

MARCH

OUTDOOR ALMANAC



02 Late winter is a great time to look for ducks. Along the coast you can find Common Eider, **Harlequin Duck**, scoters, and Long-tailed Duck. In open freshwater habitats look for Wood Duck, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, and Common and Hooded Merganser.

03 **Black Bears** are emerging from their winter sleep and looking for food. Bears have excellent memories, so if you live in an area with bears, take down your bird feeders before the bears visit them.

05 Great Blue Herons return to heronries; they begin repairing and nest building almost immediately upon arrival from their southern wintering grounds.

08 Several moth species overwinter as caterpillars, including the woolly bear caterpillar of the Isabella tiger moth. When the weather warms, they can be found crawling up sticks and last year's stems looking for a good place to pupate.

09 Eastern cottonwood trees have large, sticky buds. In early spring, honeybees, which are not native, collect the resin to make propolis, a protective glue that they use to seal their hives.

10 Silver, red, and sugar maples are flowering. Maple flowers are wind pollinated and have no petals, but these tiny flowers are beautiful nonetheless.

13 American Woodcock nuptial flights begin about this time, as the snow melts back in open fields. Around sunset listen for the peent call and the whistle of wings.

14 Full moon

16 Listen for the ducklike quacking courtship calls of male **wood frogs**. These frogs return to their vernal pools so early that there is often still ice on the water. Wood frogs only reproduce in vernal pools, so if you hear wood frogs, you know there is a vernal pool.

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

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

22 Woodpeckers drill on dead trees both for food and to make nest holes. The large, oblong holes of Pileated Woodpeckers are often found surprisingly close to the ground as they drill out nests of carpenter ants, which are their favorite food.

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 Crows are among our earliest passerine (perching bird) nesters. Listen and watch as they interact with one another and eat almost anything they can find, from black walnuts to roadkill gray squirrels.

30 **Skunk cabbages**, among the first plants to emerge in spring, appear in wetlands. Soon their unpleasant odor attracts pollinators such as flies and beetles.

PHOTOS

Harlequin Duck
Black Bear © Susan Shaye
Wood Frog
Spotted Salamander
Skunk Cabbage