

OUTDOOR ALMANAC

JANUARY 2020



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 Tufted Titmice.

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



6 Unlike most deciduous trees, oaks and **beeches** are marcescent, which means they can hold their dead leaves all winter. Oak leaves are dark brown and stiff while beech leaves are soft and very pale.

7 Observe your shrubs and fruit trees after the first snows. Chewed twigs and evergreen leaves with ragged edges are a sign of deer. Cleanly nipped, angled twig ends close to the ground or top of the snow are a sign of rabbits.

9 Mating season for White-tailed Deer peaks in November, but now is the time when it's possible to find shed antlers when walking through the woods.



10 **Full moon.** This month's full moon is most often called the Wolf Moon, but many Eastern Woodland tribes used names that referenced the continuing cold and snow. The Algonquin called it the Sun Has Not Strength to Thaw Moon.

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 When ice forms on interior lakes, Bald Eagles move to river mouths along the coast where they can fish in the open water. The mouth of the Merrimack often has a number of wintering eagles.

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 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).

28 It is fox mating season and males are actively marking their territories. If you smell a strong skunky scent, look around for a stump or post covered in fox urine.

30 Spend an hour outside at dusk listening for hooting owls. This is the best time of year to hear Great Horned Owls and **Barred Owls** as they set up territories and find mates.

