

ALBERTA'S
Watchable Wildlife

CALENDAR
2018



Alberta's Watchable Wildlife

Wildlife-viewing, once considered an activity only for mild-mannered eccentrics, is now one of the fastest growing forms of outdoor recreation in North America.

Albertans are very much part of this increasing interest in various nonconsumptive uses of wildlife – uses which do not remove wild plants and animals from their environment. And this includes hunters and anglers who also appreciate the viewing aspects of wildlife and plants. Related activities include wildlife photography, species identification (“listing”), bird feeding, behaviour study and flower identification. In support of these activities, the Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks, maintains a Watchable Wildlife Program. The program is designed to increase the following:

- levels of public interest in and appreciation for the wildlife resource

- opportunities and participation levels in the nonconsumptive use of wildlife
- levels of public knowledge and understanding of wildlife species and their habitats; and
- public involvement and support in wildlife management programs.

Recent surveys show that more than 90 per cent of Albertans participate in various forms of wildlife-viewing and appreciation, while two-thirds participate in a direct and purposeful way, either near home, in their backyards, at local urban parks or on trips and outings away from home.

Wildlife Conservation and Enhancement

Alberta is richly blessed with an abundance and variety of wild plants and animals. It is the only place in North America where the prairie, boreal forest and mountain ecosystems meet. As a result, more than 400 bird, 90 mammal, 18 reptile and amphibian, 50 fish and 1800 flowering plant species occur in Alberta at least part of the year.

Many of us watch and listen to wildlife as a means of re-establishing contact with the natural world and to escape

the noise and hectic pace of our busy lifestyles. The sight and sound of migrating geese, a glimpse of a deer or the call of a loon are special experiences that highlight our memories. Without such experiences, our world would be a much less interesting place. To ensure that we continue to enjoy these experiences and pass them on to future generations, we all must share the responsibility for conserving our natural heritage.

Responsible Wildlife-Viewing

Wildlife-viewing demands courtesy and common sense, including respect for animals and their habitats, knowledge of local regulations, and consideration for private property and the activities of others.

Ethics for the field include the following:

- **Keep to Designated Trails**
Confine your movements wherever possible to designated trails, viewing platforms and blinds.
- **Be Considerate of Wildlife**
Use binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras with telephoto lenses to observe animals from a distance THEY consider safe. Avoid nesting sites and respect resting periods. Try not to surprise wildlife and never chase or flush wild animals.
- **Don't Approach Baby Animals**
Be sure not to pick up any wild baby animals. Your actions may expose them to predators or prevent their parents

from returning to care for them. Even though not visible, the mother is likely close by.

- **Control Pets**
Pets can harm wildlife and hinder viewing opportunities. They should be under your control at all times or left at home or in your vehicle (only under suitable conditions).
- **Be Considerate of the Environment**
Leave viewing sites, including plants and animals, undamaged by your visits. Be sure your garbage is properly disposed of or recycled. Many wildlife-viewing sites are *User Maintained*; therefore, pack out what you pack in. Return used brochures to kiosks for re-use.
- **Be Considerate of Others**
Avoid disrupting the wildlife-viewing activities of others in the area. At the same time, show a friendly disposition and willingness to share observations and related information.

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

Successful wildlife-viewing requires certain skills and knowledge. The following tips will help in this respect:

Plan Ahead

Take the time to plan and anticipate what you want to see and experience. Find out where the best viewing locations are for each wildlife species and at what times of the year you may see them.

Choose Your Time of Day

Many wildlife species are more active and readily seen at certain times of the day. Early morning and late afternoon/evening are often the best for many birds and mammals.

Patience and Quiet

Wildlife are very sensitive to human presence. By moving slowly and quietly, or even stopping for several minutes at a time, you can ensure wild animals will be more accepting of your presence.

Reduce Your Visibility

Learn to use vegetation, topography, or even your vehicle, as a visual screen. Wear soft clothes that make little noise when walking in the bush. Dull, darker colours and irregular patterns on clothes are also helpful.

Seasons

Spring and fall are particularly good seasons to observe migratory birds, some of which only pass through Alberta between their wintering areas and summer breeding ranges.

Use All of Your Senses

Your ears can be as helpful as your eyes in locating and identifying some of the more secretive wildlife species. Take in the full range of sights, sounds, and smells around you to enhance your overall experience.

