

DNR: Leaves starting to dramatically turn in Northwoods; fall chinook run still on hold

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Leaves started dramatically turning colors in the Northwoods this week. There is still mostly green in the woods, but the change has begun with red colors becoming noticeable in tree canopies and sumac bushes. The Wisconsin Department of Tourism has begun its Fall Color Report (exit DNR).

Water levels are normal to a little higher for this time of year due to continued precipitation.

On Green Bay, perch anglers were having some success along with musky anglers fishing the west shore and lower Bay. Walleye anglers were coming back with four to six fish per trip.

Fishing pressure around the Door County peninsula was high this past week and fishing was good. Adult chinook salmon have been making their way into the Sturgeon Bay canal and a few big fish were caught. The smallmouth bass bite remains fairly good, with a bass tournament off Little Sturgeon Bay bringing out a lot of boats Saturday.

On Lake Michigan, salmon fishing has been slow at both Kewaunee and Algoma but was picking up in Manitowoc and Two Rivers. The chinook salmon are moving in and can be seen surfacing in the harbors. A few kings have been spotted upstream but not in any numbers yet. Some salmon have been caught up the Manitowoc but no upstream reports from the Twin Rivers yet.

Fishing pressure at southern Lake Michigan harbors was relatively low during the

last week due to windy and stormy weather conditions. No fish have been caught yet on the Sheboygan or Pigeon rivers. Sauk Creek water levels were low and will need to rise for fish to come in. The Root River is extremely clear and very low with very few anglers fishing the river and no fish reported this week.

Dove, goose and teal seasons all opened on Sept. 1. Hunters reported seeing good numbers of doves, but geese and teal were a bit more sparse. Bear season opened Wednesday Sept. 6 with many hunters optimistic about the number of bears they have coming into baits.

Deer are feeding very heavily in morning and evening hours. Antler growth is complete or nearly complete with some deer starting to shed velvet. Bull elk are starting to bugle and the Flambeau River State Forest will host an RSVP "Singing Forest" program early in the morning Sept. 15 with an elk biologist checking for bugling elk.

With the coming of fall, animals are moving around all over to begin planning for winter. Coyotes, skunk and squirrels are all looking for food to fill up on. Coyotes have been very vocal enlivening the nights with their yips, barks, and howls. Family groups have established rendezvous sites, where they meet to socialize, and prepare for an upcoming hunt. Pups are especially vocal at this time and will readily respond when howled at by a human.

Groups of cranes are showing up in fields. The first flocks of northern Canada geese have been seen heading south in their classic "V" formations. Raptor migration is also underway, with early season flights dominated by broad-winged and sharp-shinned hawks, American kestrels, bald eagles and ospreys. On the ground, warbler watching was excellent at many locations statewide this week.

Snapping turtles are hatching and emerging from the ground. Watch carefully as baby turtles can look a lot like fallen leaves on the roadways.

Prairies are in bloom with showy goldenrod, purple cone flowers, white and blue asters, cup plants, common mullein, white snakeroot, marsh skullcap, lesser daisy fleabane, Joe Pye weed, pearly everlasting and spotted jewelweed. Acorns and hickories are dropping. Wild rice is plentiful in some locations but stands are thin and too short to harvest in most areas.