

OUTDOOR ALMANAC

JANUARY 2018



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.



2 **Full Moon.** A Supermoon. Algonquins called this the Full Wolf Moon for the wolves they heard howling in hunger near their villages

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



6 In graceful contrast with the white snow, pale 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.



7 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.

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

12 January thaw. Around this date a warming trend often occurs. Watch for openings in frozen ponds and, nearby, signs of beavers such as tracks, cut trees, and wood chips.

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



18 Fragrant green-gray, waxy **bayberries** persist in clusters on scrubby branches. Year-round yellow-rumped warblers, red-bellied woodpeckers, and black-capped chickadees favor the berries and thrive on their high fat content.

23 The beauty of bark is most easily appreciated in the winter. Look for the distinctive coverings of white ash (interconnected narrow diamonds); quaking aspen (pale, grayish green, smooth on the branches, and rough on the older trunk); American beech (silvery gray and very smooth); and sugar maple (grayish, thickened vertical strips broken into irregular rectangles).

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.



31 **Full moon.** Not only is this a Blue Moon (a second full moon in the same month), but just before sunrise we will be able to see a partial (penumbral) lunar eclipse.

