

Nature Notes

Are you suffering from those late winter blues? One way to combat the late winter blues is simply to get outside, especially on a sunny day. Plan a late winter adventure to a state park or natural area. Perhaps not the ideal time to get outside to take a nature walk but with a little inspiration and preparation you can make it a great outdoors adventure.

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

-Albert Einstein

Winter is a great time to observe birds at a park, natural area or your own backyard. Many common birds begin to sing as the days grow longer, a sure sign that winter is coming to an end. Hearing their songs will surely help chase those late winter blues away.

Important Things to Remember for Late Winter Hiking

- *Check the weather forecast.*
- *Know when to turn around if weather or terrain becomes unsafe.*
- *Always leave a planned itinerary with a family or friend.*
- *Wear appropriate foot wear and clothing.*
- *Dress in layers.*
- *Pack snack and water.*
- *Leave a dry change of clothes in the car.*
- *Bring your camera.*

Some Sights & Sounds of Late Winter

Chickadee – call is a familiar “*Chick-a-dee-dee-dee*” which functions as a contact call, one that serves to keep the winter flock together when birds cannot see one another. The chickadee song is a clear *fee-bee*.



Blue Jay - The “*Jay! Jay!*” is a familiar sound; harsh, loud and unmusical, sometimes sounding more like “*Jeer-Jeer*”.

Redpoll - One of the most popular winter finches, redpolls have a rapid chattering trill call that can either be buzzing or bubbling. A “*Sweeee-eee-eeet*” call is also common.



Evening Grosbeak - Its usual voice consists of a single screaming note. The note is a single warbling call. Its typical call is a ringing “*Chirp*” or “*Cleer*”, and a loud “*Cleep*” call.

White-Breasted Nuthatch – song is a rapid, nasal, fairly low-pitched “*Wha-wha-wha*”.

Downy and Hairy Woodpecker - During the cold months of the year the downy and hairy woodpeckers are quite silent, but their drumming is a sign that winter is coming to an end. This loud rapid drumming on hollow trees can be to define a territory, keep track of a mate, or in search of a mate. Softer pecking is usually searching for food, and they will chip away at trees.

Great horned owl initiates nests as early as February. Birds are easy to locate because nests are large and are visible without leaves to hide the nest.

Wild tom turkeys begin gobbling and practice strutting their stuff.