

Featured nature sighting report for the dates of August 20-23:

It's nearing the end of August and the flowers that are blooming are showing the signs of Autumn's approach! The weather has been lovely and the mosquitos and deer flies have really slowed down. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park this month. There are some hints of Autumn color in the ferns, understory plants and a few maples. However, today is warm and the swim beach is still a great place to hang out for the last weeks of summer.

- Red squirrels are beginning to cut red pine cones, stashing the seeds for their winter food supply.
- Some of our birds are getting ready to migrate back to warmer climates.
- Watch for the rolling swirl of fish on the water's surface as they feed on insects hovering close to the water's surface.
- Late summer flowers now blooming include various asters and goldenrods, Joe Pye weed, arrowroot, giant blue hyssop and pearly everlasting.
- Watch for the this year's fawns at dusk and dawn along roadways as they come to feed or cross to water sources, notice their spots are beginning to fade.

Featured nature sighting report for the dates of September 10-14:

Autumn's colors are advancing more and more each day! Pockets of color pop out from the predominantly green forest. The weather has been lovely and the mosquitos have really slowed down. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park this weekend.

- Timber wolf seen along Country road 2 between Itasca State Park and the La Salle Lake State Recreation area.
- Listen for the howling of wolves as they work towards a rendezvous point.
- Porcupine males and females are heard squealing as they try to locate each other in the woods during their mating season.
- Northern flickers and blackbird species are gathering more frequently along the sides of roadways, feeding on ants.
- Garter snakes are seen sunning themselves on trails and roadways.

- Watch for the this year's fawns at dusk and dawn along roadways as they come to feed or cross to water sources, notice their spots are beginning to fade.

Featured nature sighting report for the dates of September 15-19:

The Autumn Equinox occurs on Saturday, September 22 and fall colors are advancing more and more each day! Heavy rain and winds last weekend took down many of the ash leaves, but the maples, basswood and birch are starting to show more color, adding reds, oranges and yellows to the otherwise 'green' woods. The temperatures have been ideal for biking. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park this weekend.

- Broad-winged hawks are on the move with many sightings of them feeding on rodents during the day.
- Groups of adult and immature bald eagles can be seen soaring overhead. Watch for them as they roost in the trees.
- Ruffed grouse are occasionally heard (and seen) as they try a little fall 'drumming' on the large downed white pine.
- Larger flocks of geese are seen flying in V-formation overhead.
- Raccoons are feeding on acorns at night, their squealing sounding like pigs.
- A spike buck and 'fork-horned' buck are often seen in the early morning and at dusk along the Mississippi River.
- Listen for barred owls calling "Who? Who? Who cooks for you all?" at night.
- See more on the attached fall color report.

Featured nature sighting report for the dates of September 22-27:

It is amazing how quickly the fall colors are advancing in the park with more and more change each day! The maples, basswood and birch are quickly approaching peak color, adding reds, oranges and yellows to the otherwise 'green' pine forest. Oaks and aspen are now adding their colors to the mix. The temperatures have been ideal for hiking or biking. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park this weekend. Watch the fall colors change along the shores of Itasca. Bald eagles have been frequenting the headwaters area. Check out the webcam.

- A lone hummingbird was seen at a feeder between September 23-25.
- Temperatures are starting to drop with day highs this past week in the low 40s to mid-50s. The 'windchill' report has appeared once again on the local weather reports.
- Groups of adult and immature bald eagles can be seen soaring overhead. Watch for them as they roost in the trees.
- Immature robins and cedar waxwings are seen feeding on the fruits of mountain ash.
- A few northern flickers are seen feeding on various fruits, while red-bellied woodpeckers are seen and heard calling from high in the tops of dead trees.
- Larger flocks of geese are seen flying in V-formation overhead.
- Raccoons are feeding on acorns at night, their squealing sounding like pigs.
- Black-billed magpies are appearing more frequently as they return around buildings for the winter season.
- Beaver are very active at night around Chambers Creek and the Mississippi Headwaters as they try to dam up the rivers.

Featured nature sighting report for the dates of September 28-October 5:

October has rolled in and the fall colors are symbolic of the season... the orange, gold and brown colors! Enjoy the sounds and smells of autumn leaves as they begin to fall when you head out on the trail. Now is the perfect time to go hiking... the bugs are (for the most part) dead after several frosts and the temperatures are like the perfect porridge...not too hot and not too cold. The maples, birch, ironwood and elm are now at peak color, adding reds, oranges and yellows to the otherwise 'green' pine forest. Oaks and aspen are quickly advancing, adding stunning color to the forest.. We hope you can come out and enjoy the park this weekend as we reach the high-point for viewing fall colors. Yes, we did get snow on Friday night (about 2 to 3-inches) but it is melting. The snow adds a wonderful twist to the fall colors.

- Snow flurries in the air on Friday and Saturday, September 28 and 29.
- Approximately 2 to 3-inches of snow fell Thursday night, October 4.
- Groups of Ruffed grouse are seen feeding along the roadways towards evening.
- Flocks of slate-colored juncos have arrived and are busy feeding in the grasses.

- Male white-tailed deer are active, their antlers free of velvet.

Featured nature sighting report for the dates of September 28-October 5:

October has rolled in and the fall colors are symbolic of the season... the orange, gold and brown colors! Mother Nature threw us a twist with some snow on Wednesday and cold temps Thursday and Friday. However, autumn won out and the sun is shining, the sky is robin's egg blue and the snow is melting with temps at 40°! Now is the perfect time to go hiking to enjoy the remaining fall colors... the bugs are dead after the hard freeze. Although we just went past peak for the abundance of colorful trees, the oaks and aspen are now at peak color, adding stunning color to the forest. Tamaracks are near or at peak with rich gold needles.

- Morning low of +17°F on Friday, October 12. Snow remains on the ground. Day time temperatures reach 40° with a sunny blue sky!
- Small ponds frozen over on Friday, October 12.
- Snow Wednesday, October 10, with about 2-inches on the ground on Thursday.
- Black bear tracks seen in the snow on Thursday.
- Large flocks of migrating sparrows seen feeding in open areas.
- Oaks and aspen are at peak. Maples and birch are past peak but still showing color in protected areas.
- Tamaracks are almost peak showing soft yellow-green to rich gold.
- Wood ducks are seen and heard as they flush from secluded ponds.
- White-tailed deer bucks are being seen feeding near does at night