JANUARY | 2024

Outdoor Almanac

1



On your New Year's walk, look and listen for Northern Cardinal's *purdy, purdy, purdy* song; **Dark-eyed Junco's** musical bell-like trill; White-breasted Nuthatch's *ankh, ankh, ankh* call; and Black-capped Chickadee's *chick-a dee-dee-dee* call. And if you are walking among pines or spruce, look up in the treetops and you may see a Red Crossbill or hear its *jip, jip, jip* or *chuppity, chuppity, chuppity* chatter.

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.

7

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

9

Eastern Ribbon Snakes are brumating in abandoned muskrat lodges, rock crevices, or other dens where they will be protected from freezing temperatures. During warm spells, ribbon snakes will leave their winter brumation spots to drink water or sun themselves.

10

Spend an hour outside after dark 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.

12

Look for Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Sparrows, **Snow Buntings**, American Goldfinches, and other songbirds scratching in the dirt or piles of snow along on the edge of the road. They are swallowing grit to help their gizzards grind up the hard seeds and fruit pits that make up their winter diet.



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 several wintering eagles.



18

Signs of coyote breeding season can be found in parallel **coyote tracks**, 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).

25

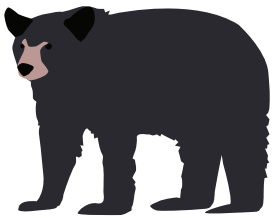
Full moon

26

Muskrats do not store food for the winter, so they have to forage every day. If the water has minimal ice, they can be seen on the ice or at pond edges eating water plants and occasionally snails or small fish.

29

Black bears are giving birth to litters of 1-5 cubs. At birth, cubs only weigh about 450 grams—that's less than 1 pound! Black bears are sleepers, not hibernators, and might be seen out of their dens during milder weather.



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