Read Wildlife Signs

Learn to recognize the signs of wildlife such as tracks, nests, cavities, droppings, and bits of fur or feathers. This will help you to see and learn more.

Viewing Guides and Equipment

Use properly selected binoculars and spotting scopes to get that close-up, detailed look. Also, field identification guides will help to sort out the characteristics and names of the species you see.

Field Notebook

Keep records of wildlife seen, their characteristics, and the circumstances of your observations. You will want to compare this with future observations. Pass on rare and unusual observations to nearby Fish and Wildlife offices.

CAUTION!
In bear country you should keep yourself more visible and make noise to alert bears of your presence; also carry pepper spray.

Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Calendar

To help increase public awareness, appreciation and understanding of wildlife, the Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks, is pleased to present *Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Calendar*. The calendar identifies specific wildlife activities throughout the year. Each month includes:

- a featured plant or animal,
- viewing tips of special significance, and
- noteworthy dates concerning wildlife activities and events.

Use the calendar to plan your wildlife-viewing excursions.






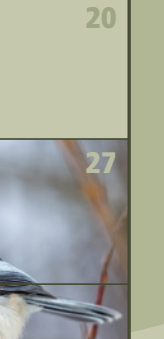
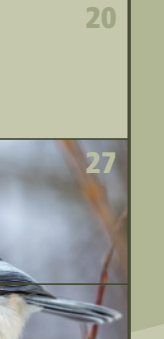
Cougar (*Puma concolor*)

Cougars probably reached their lowest numbers in Alberta in the early 1900s as a result of prey declines and human settlement. In recent years, cougar populations have increased and the species has expanded its distribution in the province. The species can now be found anywhere in the province with the exception of the more northern parts of the boreal forest. Recent records include cats as far east as Lac La Biche and a substantial population exists in the Cypress Hills. Forestry and other industrial activity, resulting in younger forests that produce more deer, creates excellent conditions for population growth: the provincial population of cougar is estimated at 2050 animals.

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Winter is an underrated time to view wildlife – occasional surprise visits to the bird feeders are made by sharp-shinned hawks and northern shrikes.
- During this month, herds of pronghorn can be seen along Highway 1 west of Medicine Hat.
- Small flocks of pine grosbeaks can be seen at bird feeders located in Alberta's parkland and southern boreal regions.

JANUARY 2018

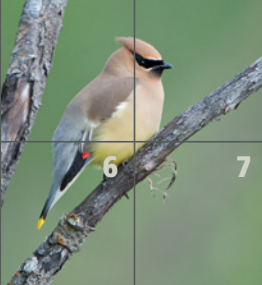


SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	NEW YEAR'S DAY 1	2	 3	4	5 <small>By the first week of January, bighorn sheep rams return to wintering areas from their rutting grounds.</small>	6
7	8	9 <small>Most mature bull moose have dropped their antlers by this date.</small>	 10	11 <small>Great grey owls move from breeding areas in response to low vole numbers.</small>	12	13
 14	15	16	17	18 <small>Great horned owls are well into their breeding season.</small>	19	20
21	22 <small>Now is a good time to see bison and moose along the parkway of Elk Island National Park north of Hwy 16.</small>	23	24	25 <small>Visit the Alberta Grain Terminals in north Edmonton to watch gyrfalcons and prairie falcons catch rock pigeons.</small>	 26	27
28	29	30 <small>Drive Range Road 260 and 261 north of St. Albert to check for snowy owls.</small>	31			



Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis*)

Bighorn sheep, Alberta's provincial mammal, are the largest of North American wild sheep, with adult males weighing up to 135 kilograms. These animals have soft hooves with hard outer rims, which provide good footing on precarious ledges. However the two halves of the hoof do not move independently, like those of mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*), so without this extra advantage bighorns rarely inhabit the dizzying heights frequented by goats. Nevertheless, bighorns can move quickly over rocky ground when alarmed and will use escape terrain to stay secure from their primary predator, the cougar (*Puma concolor*). The largest bighorn rams in the world inhabit reclaimed coal mining sites near Cadomin, Alberta.

