



Fall 2014

by Ann Prince

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

October



- 3** Monarch butterflies are migrating south toward the mountains of Mexico.
- 5** Watch for daddy longlegs still out and about.

6 Tamarack, the only northern deciduous conifer, turns golden yellow.

7 Look for the blue-green planet Uranus in the sky—it's at its closest approach to the earth now and fully illuminated by the sun.



8 Full moon. The Travel Moon (Algonquin).

11 Juncos are arriving from the north.

12 Blackbirds assemble in large congregations in trees and open fields.

15 Height of fall leaf color occurs at about this time.

17 Yellow-rumped warblers migrate. Watch for them in shrubs and trees and listen for their *check* call.

20 On warm days spiderlings disperse, floating with the wind on their featherweight film of webbing called gossamer.

25 Oaks change to russet and brown after other trees such as maples and birches have dropped their leaves.

28 Listen for the last calls of meadow crickets on warm days.

November



5 Peak migration of snow buntings to New England from their Arctic breeding grounds.

6 Full moon. The White Moon (Chinese).

7 Wood aster is still blooming in protected areas.



19 Watch for the bright-red ruby meadowhawk dragonflies over sun-warmed fields.

23 Airborne parachute-like milkweed seeds are drifting from still-bursting pods.

In those years when snowy owls come south for the winter from their breeding grounds in the Arctic tundra, they begin to arrive in the last weeks of November.

25

On Thanksgiving Day, look for bright yellow blossoms on witch hazel—one of the last plants to flower in the Northeastern forest.



27

Phoebes may still be lingering by this late date. Watch also for small flocks of migrating sparrows including white-throated and song sparrows.



December

6 Full moon. Twelfth Moon (Choctaw).



10 Overwintering thrushes such as robins and bluebirds feed on Virginia creeper berries.

13 Hibernating mammals are out of sight, though chipmunks, skunks, opossums, and raccoons may still be around.

14 The spectacular Geminids meteor shower peaks after midnight, with 120 meteors per hour.

17 Look for dry mullein stalks in old fields and on roadsides; check inside the fuzzy leaves for sheltering insects.

21 Winter solstice. First day of winter and longest night of the year.

25 Look for evergreen ferns and the bright red fruits of winterberry.



Ann Prince is Copyeditor.