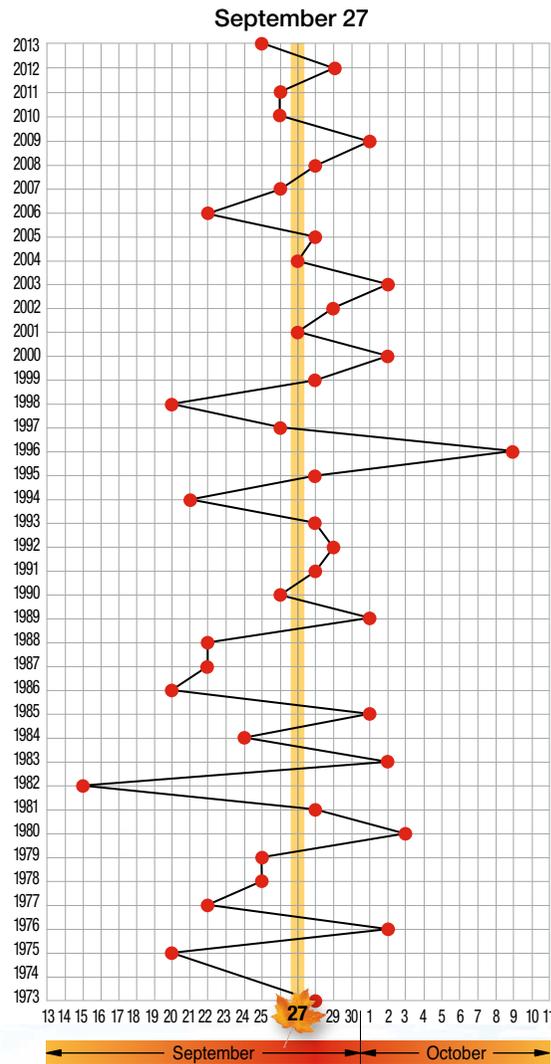


AVERAGE DATE OF PEAK FALL COLOURS



When will Algonquin's leaf colour be at its peak?

Algonquin colour admirers understandably want to know when the colours will be at their peak but this is difficult to say ahead of time. We have no crystal ball; however, fall leaf colour is usually best from late September through early October. Our graph illustrates the "peak" dates since the 1970s. This may help when you plan your autumn visit to Algonquin.

You can check for regular updates on the Park's leaf-colour status by visiting:

www.algonquinpark.on.ca
or www.OntarioParks.com

When in the Park, trails with good views of maple colour include:

Hardwood Lookout
(at km 13.8)

Track & Tower
(at km 25)

Centennial Ridges
(2 km South from km 37.6)

Lookout
(at km 39.7)

Booth's Rock
(9 km South from km 40.3)

Enjoy the view!



A single piece of firewood can destroy millions of trees.



If you bring your own firewood from home, you could spread insect and plant diseases that threaten the health of our forests. The **Asian Long-horned Beetle** and **Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)** are of particular concern right now. Although these invasive insects pose no risk to human health, they threaten the health of our forests.

Prevent the spread of these pests.

Here's how YOU can help to control the spread of invasive species

Leave firewood at home!

A better alternative is to purchase firewood locally around the park; however please check for pest infestation and avoid purchasing ash firewood.

Leave natural items in their natural habitats.

It is unlawful to cut any plants or trees, or collect dead wood, for campfires.



Firewood is sold at your campground office or...

- Pog Lake Woodyard (at km 36.9)
- Mew Lake Woodyard (at km 30.6) *open year-round*
(during winter months, operates on self-serve fee station - cash only)

PHOTO: JESSICA M'COOMB
QUESTIONS? Talk to Park staff, call the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) at 1-800-442-2342, or visit www.inspection.gc.ca
FIREWOOD from all areas regulated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) will be seized and NOT replaced.

Protect our environment and forest resources.



