

OUTDOOR ALMANAC

JANUARY 2017

- 1** Take a New Year's walk to watch for common wintering songbirds that are out and about, such as white-breasted nuthatches, **dark-eyed juncos**, northern cardinals, and white-throated sparrows.



- 3-4** From a dark location after midnight, observe the Quadrantids meteor shower—now at its peak with up to 40 shooting stars per hour.

- 5** In graceful contrast with the white snow, golden curled **beech leaves** still cling to branches. This deciduous tree does not shed its leaves until well into the winter season or even until the new buds open in the spring.



- 6** Observe your shrubs and fruit trees after the first snows. Chewed twigs with ragged edges are a sign of deer. Cleanly nipped, angled twig ends are a sign of rabbits.



- 8** Watch for **snow buntings** and Lapland longspurs in evergreens and birches.

- 12** Full moon: the Wolf Moon (Native American), The Quiet Moon (Celtic), or Moon after Yule (Anglo-Saxon). Also on this date, Venus will be at its highest point in the sky; look west at sunset to find it.



- 13** January thaw. Around this date a warming trend often occurs. Watch for flights of **bees** and other insects.

- 14** Springtails, also known as snow fleas, look like peppery specks on the white, snow-covered ground. On warming days watch for them springing from here to there at the tree bases and among the leaf litter.

- 17** Breeders and abundant spring and fall migrants in Massachusetts like yellow-rumped warblers also regularly join species such as red-bellied woodpeckers and black-capped chickadees in feeding on **bayberries** in winter because of the berries' high fat content.



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



- 19** Search for Mercury in the eastern sky during the dark hours just before dawn. The planet is most visible now because it's at its highest point above the horizon.

- 23** Look for the bright stems of **red osier dogwood** along stone walls or around the edges of wetlands.



- 27** Red winterberries on bare twigs are vibrant in the snowy landscape.

- 30** Breeding season for **great horned owls** begins about this time. Juniper, beech, and pine are all favored trees for nests. Pairs may roost together near their chosen site before the female lays eggs, which hatch in just over a month.

