September 2006

Dam Drawdowns and Critters

Early fall water level drawdowns protect turtle and frog populations from freezing to death. Most turtles can survive winter when they are under 30 inches or more of water. Some turtles spend winter under floating mats of emergent vegetation in shallow areas where they dig themselves into the lake bottom. Under normal water levels, even a 6-inch drawdown could mean trouble for turtles. Drawing down the water in early fall allows turtles time to select their winter locations. If the water is drawn down too late in the season, the turtles will not have time to find a suitable site. With today's heavy turtle nest predation rates and road deaths, recovering from heavy over-winter mortality is much more difficult. Frogs are normally active later than the turtles and are better able to move following drops in water levels. Frogs are short-lived, produce large numbers of young, and are better adapted to recover from impacts of a late-season drawdown.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
August / October					1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6 Acorns ripen and fall	7 ○ Full Corn Moon	8 V's of geese in sky	9 WCLRA annual meeting 9:00 am Blackbirds congregate before migration
10	11 Rattlesnake plantain orchid blooms	12	13 Monarch butterflies seek goldenrod then roost at night in trees	14 ◑	15 Gatherings of flickers	16 Look for mushrooms
17	18	19 Mallards begin migration	20 Last of hummingbirds, orioles	21	22 ● Autumnal Equinox	23 First day of Rosh Hashanah
24	25 Transient Canada geese pass through	26 ●	27 Loons, sandhill cranes still vocal	28 Coyote community vocal	29	30 ◐