The Visitor Centre offers **FREE WiFi** internet access
...and while there, don't forget to check out The Friends of Algonquin Park Bookstore and Nature Shop, or the Sunday Creek Café.

algonquinpark.on.ca

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Algonquin

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The Raven

A Natural and Cultural History Digest

The Flight of Featherless Wings

by Lev Frid

As the fall passage of birds slows down in Algonquin Park, lesser-known travelers are still making their way to wintering grounds farther south. These creatures, like birds, have spent their summers feeding and breeding in northern forests and are now moving south to avoid the cold weather and lack of food. Unlike the birds, however, these travelers are making their journey on wings without feathers — they are migratory bats. In a world where their relatives are suffering from a deadly fungus, the migrant bats are safe from the plague.

Bats have been getting a lot of attention in the media, and it's usually pretty depressing. First, the mysterious die-off of hibernating bats in upstate New York, then the identification of the culprit—White-nose Fungus (*Pseudogymnoascus destructans*), and now the discovery that this fungus is quickly spreading throughout eastern North America and destroying colonies of bats. Bats that were once common, a prime

example being the Little Brown Bat, are now relatively scarce. It may seem like all is lost for these misunderstood creatures, but that is not the case. We must remember that not



This Red Bat is roosting on foliage. These large bats over-winter singly on trees rather than in caves.

all of the bats hibernate in colonies, and by removing themselves from the cool temperatures that the fungus needs to survive (such as in a cave or a mine for example), they are effectively safe from this threat.

Three of our bats in Algonquin are migrants, and all three are exceptionally attractive animals. These are the Eastern Red Bat, the Hoary Bat, and the Silver-haired Bat. Compared to the cave-hibernating bats, these bats are quite a bit larger and have a longer tail membrane that allows

them to fold it over most of their body to conserve heat as they roost in the canopy of trees. Unlike cave bats, they roost and raise their young individually and not in a colony setting. Therefore they are in less contact with one another, and combined with the fact that

they spend their winters in places where the temperature is usually too high for the fungus, this means they are effectively escaping the fungal threat.

The routes these bats use to get to their wintering quarters, and even where exactly most of them go, remains poorly known.

Presumably, from sightings and surveying, a good number of them over-winter in the south-central United States, where average winter temperatures hover around freezing. Some perhaps go even farther than that; Hoary Bats have been recorded in northern Mexico. Regardless, for an animal roughly the size of a mouse, it is a long way to travel to avoid our winter. They have thick fur that allows them to keep warm as they hibernate, usually curled up high in trees on a relatively unexposed branch, under bark, or in leaf-litter on the forest floor. On nights where the temperature gets high enough for insects to become active, these bats will rouse and feed.

The fact that these bats migrate, coupled with their large size and usually bright colours, makes them great candidates for observation and study. On a warm autumn evening with many flying insects, these bats will move even during the light of day, and by looking for them in openings or natural corridors, such as Highway 60, one might be pleasantly surprised at what can be found! It was on such an evening here that some of our naturalists got to see for themselves the trials and tribulations of bat migration.

We knew that bats were on the move when we were driving home one October evening from a bird watching trip to the East Side. It was dusk, but still quite bright when we saw a bizarre orange animal flying across the road.

We pulled over thinking it was a bird, but to our surprise it turned out to be a spectacular male Eastern Red Bat. If you get a look in good light, you can tell the sexes apart – the male is a bright orange while the female is a more subdued yellowish colour. We were able to watch it for quite a while before heading back, and saw a few more Eastern Red Bats migrating along the road as well as a Silver-haired Bat.

