

ALBERTA'S  
Watchable Wildlife

2015  
CALENDAR







# 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”), birdfeeding, behaviour study and flower identification. In support of these activities, the Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, 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.
  - **CAUTION!**  
In bear country you should keep yourself more visible and make noise to alert bears of your presence; also carry pepper spray.
- 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.

## Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Calendar

To help increase public awareness, appreciation and understanding of wildlife, the Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, 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.*





## Northern Goshawk

*(Accipiter gentilis)*

The northern goshawk breeds throughout the forested regions of Alberta, but often wanders out onto the prairies in the southern part of the province in winter. Goshawks prey on a wide variety of birds and mammals, from ruffed grouse to snowshoe hares, and are particularly attracted to flocks of feral rock pigeons (*Columba livia*) frequenting farm yards in winter. Keen birders will note that the male pictured on the left is in his first adult plumage (second-winter), showing heavier ventral barring, and an orange-coloured eye. Subsequent plumages will be blue/grey, with fine ventral barring, and the eye, in time, will become deep crimson. The juvenile male bird, challenging for food (right), is in the typical brown, first-winter plumage.

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Watch for bald eagles wherever open water allows ducks to overwinter.
- Many small wild creatures such as voles, deer mice and shrews are active through the cold of winter in the "subnivean" layer beneath the snow.
- Great grey owls and northern hawk owls are often more visible in winter as they hunt woodland edges during the day.

# JANUARY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				NEW YEAR'S DAY 1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Gyrfalcons and prairie falcons overwinter in Edmonton, feeding on pigeons and waterfowl.			Townsend's solitaires move into urban areas to eat berries.	
11	12	13	14	 15	16	17
			Muskrat houses or "pushups" are the only sign of this aquatic rodent in frozen ponds and lakes.			
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Willow areas north of Fort McMurray attract the aptly named willow ptarmigan in its white winter plumage.			Jumping mice are asleep below ground. They are our only hibernating mice.		
25	26	27	28	29	 30	31
		Canada lynx are active through the winter preying primarily on snowshoe hares.				





## Arctic Grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*)

Arctic grayling are among the most beautiful of all native Alberta fish. They occur throughout the Athabasca, Peace, and Hay river drainages in the province. Each spring, spawning males display spectacular iridescence and brilliantly coloured dorsal fins. This beauty, and the fact that they are easy to catch, have made them a favourite with anglers. Unfortunately, with increased road access, this popularity has made them vulnerable to over-harvest in many parts of the province. Provincial populations are estimated to have declined predominantly between the 1950s and 1970s, with 50% of named subpopulations declining by over 90% in abundance. The Alberta range for the species has contracted by approximately 40%.

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Winter in the mountains sees birds such as Steller's jays, Clark's nutcrackers and American dippers move downslope and they are often easier to see at this time.
- Look for snow fleas or springtails out on chinook afternoons.
- Black-backed woodpeckers can often be located by listening for the soft tapping as they scale bark in a characteristic pattern.

# FEBRUARY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 <b>GROUNDHOG DAY</b> traditionally the day when woodchucks emerge from their burrows to foretell the remaining length of the winter.	3	4	5	6	7 Cougars hunt actively throughout the year preying primarily on deer.
8 	9	10	11 "Ghost moose" are actually infested with ticks that causes them to rub off their outer coat and appear light coloured.	12	13	14 <b>VALENTINE'S DAY</b>
15 	16 <b>FAMILY DAY</b> Eurasian collared-dove has become a familiar sight year round in southern Alberta towns.	17	18	19 Deer species have dropped their antlers.	20	21 Grey jays also called "whiskey-jacks" are among the most curious and tame of forest birds.
22	23 	24	25 Burbot are spawning with some females carrying one million eggs!	26	27 	28





**Ruffed Grouse**  
(*Bonasa umbellus*)

The ruffed grouse is one of seven species of grouse native to Alberta. The name, 'ruffed', refers to the long, black or chocolate-coloured neck feathers that are most prominent on the male. When a male is in full display, these feathers are extended into a spectacular ruff that, together with a fully fanned tail, makes him look twice his normal size. The plumages of the two sexes are quite similar and, while about two-thirds of the males have unbroken dark bands near the end of their tails, many males have bands much like those of females – as can be seen here. Across most of their range ruffed grouse occur in two colour morphs; red morphs are more common in milder climates, and the grey birds are more abundant where winter climates are more severe.