FEBRUARY 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 Groundhog Day. American woodchucks ("ground hogs") in parts of the U.S. emerge from their dens and supposedly foretell the length of the remaining winter.	3
4	5 This is an excellent month to drive roads in Alberta for winter specialties like northern goshawk and gyrfalcon.	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Breeding season for coyotes; they are more visible at this time than at any other time of the year.	13	VALENTINE'S DAY 14	15	16	17
 18	FAMILY DAY 19 Beautiful, but increasingly rare evening grosbeaks visit rural bird feeders.	20	21	22 On warm days, adult male Richardson's ground squirrels emerge from their burrows – they are substantial prey items for gyrfalcons and snowy owls.	23	24
25	26	27	28 Burbot spawning is at peak under the ice of Alberta lakes.			

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- In some years, dozens of short-eared owls can be seen coursing over the weed beds of Beaverhill Lake. Use a spotting scope at the Mundare Beach lookout at dusk to see the birds.
- Elk have settled into their winter ranges in the lowlands along rivers in Banff and Jasper. Watch for local wolf packs attending these herds during dawn and dusk.
- Black-backed woodpeckers can be located by listening to their soft tapping of trees as they scale away tree bark in a unique pattern.



American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)

In Alberta, the black bear is a widely distributed species, found in all eco-regions except the prairies. The provincial population is estimated at 30,000 individuals. As omnivores, black bears will eat just about anything; however, more than 90% of the diet of Alberta black bears comprises vegetation. Many are seen on roadsides during springtime as they devour lush patches of dandelion while others may be seen in poplar trees (as seen here) filling up on catkins or sweet buds. They appear to eat constantly, becoming hyperphagic as winter approaches when they may consume more than 20,000 calories per day! The bears need the food as they can lose as much as 40% of their body weight during winter hibernation.

MARCH 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 <small>Most ungulates begin the third trimester of pregnancy. From now until "green-up" is the maximum drain on pregnant females.</small>	3
	4	5	6	7	8	9
10						
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS 11	12	13	14 <small>The first prairie crocus may bloom in southern Alberta, especially if the winter has been mild.</small>	15	16	ST. PATRICK'S DAY 17
18	19	SPRING EQUINOX 20	21	22	23	24
<small>White-fronted geese begin arriving in southern Alberta.</small>		<small>Mourning cloak butterflies stir from hibernation especially on warm sunny days.</small>				
25	26	27	28	29	GOOD FRIDAY 30	31 <small>Watch for large, dark Harlan's red-tailed hawks moving north out of Alberta to breeding grounds in the NWT and Yukon.</small>

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- By late March, the earliest peregrine falcons arrive at nesting territories in Edmonton, Red Deer, and Calgary. These early birds are usually older, experienced adults.
- During this month, large numbers of golden eagles can be seen migrating high above the front range of the Rocky Mountains. Over 400 have been recorded in a two-day period at a count station in Kananaskis.
- Downy woodpeckers begin to excavate nest cavities in standing dead wood of aspen and mixed-wood forests.



Clark's Grebe (*Aechmophorus clarkii*)

The elegant Clark's grebe is the rarest of the six grebe species found in Alberta. This species is usually found on waterbodies located in southern Alberta, like Pakowki Lake. Strikingly similar to the western grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) found further north, it was once considered a sub-species of that species. It was recognized a distinct species as recently as 1988. The crimson red eyes of Clark's grebe are surrounded by white feathering; the eyes of the western grebe are surrounded by dark feathers. The species was named after John Henry Clark, surveyor and wildlife collector, who procured the type specimen for the species in 1858.

APRIL 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
EASTER SUNDAY 1	EASTER MONDAY 2	3 Red-tailed hawks return to set up nesting territories—watch for their spectacular undulating flight displays.	4	5	6 	7
8	9 Short-horned lizards start to make short outings on sandstone bluffs in the Manyberries Badlands.	10	11	12	13 Ruby-crowned kinglets sing "chubby cheeks, chubby cheeks" throughout the southern boreal mixed-wood.	14
15 	16	17	18	19	20 Columbian ground squirrels emerge from their burrows in the foothills and low mountain passes.	21
22 	23	24	25	26 Bullsnakes can be seen basking at the entrances to their hibernacula.	27 	28
29	30 Long-toed salamanders are moving to their breeding ponds.					

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Rare sage grouse are on their dancing grounds. The species is the focus of intensive species-at-risk management in Alberta.
- Early this month, grizzly bears in Alberta's foothills begin to emerge from their dens.
- In late April, the beautiful cinnamon teal can be seen on small ponds in the prairies and parkland.



Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)

The handsome common goldeneye is one of several Alberta duck species that nest in tree cavities. Many landowners extend a helping hand to these birds by erecting nesting boxes on their property. Goldeneye will sometimes nest considerable distances from water and have been found nesting in nest boxes placed in dense woods for northern saw-whet owls (*Aegolius acadicus*). Goldeneye will routinely overwinter in Alberta, anywhere there is open water. The animated courtship rituals performed by the adult male may start in mid-winter and can add a bit of zest to winter birding.

MAY 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
				<p>The strident vocalizations of the marbled godwit are heard near wetlands on the prairies.</p>		
6	7			9	10	11
<p>Turkey vultures can be seen searching for abandoned buildings in which to nest in the Cold Lake area.</p>	<p>The earliest goslings of Canada geese begin to appear on rivers and ponds in southern Alberta.</p>					
MOTHER'S DAY 13	14	15	16	17	18	19
<p>Morels erupt in central Alberta – they are excellent eating.</p>					<p>Ovenbirds return to central Alberta announcing their arrival with: "Teacher! Teacher! Teacher!"</p>	
	VICTORIA DAY 21	22	23	24	25	26
						<p>Smell the heavy fragrance of silverberry/wolf willow along prairie streams.</p>
27	28	29	30	31		
			<p>Watch the energetic courtship dancing of eared grebes on shallow ponds in central Alberta.</p>			

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Around May 23 is a good time to visit the shores of North Cooking Lake, east of Sherwood Park. This is a peak migration period for large numbers of Arctic-nesting shorebirds.
- Visit Elk Island National Park to see newly born bison calves.
- The flowering blooms of saskatoons and chokecherries appear as a whitish haze through the midst of the aspen parkland. They result in some excellent pies and jams from berries picked in late summer.



Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos)

Alberta grizzlies are some of the least productive brown bears in the world, with late age of first reproduction, small litters, and long inter-litter intervals. Most females do not give birth until between 4 and 8 years of age, litter size averages just under 2 cubs per litter, and the inter-litter interval averages 4.5 years. These magnificent animals can be seen anywhere in Rocky Mountain Natural Region from April to October and are often seen at roadsides in Alberta's parks during June and July when they graze heavily on dandelion crops. The grizzly bear is listed as a *Threatened* species in Alberta.

JUNE 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3		5	6	7	8	9
						16
					15	
FATHER'S DAY	18	19	20	SUMMER SOLSTICE	21	22
24	25	26		28	29	30

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- An ideal time for bird watching. Many species can be identified by their unique songs; you can learn these quickly by acquiring a birding app for your smartphone.
- Yellow warblers have established territories in many parkland forest locations near Buffalo and Miquelon Lakes. Listen for their call of: "Sweet. Sweet. Sweet. Shredded Wheat" and watch for a flash of yellow of the male 'wild canary' in the woods.
- Drive the prairie roads south of Cypress Hills Provincial Park to see prairie specialties like American badger, burrowing owl, and pronghorn.

Tune into the Peregrine Web Cams on the Alberta Conservation Association website to see the first young peregrine chicks hatching.

See the white flowers of Labrador tea in the boreal forest of northern Alberta.

You have an excellent chance of seeing black bears foraging on vegetation on the road up to Maligne Lake in Jasper National Park.

Wood lilies are blooming in the aspen stands at lower elevations in the mountains.

Wood frog tadpoles are going through metamorphosis to become sub-adult frogs.

Look for western painted turtles in the ponds around the Helen Schuler Nature Centre in Lethbridge.



Swift Fox (*Vulpes velox*)

The swift fox disappeared from the short- and mixed-grass prairie regions of Alberta in the 1930s. However, captive breeding and re-introduction efforts by government and non-government agencies, including the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division, have been successful in re-establishing a breeding population of several hundred animals on the Canadian prairies. This is one of several *Endangered* and *Threatened* species that are managed for conservation in the south-eastern part of the province. For more information on these conservation efforts see: <http://multisar.ca/>

JULY 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
CANADA DAY 1	2	3	4	 5	6	7
		Listen to the boreal chorus frogs at dusk in Elk Island National Park.				Watch for yellow-bellied marmots on the campus of the University of Lethbridge.
 8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Watch for cryptic white-tailed ptarmigan by hiking above the tree-line at Wilcox Pass.					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Look for the distinctive tracks of raccoons in the mud along waterways of central and southern Alberta.						
22	23	24	 25	26	27	28
	Common loons congregate on Muriel Lake. Foraging flocks of over 100 birds can be encountered for the next several weeks.					Watch for soaring turkey vultures, with their sharp, V-shaped dihedral, moving up and down rivers through Alberta's badlands.
29	30	31				
	Diminutive least chipmunks patrol camp grounds in the mountain parks for natural and man-made foods.					

