roots and rocks.



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Watch for flocks of migrating shorebirds in muddy estuaries, along the coast or in open fields. Most of these birds breed in the Arctic and spend winters in Central and South America. Adults come through first, followed by this year's juveniles.

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**Solomon's seal fruits** hanging under the plant's curving stem have ripened to a deep blue-black. Clusters of ripened red false Solomon's seal fruits hang from the ends of the stems.