# MARCH 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 1	 2	3	4	5	6	7
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS 8	9	10	11	12	13	14
			Snow buntings linger in the prairies and parkland.			
15	 16	ST. PATRICK'S DAY 17	18	19	SPRING EQUINOX 20	21
		Melting snow uncovers the winter mounds of northern pocket gophers.				
22	 23	24	25	26	 27	28
			Richardson's ground squirrels start to appear on warm days.			
29	30	31				
	Warm days can induce a mourning cloak butterfly out of hibernation.	Horned larks and tree sparrows drift north if the weather is good.				

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Although possessed of a ferocious reputation, the wolverine weighs only around 16 kg.
- Ice fish for lake whitefish and other species at Lake Wabamun, Lac St. Anne and other Alberta lakes.
- Boreal owls are calling in the deciduous forests up Maligne Lake Road.





## Western Tiger Salamander

*(Ambystoma mavortium)*

The western tiger salamander is one of two species of salamander native to Alberta. They exist within the lowland deciduous and coniferous forests and in the grasslands of Alberta from the latitude of Edmonton, south. Primarily nocturnal, they are active in Alberta from early spring to early fall. Opportunistic feeders, they will eat mites, earthworms, slugs, and various terrestrial and aquatic insects. Their eggs are laid in shallow ponds and the larvae are aquatic for as little as four months to up to two years. Adults often burrow in soft ground and may use the diggings of the northern pocket gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*) (often incorrectly identified as 'moles' in Alberta) to take cover in the subterranean.

# APRIL 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	GOOD FRIDAY 3	4
				Red-tailed hawks return to set up nesting territories.		
EASTER 5	EASTER MONDAY 6	7	8	9	10	11
April 5-11 Wildlife Week "Be a Wildlife Supporter"			The yap and yodel of coyotes is heard across the province, including in the river valleys of our major cities.		Prairie crocus or pasque flower is a traditional harbinger of spring.	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			Our largest fish, the lake sturgeon may live for 60+ years.			
19	20		22	23	24	25
	The song of the American robin is heard again through cities and towns.					
26	27	28	29	30		
		Snakes are beginning to move out of their hibernacula in southern Alberta.				

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Canada geese move north and pairs stake out potential nest sites often standing on frozen ponds waiting for the ice to melt.
- Tree swallows and mountain bluebirds are laying claim to nestboxes throughout the southern half of Alberta.
- Sharp-tailed grouse are on their dancing grounds and can be viewed at places like Camp Wainwright.





## American Golden Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*)

The beautiful American golden plover is the very latest addition to the list of breeding birds in Alberta. Recently, university researchers and biologists from ESRD identified several breeding pairs of this Arctic-nesting species from the high alpine zone of Caw Ridge, in northwest Alberta. Normally a denizen of the tundra of the Arctic coast and islands in Canada, this species finds similar habitat in the high terrain of the Rocky Mountains in the Yukon, northern British Columbia, and now, Alberta. These compact and powerful shorebirds migrate from the northern breeding grounds to their wintering grounds in Patagonia in South America. Among migratory birds, this species has one of the longest migratory routes of over 40,000 km.

# MAY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5		7	8	9
MOTHER'S DAY 10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	VICTORIA DAY 18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Wilson's snipe are "winnowing" over marshes across Alberta.
- Visit Elk Island National Park to spot the reddish-coloured bison calves born at the end of May.
- The pronghorn is the sole survivor of a large array of prehistoric "American antelopes". It has recovered well from historical low numbers and can now be readily seen on Alberta's prairies.





