

OUTDOOR ALMANAC

1

This is an irruptive year for northern seed-eating songbirds. On your New Year's walk be on the lookout for flocks of Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine and **Evening Grosbeak**, White-winged and Red Crossbill, and Common Redpoll.



2-3

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.

12

In winter, groups of **American Crows** often have a lookout (aka a sentinel) that caws regularly while the others feed. If you hear a single crow cawing, look for the rest of the group feeding nearby.



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

Signs of coyote breeding season can be found in parallel **coyote tracks** and scent markings and duet howling.



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

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 Mohawk called it the Big Cold Moon.



29

If you are hiking in an area near rivers and/or lakes and there is snow on the ground, look for the distinctive slides of River Otters where they travel between bodies of water. Otters lope along like all weasels but in snow, they may flop onto their bellies and glide along, occasionally pushing with their back feet.

30

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