A few days later, as we were driving home from work, we noticed something large flying over the road near Lake of Two Rivers. Being avid birders, we pulled over expecting to see a bird, but to our surprise, it was a Hoary Bat! It was still very bright outside and we were able to view this bat with binoculars as it coursed along the highway. It was a beautiful creature, with a yellow collar, dark face and body hair with pale “hoar-frosted” tips that give it its name. With an 8-inch wingspan, it the largest bat in Canada. It flew with a distinctive flap-flap-flap-glide pattern, as a small hawk does. We quickly realized that we were not

the only ones with our eyes on this bat. A Merlin, a small falcon, appeared and began harassing it. It fended off the threat, but as the Merlin left we noticed it was gaining altitude until it abruptly stalled in mid-air, folded up



Migratory bats have elongated tail membranes that they fold over their bodies to conserve heat, as they hibernate singly and in more exposed areas than cave bats.



The Hoary Bat may travel from Canada as far south as the southern United States or Mexico.

its wings and performed a marvelous stoop that ultimately ended in success. He was indeed fuelling his own migration south. While hibernating bats live for an average of ten years, migration as we discovered takes its toll, and migrant bats can be expected to

live for only three to five years – similar to our migratory birds. Migration is not without risk.

Even though our individual Hoary Bat had finished its migration early, its relatives are going to continue winging their way south on their unfeathered wings, escaping the threat of

Little Brown Bats and the devastating effects of White-nose Syndrome



An example of a healthy Little Brown Bat, unaffected by White-nose Syndrome (left) and a hibernating Little Brown Bat suffering from White-nose Syndrome (right). Note the white fungus around the nose and on the wings.

Until recently the Little Brown Bat was the most common bat in Ontario. You may have seen them huddled under the stoop of your home or cottage or flying at night in an open area feeding on flying insects.

Since the discovery of White-nose Syndrome in New York State in 2006, the disease has spread quickly and arrived in Ontario by 2010. Now, many of the caves and abandoned mines where Little Brown Bats over-wintered have become crypts for the bats that have succumbed to the pathogen. Researchers have observed the rapid loss of 90% of the Little Brown Bats in monitored over-wintering sites. What

we do know about White-nose Syndrome is that it thrives in the cool temperatures of caves and that it is spread bat to bat. To make matters worse, part of the life history of the Little Brown Bat involves males flying long distances to other caves, thereby spreading the fungus. And so, the plague continues to spread across Eastern North America. In response to this rapid decline, scientists and government officials have designated the Little Brown Bat as Endangered in Ontario. With this new status, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry wants your sightings of Little Brown Bats.

Please report your sightings at Natural Heritage Information Centre
nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/species/species_report.cfm

cold, starvation and now White-nose Fungus. They will return, just like our birds, to rear their young in Algonquin’s north woods in the spring, creating a new generation of fascinating little mammals – guided by echolocation, feeding on thousands of insects in a given night, and inspiring movies, books

and Halloween costumes world-wide. Even while their hibernating relatives may suffer at the hands of this destroying fungus, the story of North American bats is still one filled with incredible adaptation and stunning beauty, and certainly one that does not have an unhappy ending.

Annual Algonquin Dragonfly & Damselfly Count

This year’s Dragonfly and Damselfly Count was held on July 2nd. This citizen-science census was carried out by a large group of volunteers from all over southern Ontario, and achieved a tally of 67 species by day’s end—a tie for the highest ever. Some highlights included the discovery of a Dot-tailed Whiteface and Widow Skimmer, both of which are southern species that are very rare in the Algonquin highlands. A Forcinate Emerald was also netted, representing the fourth-ever park record and a reminder to us naturalists that surprises can happen anywhere and at any time, even in places we consider well-studied and understood!



The elusive Forcinate Emerald.



The dainty Dot-tailed Whiteface.



The Widow Skimmer prefers rich wetlands.



NEW RELEASE

ONLY \$12.95

The Best of The Raven Volume 2

This is the second book in this series which includes 80 articles reprinted from the popular and informative Algonquin Provincial Park’s Natural and Human History Newsletter, *The Raven*, from 1993 to 2000.

SHOP ONLINE: algonquinpark.on.ca

Available at the Algonquin Visitor Centre Bookstore, Logging Museum and Park Access Point offices.