**Eared Grebe**  
(*Podiceps nigricollis*)

The diminutive eared grebe is one of 6 grebe species that breed in Alberta. Unlike most of the other grebe species, eared grebes breed in colonies composed of floating nests and may include up to several hundred pairs. Considered the most numerous of all species of grebes in the world, it occurs on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Unlike most other grebes, it rarely eats fish, and subsists mainly on aquatic invertebrates. This pigeon-sized grebe is a poor flier and therefore migrates mainly at night; it is a favourite prey item for urban-nesting peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) in Alberta, where the ambient light of the city exposes them at night as an easily captured food source.

# JUNE 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
FATHER'S DAY SUMMER SOLSTICE 21	22	 23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- The carnivorous sundews and pitcher plants are blooming in fens in the Cold Lake area. A pair of rubber boots is all it takes to get up close to these unique plants.
- Visit Winston Churchill or Cold Lake provincial parks to see a wide array of wood warblers as they sing their distinctive songs to attract a mate.
- Drive the prairie south of Cypress Hills for prairie specialties like McCown's longspur, long-billed curlew and lark bunting.





**Pronghorn**  
(*Antilocapra americana*)

The pronghorn is one of the most-easily observed ungulates in Alberta. They can be seen off most highways in southeast Alberta and are especially common on native prairie along Highway 1 between Brooks and Medicine Hat. Pronghorns are social animals with summer groups averaging between eight and 10 animals. Breeding takes place in late September with young, usually twins, born in the last 10 days of May. Unlike deer or elk, newborn pronghorn lack white spots. At the northern limit of their range in Alberta, they can incur heavy losses during harsh winters. Adults have relatively small hooves, no dew claws, and are not well-adapted to snow. They typically move long distances to find winter ranges with reduced snow depths.

# JULY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			CANADA DAY <b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park provides a great introduction to life along a prairie river.
- Fabulous scenery plus birds like Brewer's sparrow, white-tailed ptarmigan and grey-crowned rosy finch can be seen by hiking above tree line at Wilcox Pass.
- Look and listen for pikas below Mount Edith Cavell and at the lower end of Medicine Lake in Jasper Park.





**Franklin's Gull**  
(*Larus pipixcan*)

The dove-like Franklin's gull arrives in Alberta from its Chilean wintering grounds in late April. At this time, the plumage of the breast and belly appears a striking pink, particularly if the birds are viewed while they are flying over patches of snow remaining from winter. Because of this trait, the bird was originally named the Franklin's rosy gull. Dr. John Richardson, naturalist on the Second Franklin Expedition in 1825 named the gull in honour of Sir John Franklin, the English explorer. This bird nests in colonies composed of floating nests built of dead or dying vegetation. The entire breeding range for the species exists in the great plains of North America, with the Canadian population estimated at over 1.5 million birds.

# AUGUST 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	HERITAGE DAY 3	4	5	6	7	8
		Black terns are turning white as they prepare to head south.		Beautiful day-flying police car moths gather on cow parsnip.		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Waterfowl are moving off the small breeding ponds to larger wetlands.			Sora rails are easier to see now as young explore their home sloughs.		
16		17	18	19	20	21
		The young of many species are beginning to venture further afield on their own.				22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	All three of Alberta's chipmunk species occur in Waterton Lakes National Park.		Many Richardson's ground squirrels have already started to hibernate.		

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- During the last week of August, walks in the river valley of Edmonton often reveal small flocks of warblers already drifting south.
- White-faced ibis and other wetland birds can be seen at Pakowki and other prairie lakes.
- This is the season for using dry flies for westslope cutthroat trout.





**Moose**  
(*Alces alces*)

The sight of a mature bull moose during the autumn rut instantly erases from the mind any image of the species portrayed in cartoons and comic books. These magnificent members of the deer family can be as large as 2.1 m (6 ft 9 in) at the shoulder and weigh up to 700 kg (1500 lb). Although not usually aggressive towards humans, bulls in the rut will aggressively defend their cows, and females can be very dangerous while defending young calves. Six different subspecies of moose are recognized throughout the Holarctic ecozone. Normally denizens of the forested regions of Alberta, moose have made a significant range extension into the prairie biome of Alberta in recent decades. Few ungulates are harder to overlook than a mature moose moving over short-grass prairie!

