



OCTOBER

OUTDOOR ALMANAC



01 With its molt nearly complete, the American Goldfinch has only a few remaining yellow breeding feathers. Its new wing feathers sport broad, pale edges and wing bars that, by next August, will be worn away almost completely, leaving an all-black wing.

02 The last of the **Green Darner Dragonflies** can be seen flying over sunny meadows before they migrate south for the winter.

05 **Common Milkweed**, an important resource for many different insects in the summer, disperses its seeds. Look for large, bumpy pods with fluffy white seeds emerging, ready to float off in the wind.

06 Full moon

08 Dark-eyed Juncos and **White-throated Sparrows** start showing up at feeders.

12 Look closely at rotting logs to see the tiny fruiting bodies of wolf's milk slime mold; they are bright pink to purplish gray. Slime molds are not fungi but single-celled organisms that feed on fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms.

15 While some of our sparrows are year-round residents or come for the winter (American Tree and White-throated sparrows), several species including Chipping, Savannah, and Saltmarsh sparrows fly south with the northwest tailwinds.

18 Woodchucks, a.k.a. groundhogs, are preparing for hibernation. To get ready for their slumber, they can eat up to 1 pound of vegetation a day and add about ½ inch layer of fat to sustain them through the winter.

19 Turkey Vultures are migrating. Scan the sky for a large, black bird soaring with its wings in the shape of a shallow "V."

20/21 After the sun goes down, look to the night sky to view the peak of the Orionids meteor shower.

21 **Eastern Chipmunks** are busy storing nuts and seeds for winter. Instead of hibernating continuously through winter, chipmunks wake every few weeks to eat the food they stored.

23 North American Racers migrate from the field habitats they live in most of the year to forested slopes, where they overwinter in dens with other snakes.

26 Look for Harlequin Ducks and Common Goldeneyes arriving to spend the winter along the coast.

31 Happy Halloween! Don't worry about any vampire bats in Massachusetts. Species that we do have, such as **Big Brown Bats** and Little Brown Bats, are preparing for hibernation in caves and cavities or traveling south.

PHOTOS

Green Darner Dragonfly © Catherine Lahousse • Common Milkweed White-throated Sparrow • Eastern Chipmunk © Zhanna Karachev Big Brown Bat © Amy Powers-Smith