

September

September in Falmouth is a golden time, with the lingering warmth and lowering light angle; and it is a great time to go for a walk after the crowds of summer have left. Consider walking around Long Pond, or visit the Sea Farms Marsh. Here are some thoughts about what to expect and what to look for outdoors in September:



Poison Ivy (“leaves of three, leave it be”) and **Virginia Creeper**, a vine with maple-like leaves, turn red.

The **Virgin’s Bower Clematis** blooms, covering its vines with five-petaled white flowers. The distinctive feathery seed heads persist into fall.

The **ocean water’s temperature** is high enough to support hurricanes, and the inshore waters give us back the warmth we missed in the spring.

Birds from the north are to be found in thickets all over town. Look for them around the edges of Peterson Farm, and along the Bike Path, but they can show up anywhere, especially after a north wind.

The **equinox** is around the 21st — daylight and dark are of equal length — 12 hours, presaging the lengthening hours of darkness ahead.

Wild grapes ripen. You can often smell the spicy, grapey fragrance before you spot them. Look for Catbirds, Cardinals and Robins, feeding on grapes and other wild fruits.

Red dominates the wet woods and pond edges as **Tupelo** and **Red Maple** reach their peak of color ahead of the golden or russet oaks and hickories.

Terns have mostly left Falmouth by late summer, though a few sometimes return to fish. Now they leave the Cape entirely, not to return until April.

Green Darner dragonflies migrate through in late summer and can often be seen flying low above grasslands, especially near water.



Great Egret. Photo by Craig Gibson.

Monarch butterflies are common in gardens and on blooming asters as they pass though on their way south. These are the children and grand children of the ones that arrived in June.

Acorns and hickory nuts ripen; squirrels collect them and store them for winter, by burying them in the soil. Those that are forgotten may sprout next year, starting new trees.

Salt marshes turn golden as the grasses set seed and begin to die back.

Preserving Open Space for Falmouth

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