# SEPTEMBER 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	LABOUR DAY 7	8	9	10	11	12
13	The viewpoint at Lois Hole Provincial Park allows for a good look at a wide variety of wetland birds.	15	16	17	18	19
20		22	FALL EQUINOX 23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			
	Look for the square excavations in trees made by pileated woodpeckers.					

The meadow vole may well be the most abundant mammal in Alberta.

Grebes are the only family of birds known to eat their own feathers, presumably as a digestive aid.

Sandhill cranes migrate south by the thousands.

Harlan's morph of red-tailed hawk drifts south from the Yukon.

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Drive the Icefields Parkway in Jasper and Banff national parks for wildlife and unparalleled scenery.
- Burned forest offers a specialized habitat for many species of flora and fauna.
- Elk, also known as wapiti, are "bugling" as the rut begins. Waterton and Jasper are among the best places to see these beautiful deer.





## Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)

The spectacular golden eagle breeds in all ecoregions of the province but is not common in any area. Most often found on cliffs, the huge stick nests of this eagle can be seen on the banks of most major rivers, in the mountains and foothills, and on the Canadian shield in the north-eastern corner of the province. Although some golden eagles in Alberta remain here all year, some join the ranks of birds from northern Canada migrating through the province where they are counted in the thousands as they pass over the Kananaskis range in south-western Alberta. Still air and fog will often drive such migrants to the ground where they are a delight to bird watchers and photographers alike.

Here a juvenile bird has taken up a perch on the remains of an ancient limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*).

# OCTOBER 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	THANKSGIVING DAY 12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	HALLOWEEN 31



Red foxes occur in a variety of colour morphs — red, silver and cross.

Caribou migrate seasonally between summer and winter grounds.

House finches add a dash of colour to urban yards in winter.



Pine grosbeak start to move into populated urban areas.

Look closely at the large goose flocks migrating through the province to pick out tiny Ross' geese.

Weasels are already white in preparation for snow.

Holes dug by badgers serve as important shelters for a host of other species.

Nuttall's cottontails are our only true rabbit and retain a brown coat throughout the year.

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Rough-legged hawks have moved south from their Arctic breeding grounds and appear on the prairies.
- Get your bird feeders ready as an early snowfall can have birds looking for secondary food sources.
- Cold Lake stays ice free very late and often attracts rarities like harlequin ducks, Arctic loons and odd gulls.





## Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*)

Alberta grizzlies are among the smaller brown bears in North America, with females averaging between 140 and 180 kg (300 to 400 lb) and males usually between 160 and 230 kg (350 to 500 lb). These bears do not have access to calorie-rich fish foods like many other populations in British Columbia and Alaska, so they never grow as big. Grizzlies can be seen anywhere in the Rocky Mountain Natural Region in Alberta from April to October and are often seen at the roadsides of Alberta's parks during June and July when they graze heavily on dandelion crops. Grizzly bear density is highest in the relatively undisturbed portions of the province around Grande Cache. Now listed as a Threatened species in Alberta, efforts are underway to curb human-caused mortality for the species, including reduction of motorized access in core grizzly range.

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Snowy owls erupt from their Arctic nesting grounds erratically.
- Many small forest birds and mammals can be attracted by "pishing" or by sucking on the back of one's hand to produce a squeak.
- Learning to recognize animal tracks and sign can add another exciting element to winter outings.

# NOVEMBER 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS <b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	Red squirrels build up their middens to take them through the winter.	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
 <b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	Bohemian waxwings move into settled areas often in large flocks.	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	Watch for the "frosted" hoary redpolls within common redpoll flocks.	 <b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		White-tailed prairie hares (jackrabbits) are well adapted to city life and allow close approach at places like the University of Alberta campus.	Common goldeneyes and mallards winter as far north as they find open water.		
			Beavers are safe in their lodges for the winter.			





