



Winter 2015

By Ann Prince

Outdoor Almanac has been a longtime Sanctuary magazine favorite, and we're thrilled to bring it to the pages of Connections.

JANUARY



1 Take a New Year's walk to watch for common wintering songbirds that are out and about, such as nuthatches, juncos, and cardinals.

3 Watch for pine grosbeaks and redpolls in evergreens and birches.



5 Full moon; the Moon after Yule (Anglo-Saxon), the first full moon after the winter solstice. This is the traditional season of festivals that celebrate lengthening days and the sun's rebirth.

8 Red winterberries on bare twigs are vibrant in the snowy landscape.

10 In snowy fields and on icy ponds watch for visiting geese from the arctic such as white-fronted and snow geese.

18 Fox and bobcat tracks make dotted lines on the snow-covered ground.

23 Look for the bright stems of red osier dogwood along stone walls.



30 Great horned owls begin to nest at about this time.

FEBRUARY



3 Full moon; the Ice Moon (Celtic).

6 The giant planet Jupiter will be at its closest position relative to Earth and at its brightest in the sky. Around midnight look through binoculars at Jupiter and its four largest moons.

10 If there's a snowmelt, search for traces of tunnels dug by voles and shrews.



21 Listen for the buoyant spring songs of chickadees and titmice.

26 In coniferous or mixed forested areas listen for the whistling notes of purple finches.

MARCH

5 Full moon; the Worm Moon (Native American), so named because the ground softens in March and the earthworms reappear.



10 Salamander migration begins. On the first rainy nights after the snow melts, watch for them as they make their way to vernal pools.

13 The flowers of pussy willows, also known as catkins, are fuzzed out on leafless branches.

16 Skunk cabbages, among the first plants to emerge in spring, appear in wetlands. Soon their unpleasant odor attracts pollinators such as flies and beetles.

18 Red-winged blackbirds are back. Watch also for flights of grackles and starlings.

19 Listen for the territorial drumming of hairy, downy, and pileated woodpeckers. Pairing begins in late winter.



20 Vernal Equinox; first day of spring. Days and nights are of equal length.

23 Listen for the roundelays of song sparrows and the trills of yellow-rumped warblers.

26 Phoebes and fox sparrows arrive.

29 Overwintering mourning cloak butterflies, harbingers of spring, come out of hiding on sunny days.



Ann Prince is Copyeditor.