

Got Cabin Fever?

Feeling restless, uneasy, day dreaming about warm, summer breezes down at the lake, perhaps just a little grumpy? Sounds like a classic case of cabin fever, typical of this time of year. *Cabin fever* has afflicted many of us for years and years. It's believed that *cabin fever* was used to describe early settlers who experienced long, cold winters in their small, log homes. Some believe the only cure for *cabin fever* is time. So for many of us we just wait. While we wait for warmer days, earlier sunrises and later sunsets the wildlife continue their daily struggle for survival in search of food and warmth.

I say let's fight *cabin fever*! Time to get off the couch and hit the trail! Take an adventure in our backyard and find out how the wildlife is coping with '*cabin fever*' and what they are doing as winter unwinds these next couple months.



Black-capped chickadees, purple finches, and common redpolls continue to fluff up their feathers to keep warm, using the trapped air against their bodies as insulation.

Great horned owls begin nesting. Nests are easy to locate because nests are quite large and often located in small groups of mature trees or tree rows.

Ruffed grouse leave their snow bank shelters to continue their search for buds and dried berries. Their favorite buds are of the quaking aspen.

Ring-necked pheasants continue to hunt for snowberries, Russian olives and sumac berries where corn and sunflowers cannot be found.

Snowshoe hares climb on top of snow banks reaching for tasty, slender twigs, bark and buds. Soon enough they will begin to lose their white, winter coats.

As you carefully travel along the rivers, streams and ponds take a moment to think about the **dragonflies and damselflies** lying deep at the bottoms as larvae or nymphs ever so patiently waiting for spring to arrive.

Northern leopard frogs are down there as well in a deep state of hibernation. Soon the evening frog chorus will fill the air!



Early birds, **American robins** and **Eastern and Western bluebirds** begin to arrive. Perhaps even earlier might just be some **Red-winged blackbirds** arriving to stake out their marshy territory.

Red-tailed hawks, masters of soaring, begin to arrive.

Bald eagles will soon be nesting after their spectacular aerial courtship displays.



Squirrels mating season begins with a high-speed chase up, down and around trees with the females playing hard to get.

Turkeys start gobbling and strutting their stuff.

Hairy and Downy woodpeckers will soon begin to beat their heads against trees, fence posts and occasionally wood shingles – a sure sign that not only is winter finally unwinding but love is in the air.



So hang in there, and let winter unwind, spring is right around the corner!