

JANUARY

OUTDOOR ALMANAC



01 On your New Year's walk as you look and listen for our usual winter birds—cardinals, chickadees, juncos, goldfinches, **White-throated Sparrows**—don't be surprised if you find an American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, or even Hermit Thrush as well. Even though the majority of these birds still migrate south, warming winters and access to food keep some of them here all winter.

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.

07 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 at the top of the snow are a sign of rabbits.

10 Gray Treefrogs spend the winter hibernating under leaf litter, rocks, and rotting logs. There they survive the bitter cold (as low as -20 degrees F) and can freeze up to 40% of their body, thaw, and repeat the cycle a handful of times.

13 Full moon

14 In winter, **American Crows** roost together every night. Roost locations change over time but currently there are large roosts with thousands of birds in Lawrence and Springfield. If you are near either city in the late afternoon and notice large numbers of crows flying about, they are staging before settling into their chosen roost trees for the night.

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

20 **River Otters** do not hibernate and remain active during winter. If you are in an area where river otters live, look for the long slide marks they make in the snow when gliding along on their bellies.

23 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.

28 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.

29 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.

PHOTOS

White-throated Sparrow
American Crow
Coyote © Deborah Monte
River Otters © Jason Gilbody
Eastern Bluebird