

# NATURE NOTES

March 2024



**1** Welcome spring? Yes! March 1 marks the beginning of meteorological spring. Astronomical seasons are based on the position of Earth in relation to the sun, while meteorological seasons are based on the annual temperature cycle.

**18** The American Woodcock has begun to display at dusk and dawn in open fields. Males call as they spiral high into the sky and loop back down to the ground to attract a female. **Check [dpnc.org/events](https://dpnc.org/events) for our two Woodcock Walks this month.**

**3** Mourning doves build their first nests of the year. They will lay 1-2 eggs in each brood and may have up to 6 broods in a year.

**19** The Vernal Equinox, which takes place on Tuesday, March 19 at 11:06 pm, marks the first day of spring and the moment the sun crosses the Earth's equator heading north.

**4** Skunk cabbage flowers are emerging in wet woodland areas. These maroon-hooded flowers produce their own heat (up to 50°F). This warmth provides a safe haven for flies and other early hatching insects that pollinate spring flowers.

**21** Wood frogs are awakening from a frozen hibernation. Their unmistakable "quack" can be heard from vernal pools and ponds.



**9** Mourning Cloak butterflies emerge from hibernation. They hibernate under tree bark and when they emerge, Mourning Cloaks feed on flowing sap from tree branches.

**23** Gray squirrels have their first litter of babies. They are born blind, deaf and without fur. They rely on their mother's care for about 10 weeks before they explore on their own.

**10** Spring forward! Daylight saving time begins Sunday, March 10 at 2 a.m. local time.



**12** Killdeer have arrived. Listen for their *kill-deer, kill-deer* call in fields and pastures, or on playgrounds, unpaved driveways and beach dunes.

**25** The March full moon is called the Full Worm Moon, named for the worms that are starting to become more active as the weather warms.

**29** Black Bears emerge from their dens. Males will emerge first, followed by females in late March to mid April.

**14** Red Maple buds begin swelling. They have been dormant through winter, and now, with the longer days and warmer weather, they are getting ready to flower in the coming weeks.

**28** Red fox pups emerge from their dens and can be seen playing by the entrance. Both parents will help protect and bring food to their young.

**17** Ospreys start to return from South America. Pairs will often reunite at their old nest site, and make repairs and add material to ready it for egg laying.

