

January

PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

Naturalist Jim Gilbert's observations from this time last year, plus a seasonal checklist of backyard tasks.

JAN

01

Just 2 inches of crusty snow covers the landscape. The first **Black-capped Chickadee** "fee-bee" whistles songs, and "whi, whi, whi..." songs of the **White-breasted Nuthatch** ring in this new year. Both sounds are considered to be early signs of spring.

JAN

02

Flying squirrels sometimes use **Wood Duck** nesting boxes as winter homes; several gather in one box, each rolled up like a ball. Between 17 and 21 inches of ice covers Upper Red Lake.

JAN

04



On this cold below-zero day, many people enjoy seeing sundogs, rainbow-like arcs out from the right and left sides of the sun. Observers report incredible numbers of **Bohemian Waxwings**, **Cedar Waxwings**, **American Robins** and **Pine Grosbeaks** in the city of Grand Marais, feeding on mountain ash fruit. Wildlife photographer David Brisance counts 1,053 Bohemian Waxwings in a grove of four trees.

JAN

07

20 species of birds come to one Northfield feeding station for seeds, suet and water. They include at least 30 **American Goldfinches** and 40 **House Finches**, plus **Ring-necked Pheasants**, **Wild Turkeys** and **American Crows**.

JAN

08

There is a huge **American Robin** winter roost in a small grove of conifers at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. Over 2,500 robins head into the roost between 4:30 and 5:05 p.m. today. Near Goodhue, a flock of about 150 **Snow Buntings** gather. Down the road a bit, a flock of 20 **Horned Larks** congregate.



JAN

09

A **Blue Jay** vocalizes a first-of-the-year "pump-handle" call, also known as the "speelunker" call, in Victoria. Another early spring sound!

JAN

11

Our third consecutive day with snowfall. Now we have a 6-inch snow cover. (It will turn out to be the most snow cover for all of January and February this year). The snow on evergreen boughs is a beautiful sight.

☐ Celebrate the increasing minutes of daylight; we are gaining light each day now.

☐ Bundle up! January is the coldest month of the year in MN with January 25th averaging the coldest day.

☐ Deter ravenous squirrels with **Flaming Hot Feast—Squirrels' Defeat seed cakes or cylinders, hot pepper suet cakes or plugs** or by adding **Flaming Squirrel Seed Sauce** or **Fire Hot powder mix** to your seed.



☐ To help birds refuel quickly, provide foods loaded with fat and protein like **mealworms**, **suet**, **suet pellets**, **peanuts** and **sunflower out of the shell**.



☐ Practice bird song and call identification with the **Birds of MN** CD, the **Backyard Birdsong Guide** book or the **Audubon Singing Bird Clock**.

☐ Fill the winter hours by becoming more familiar with birds' field markings by coloring the **Sibley Birds Coloring Field Journal**.

☐ Add a **24" coil mount branch arm** to your **Erva pole system** to provide a perch for the birds and space for additional feeders.

☐ Provide a clean water source with a **heated birdbath**. Use **Bird Bath Protector** in it to keep it clean and fresh.

January PHENOLOGY & CHECKLIST

(Continued from front)

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We continue to hear pairs of **Great Horned Owls** hoot duets as they declare nesting territories. It's a cold morning with lows of -42°F at Embarrass, -40°F at International Falls, -33°F in Brainerd, and -7°F at MSP International Airport.

JAN
14

Ice on Lake Waconia is 14 to 16 inches thick. Walleyes, northerns, sunfish, and crappies are biting.

JAN
15

Meteorological winter, which started Dec. 1, is now half over. Lately, many of us hear the loud drumming sounds made by **Downy Woodpeckers** on hollow tree trunks or other signal posts to show pair bonds and declare territories.

JAN
18

January thaw! First 40°F temperature of 2017. Honey bees are out on cleansing flights. The first raccoons are out and about. The snow depth is down to 2 inches.

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A **Snowy Owl** makes an appearance in downtown Minneapolis.

JAN
21

The first **Northern Cardinals** sing "what-cheer..." spring songs from several Twin Cities area neighborhoods. With warm temperatures and melting snow, a layer of water covers pond and lake ice.

JAN
25

A skunk emits its distinct odor for the first time this year. The landscape is white again. 2.3 inches of snow falls in the Twin Cities and 8.8 inches in Austin. Feeding frenzies commence at feeding stations; **juncos**, **chickadees**, **goldfinches** and more are active and abundant as the snow falls.

JAN
28

From the MN DNR webcam in St. Paul: a **Bald Eagle** lays her first egg in a nest today.



JAN
29

We've gained 55 minutes of daylight since the winter solstice on Dec. 21. Apple growers begin pruning their trees. Around this time, in northern MN and WI, female black bears wake up enough to give birth to two or three cubs that are covered in fine hair and weigh less than a pound each.

JAN
31

About 75 percent of the Twin Cities area landscape is snow-free again. 8.4 inches of snow fell in January at MSP International Airport. A first eastern chipmunk is out and about in a Northfield yard. Statewide, late January into February is egg-laying time for **Great Horned Owls**.

❑ Scatter **Critter Crunch** on the ground or on a tree stump or in a screened bottom ground feeder for over-wintering Mourning Doves, Blue Jays, cardinals, pheasants and Wild Turkeys.

❑ Stock feeders with **Nyjer™ and Chips** for goldfinches and visiting finches. Nomadic, mixed foraging flocks will be abundant one day and scarce the next.

❑ Provide high-protein shelled peanuts or sunflower kernels in a **Quick Clean Peanut Mesh feeder**. Woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, and finches will love it!



❑ Look for winter-visiting Pine Siskins, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Purple Finches and irruptive species like Red Polls, Great Gray and Snowy Owls. January is the time to watch for vagrant species like the Varied Thrush as well.

❑ Watch for visiting Barred Owls. They may perch in backyards watching for voles, mice and shrews. The tunnels of the short tailed shrews are less than 1" wide and just under the surface of snow.

❑ Look for Bald Eagles to gather near open water of marinas and rivers.

❑ Call the Wayzata store to arrange our **vacation Feed-and-Fill service** to keep your feeders stocked while you are out of town.

❑ Send your **bird photos** to **carol@wildbirdstore.net** to be displayed on our digital sign in the stores or on our Facebook page.