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Fireflies are visible on hot nights over the native grasslands in the Cypress Hills.
- July is the best month to see Alberta butterflies. A good field guide will make butterfly watching even more rewarding.
- Take the Jasper Sky Tram to the top of Whister's Mountain in Jasper. Listen and watch for alpine specialties like grey-crowned rosy finch and hoary marmot.



Grey Wolf and White-tailed Deer

Opportunistic feeders, wolves in Alberta have been known to eat anything from berries to beavers, but their prime diet consists of ungulates like white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Forestry and other industrial activities in the province have resulted in younger forests that produce more deer; this in turn creates excellent conditions for population growth for wolves. Some of the largest wolves in the world live in Wood Buffalo National Park, where packs of up to 25 animals kill adult wood bison (*Bos bison athabasca*), animals that can weigh over 1200 kg. To achieve this, these wolves have to be large and many weigh over 54 kg (120 lbs), however most wolves in Alberta average about 36 kg (80 lbs).

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Antler development for male deer, elk, and moose is complete. By late August, these animals begin to clean off the dead velvet layer of the antlers by rubbing against tree trunks, fence posts, and bushes. Watch for rub marks ("rubs") where tree bark has been shredded off trunks.
- Black and grizzly bears are feeding on berries in the Alberta mountains and foothills. Human berry pickers are also visiting subalpine berry patches during this period – stay alert and take precautions for bears (make noise, carry bear spray, move in groups).

AUGUST 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3 	4 <small>Plains garter snakes can be seen along the road bordering the west fence of Elk Island National Park.</small>
5 	HERITAGE DAY 6	7	8	9	10 <small>Sora rails are easier to see than earlier in the year as their young explore their home sloughs.</small>	11
12	13 <small>Cutthroat trout begin to emerge as fry at Job Lake in the central Rocky Mountains of the province.</small>	14	15	16 <small>Fall warbler migration is at its peak.</small>	17	18
19	20	21 	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 <small>Major hatches of mayflies occur in the Medicine Hat area.</small>	31 <small>Many Richardson's ground squirrels (gophers) are already hibernating.</small>	



Bullsnake (*Pituophus catenifer*)

A denizen of the prairies, the Bullsnake is most often found in drier grasslands and sage brush habitat in southern Alberta. This beautiful snake is not poisonous, but will kill prey up to the size of small rabbits by constriction. This species is by far the best climber of Alberta snakes and they have been known to raid bird nests located more than 10 metres above the ground. Like all Alberta snakes, the bullsnake hibernates during winter, sometimes sharing hibernacula with the larger prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*). These snakes lay their eggs away from the hibernaculum, depositing up to two dozen in abandoned mammal burrows. The eggs hatch in the fall and some hatchlings may enter hibernation never having eaten.

SEPTEMBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	LABOUR DAY 3 <small>Elk can be seen in the fall rut along the roads into Waterton and Jasper National Parks.</small>	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 <small>Normally secretive sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks are seen in open air as they begin their movements south.</small>	11	12	13	14	15 <small>Decreasing daylight creates light/dark regimes of early spring stimulating courtship behaviour in some birds – ruffed grouse drum, sharp-tailed grouse dance, and rooster pheasants crow.</small>
16	17	18 	19	20 <small>Semi-palmated sandpipers are common on mudflats of central Alberta as they continue their migration from the Arctic to South America.</small>	21	FALL EQUINOX 22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29 
30			<small>Bull trout begin to spawn in lakes and streams of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains.</small>		<small>Moose begin the rut towards the end of September.</small>	

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Ruby-throated hummingbirds stop visiting feeders and begin their migration south in early September.
- Mid-September is a good time to drive Highway 40 from Hwy 1 to Longview to view fall colours and spectacular mountain scenery.
- Lake whitefish in Lake Athabasca and in the Athabasca River begin to move upstream to spawn.
- Many species of waterfowl begin assembling on large waterbodies.



Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)

Wildly nomadic short-eared owls can seem to appear and disappear like ghosts, breeding in one part of the province for a year or two and then remaining totally absent in the same habitat for years. These day-active owls can be found anywhere in Alberta and will follow population peaks of their primary prey species, primarily mice and voles. As a ground-nesting species this owl has declined in parts of the province where industrial crop production is the primary land use. They are known to range widely; one owl fitted with a satellite transmitter near Hanna, was located 4 days later in Kansas – a distance of over 2000 kilometres.

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Large, dark Harlan's red-tailed hawks move down into Alberta from their breeding grounds in the Yukon and NWT. Driving prairie roads will reveal these handsome buteos along with American rough-legged hawks.
- Visit Wabamun or Cold Lake with a spotting scope to see rare waterfowl like harlequin duck, Pacific loon, and various northern gull species.

OCTOBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2		4	5	6
		This week, fall colours reach their peak along the Milk River valley.				Local birds, feeling the cooling season, begin to visit bird feeders more often, adding a little life to urban yards.
7	THANKSGIVING DAY 8	9	10	11	12	13
					Nuttall's cottontail, Alberta's only true rabbit species, do not change colour and can be easy to see in natural areas in southern Alberta, especially after an early snow.	
14	15		16	17	18	19
	Lesser yellowlegs, one of our most common shorebirds, leave southern Alberta lakes to continue their migration to South America.					White-tailed jackrabbits on the University of Alberta campus are beginning to turn white, first the feet, legs, and ears, then the rest.
21	22		23	24	25	26
					Watch for the first snowy owls to arrive in central and southern Alberta; the croplands north of Drumheller are good places to search.	
28	29	30	HALLOWEEN 31			
	Look for brown trout spawning in the North Raven River.					



Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*)

Woodland caribou in Alberta exist as two eco-types. The boreal eco-type is found in the flat, boreal forest regions of the province. The mountain eco-type (seen here) spends the summer at or above the treeline in the mountains but winters in the forest at lower altitude. In winter, both eco-types show a preference for mature to old forest, where lichen is the primary food source. Predation by wolves is the primary cause of death for caribou and the most significant limiting factor for the species. Industrial development in Alberta has created linear corridors (roads and cut-lines) that affect the movement and distribution of caribou and has resulted in easier access for their prime predator. Woodland caribou are a *Threatened* species in Alberta.

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Canada geese stage in large numbers during the first week of the month on waterbodies in central Alberta. If the winter is mild, many will not go further south than Calgary.
- Learning to recognize animal tracks and sign can add another dimension to wildlife viewing in winter. Driving roads in the boreal forest after a good snowfall can yield many challenges and surprises – access lots of good learning material via the Internet.

NOVEMBER 2018




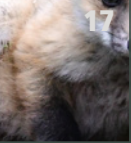

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
				Deer hunting begins in most parts of Alberta.		
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS 4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Individuals of two species in the genus <i>Zapus</i> , or jumping mice, are curled up below ground and are now in hibernation.					White-tailed deer bucks are usually in the rut at this time. Bucks move carelessly across the landscape and vehicle collisions with deer peak.	
REMEMBRANCE DAY 11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				In east central Alberta, dozens of bald eagles congregate at the Medley river to feed on spawning lake whitefish.		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25			28	29	30	
Peak breeding season for porcupine in Alberta.				During winter coyotes may turn to rotten fruit, garbage, compost, and pet food for additional food. Safeguard these edibles and report any aggressive coyotes to Alberta Fish and Wildlife.	Last day of the hunting season for most big game in Alberta.	



Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter striatus*)

This female sharp-shinned hawk is showing a little leg and making it abundantly clear why the species received such a curious name. These secretive, tiny, woodland hawks inhabit dense boreal and montane forests of Alberta, building their loosely constructed nests away from habitats frequented by larger raptors like the Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*) and Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*). Up until relatively recently, this species was strictly a neo-tropical migrant, following songbird prey to southern Mexico and Central America. With warmer winters and abundant prey dependent on bird feeders, more and more of these hawks are spending the winter in Alberta cities.

DECEMBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Prairie falcons often remain in the province all winter; watch for them working flocks of rock pigeons around farm yards in central and southern Alberta.
2	3	4	5 Watch for irruptions of winter birds like white-winged crossbill, grey-crowned rosy finch, and common redpoll.	6	7	8 Large flocks of Bohemian waxwings move into urban centres to feed on mountain ash berries; they eat quickly and nervously as their prime predator, the merlin, is rarely far away.
9		11	12 In some years, large numbers of pine and evening grosbeak will visit feeders in rural and suburban areas to the delight of winter birders.	13	14	15
16		17	18	19	20	21 WINTER SOLSTICE 22 Look for the easily recognized tracks of the larger weasels, pine marten and fisher, on fresh snow in boreal, foothills, and mountain regions of the province.
23	CHRISTMAS EVE 24	CHRISTMAS DAY 25	BOXING DAY 26	27		28
30	NEW YEAR'S EVE 31			Drive Highway 827 from Thorhild to Colinton in search of great grey and northern hawk owls.		29 Visit Goldbar Park in Edmonton to scope out waterfowl on the open parts of the river - many rarities have been spotted there.

Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Drag out the binoculars. The 2018 Christmas Bird counts will occur throughout the province during December. Your participation can range from watching and counting birds at your feeder, to driving the roads, to getting out and 'beating the bushes' in your area. Contact your local natural history club for details.
- Flying squirrels are active all winter. Watch and listen for them at night at bird feeders located near or in mature woods. They are one of the few animals that will vocalize at night during winter.

Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Calendar 2018



PHOTO CREDITS:

January: Cougar [DELANEY ANDERSON], Brown Creeper [DAVE PRESCOTT], Boreal Toad [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Black-capped Chickadee [ROYCE HOPKINS]
February: Bighorn Sheep [DAWN RYMER], Cedar Waxwing, MacGillivray's Warbler, Bushy-tailed Woodrat [GORDON COURT]
March: American Black Bear [LEO DEGROOT], Yellow-collared Scape Moth [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Common Loon [MARK BRADLEY], Clouded Sulphur [DAVE PRESCOTT]
April: Clark's Grebe: [DAVE PRESCOTT], Western Tailed Blue [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Great Horned Owl [MYRNA PEARMAN], Prairie Rattlesnake [NICK PARAYKO]
May: Common Goldeneye [MYRNA PEARMAN], Wild Rose [GORDON COURT], Bronze Copper, Wood Frog [DAVE PRESCOTT]
June: Grizzly Bear [EMILY COURT], Lincoln's Sparrow [MARK BRADLEY], Northern Hawk Owl, White-tailed Deer [GORDON COURT]
July: Swift Fox [GORDON COURT], Killdeer [ROYCE HOPKINS], Anica Checkerspot [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Bison [KIM COLLINS-LAUBER]

August: Grey Wolf and White-tailed Deer [DAVID SMITH], Dusky Grouse [NICK PARAYKO], Dotted Blazingstar [DAVE PRESCOTT], Porcupine [DAWN RYMER]
September: Bullsnake [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Sara Orange Tip [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Common Nighthawk [NICK PARAYKO], White-tailed Jackrabbit [MYRNA PEARMAN], Wood Duck [ROYCE HOPKINS]
October: Short-eared Owl [GERALD ROMANCHUK], Magnolia Warbler [GORDON COURT], Eared Grebe [MYRNA PEARMAN], Columbian Ground Squirrel [DAWN RYMER], Common Nighthawk [MYRNA PEARMAN]
November: Woodland Caribou [MARK BRADLEY], Ring-necked Duck, Palm Warbler [GORDON COURT], Tiger Lily [GERALD ROMANCHUK]
December: Sharp-shinned Hawk [GORDON COURT], American Redstart [GORDON COURT], Lazuli Bunting [NICK PARAYKO], Red Fox [MYRNA PEARMAN], White-winged Crossbill [MARK BRADLEY]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Ron Bjorge, Gordon Court, Judy Fushley, Robin Gutsell, Lisa Monsees
 Layout: Broken Arrow Solutions Inc.

ISBN 978-1-4601-3655-3 (PRINT)
 ISBN 978-1-4601-3656-0 (PDF ONLINE)

Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Calendar 2018 is published by the Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks. For an electronic version of the calendar please visit: <http://aep.alberta.ca/recreation-public-use/wildlife-viewing/watchable-wildlife-calendar.aspx>.