

OUTDOOR ALMANAC

MARCH 2018



1 Full Sap Moon denoted the time when Native Americans could collect maple sap. Due to climate shift, early March is now more likely to be the end of the season for eastern Massachusetts.



3 The furry, light-gray flowers of **pussy willow** burst from their buds.

4 The first of the migrant red-winged blackbirds are returning north. The earliest groups are made up almost entirely of adult males. Look for them perched on high marsh reeds and rushes such as cattails, displaying their bright red and yellow shoulder patches, or epaulets.

10 Listen for the distinctive quacking of wood frogs in the evening as they gather at vernal pools. They are the first amphibians to emerge in the spring and often congregate on pools still partially covered with ice.

14 American woodcock nuptial flights begin about this time, as the snow melts back in open fields. Listen for the peent call and the whistle of wings.



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.



17 The first warm (40°F), rainy night will bring out the **salamanders** as they migrate from their winter burrows to vernal pools to mate. They spend only a short time at the pools and, soon after mating, head back to the uplands.

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



20 Vernal equinox: first day of spring. Night and day are of equal length.

22 **Great blue herons** return to rookeries; they begin nest building and repair almost immediately upon arrival.



26 Look and listen for tom turkeys gobbling and displaying. Their heads turn brilliant red and blue, they fan and waggle their tails, and drag their wings across the ground as they strut back and forth. When you find displaying toms, look around to find the hen who is usually nearby but often hidden from view.

27 **Mourning cloaks** overwinter as adults in tree crevices and beneath loose bark, emerging on warm days in early spring.



30 Tree swallows return. Look for them scouting for nest boxes or tree cavities as breeding season begins.

31 Another March **full moon**; the second Blue Moon of the year. The term blue moon only came into common usage in the 1940s and on average a Blue Moon occurs every 30 months.