## Canada Lynx *(Lynx canadensis)*

The number of Canada lynx in Alberta varies widely and is inextricably linked to the abundance of its primary prey, the varying or snowshoe hare (*Lepus americanus*). In years when prey are abundant, lynx are more sedentary and will breed, having up to five kittens per litter. When prey decline, this cat may wander widely in search of good feeding conditions. One lynx, ear-tagged as a kitten in the Mackenzie Wood Bison Sanctuary south and west of Yellowknife, NWT, was captured two years later near Drayton Valley! The lynx is readily distinguished from its smaller cousin, the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), by having a black-tipped tail, rather than one marked with multiple black bars.

## Wildlife-Viewing Tips

- Flying squirrels are active through the winter. Look for them after dark on bird feeders in wooded areas.
- Christmas Bird Counts have been censusing birds in North America for over 100 years. It's a great opportunity to participate by going out with a group or counting the birds coming to your feeders.
- Many wolves in Alberta are black. Recent DNA work attributes this to an ancient introduction of genes from First Nations' dogs.

# DECEMBER 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
	Watch for the occasional brown creeper tagging along with chickadee flocks in winter.				Ravens are likely both our smartest and hardest birds, active even in very cold weather.	
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	WINTER SOLSTICE <b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	CHRISTMAS EVE <b>24</b>	CHRISTMAS DAY <b>25</b>	BOXING DAY <b>26</b>
	The merlin is our familiar small falcon within cities. It can capture birds over twice its own weight.					
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	NEW YEAR'S EVE <b>31</b>		
	Both black and grizzly bears share their winter dens with their young for a year or two.					



# Alberta's Watchable Wildlife Calendar 2015



## PHOTO CREDITS:

**January:** northern goshawks [JON GROVES]; bald eagle, ermine [GORDON COURT]; yellow-lady's slipper [DAVE PRESCOTT]  
**February:** Arctic grayling [GORDON COURT]; meadow vole [GERALD ROMANCHUK]; western anemone [DAVE PRESCOTT]; downy woodpecker [PAM STEPHENS]  
**March:** ruffed grouse, melanistic Richardson's ground squirrel [GORDON COURT]; lesser yellowlegs [REBECCA BALDWIN]; common tickseed [DAVE PRESCOTT]  
**April:** western tiger salamander [GORDON COURT]; white pelican [MONICA DAHL]; grass-of-Parnassus, common yellowthroat [DAVE PRESCOTT]  
**May:** American golden plover, tree swallow, great blue heron [GORDON COURT]; checkered skipper [GERALD ROMANCHUK]  
**June:** eared grebe [DAVE PRESCOTT]; peregrine falcon [GORDON COURT]; wood frog [MONICA DAHL]; cherry-faced meadowhawk [GERALD ROMANCHUK]

**July:** pronghorn [GORDON COURT]; peregrine falcon [TODD PONICH]; Leconte's sparrow [DAVE PRESCOTT]; honey bees [MONICA DAHL]  
**August:** Franklin's gull [DAVE PRESCOTT]; gopher snake [GERALD ROMANCHUK]; merlin [PAM STEPHENS]; bighorn sheep [TODD PONICH]  
**September:** moose [DALE ESLINGER]; golden eagle [GORDON COURT]; thirteen-lined ground squirrel, boreal toad [GERALD ROMANCHUK]  
**October:** golden eagle [STEVE SCHWARTZE]; northern saw-whet owl [MONICA DAHL]; northwestern fritillary [GERALD ROMANCHUK]; little brown myotis [GORDON COURT]  
**November:** grizzly bear [MIKE EWALD]; gyrfalcon and rock pigeon [GORDON COURT]; Virginia ctenucha [GERALD ROMANCHUK]; ruffed grouse [TODD PONICH]  
**December:** Canada lynx [STEVE SCHWARTZE]; white-tailed prairie hare, northern flying squirrel [GERALD ROMANCHUK]; American black bear [TODD PONICH]

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