

Gunflint Trail Wildlife Calendar

January

- Oblong holes at the base of trees are the workings of Pileated Woodpeckers searching out Carpenter Ants.
- Bull moose shed their antlers.
- Listen and look for wandering flocks of northern finches including Pine Grosbeaks, Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Common Redpolls, White-winged and Red Crossbills.

February

- Watch out for moose kneeling on the Gunflint Trail. They are licking road salt, which they crave.
- Long troughs in the snow signal otter "slides". This is how otters travel.
- This is a great time to look for the pink, red, white, or green Northern Lights, also called the Aurora Borealis.
- Sundogs, mini rainbows on each side of the sun, signal ice crystals in the high atmosphere.
- Snowfleas, looking like pepper on the snow, may emerge on mild days.

March

- Gray Jays in their bulky moose-hair lined nests are already sitting on eggs.
- Lake Trout season ends outside the BWCAW on the 15th of March; inside the BWCAW on the 31st.
- Listen for wolves, as this is peak howling month.
- The first bird migrants return, including American Crows, Bald Eagles, and Snow Buntings.

April

- Loon scouts fly over looking for open water.
- Spruce Grouse are in full display. They puff out their feathers, erect their red "eyebrows", fan their tails and strut for all they're worth.

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May

- Flower Month (wildflowers of all varieties begin peeking up everywhere you look).
- Warblers return from the tropics. Twenty-six species of "winged jewels" migrate and nest in the Gunflint Trail area. That's half of all North American species!
- Moose have their calves and White-tailed Deer have their fawns.
- Lake Trout are still in shallow water. Fish for them right after ice-out or during opener, whichever comes last.

June

- Bald Eagles have made an incredible comeback and are now a common sight on most Gunflint Trail area lakes.
- Mosquitoes and Black Flies at their peak abundance - but remember: Black Flies are the main pollinator of blueberries, and mosquitoes feed many other critters up here.
- Our two turtle species, the Snapping Turtle and the Western Painted Turtle, are laying their eggs on land.
- Fishing is good for the "Big Four"; Northern Pike, Walleye, Smallmouth Bass, and Lake Trout.

July

- Songbird nesting ends mid month.
- The "plunk" of the Green Frog can be heard in almost any bay.
- Moose are often in the water to feed on water lilies and to escape the flies and mosquitoes.

August

- Fungus is among-us in August. Fly Amanitas, puffballs, Chanterelles, Russulas, and more.

September

- Wild rice is ripe and the ducks love it.
- Moose bulls and whitetail bucks are scraping velvet off their antlers.
- Loons raft up in big flocks on the bigger lakes before heading to the Gulf of Mexico for the winter.

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October

- The Tamaracks turn smoky gold in the wet bogs.
- Moose season opens.
- Decreasing day length and cold snaps remind Black Bears that it is time to hibernate
- Duck season opens as the first flocks of Ring-necked Ducks from Canada move south.

November

- Deer hunting season is timed to the rut of the Whitetails.
- Snowshoe hares turn white.

December

- Look for shed Deer antlers while out snowshoeing or cross country skiing.
- Grouse season closes on December 31st.
- Spruce Grouse grow extra scales on their feet to act as snowshoes.

