

JANUARY 1- 14, 2022 NATURAL HISTORY NOTES
By Dick Harlow

JANUARY SNOW



Winter Snow, January 2022 looking out over the meadow and bird boxes in back of Deer Meadow Drive. © Dick Harlow

I have to say I love being able to look out my window and see a beautiful landscape covered in snow. And see rabbit tracks, vole tracks, fox tracks in the snow. I can't give the reader a specific explanation why I like snow other than to muse as a naturalist; it shows me who has traversed my garden without me knowing and seeing it. It also sometimes tells me who has been hunting and whether it had been successful.



Eastern Cottontail Rabbit tracks. © Dick Harlow

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A single rabbit track in the snow. © Dick Harlow

But I don't need snow for some birds of prey to let me in on their success. Prey feathers on the snow give me that clue. On the other hand, failures I would have to be present to see, so I would always be in the dark about that event.

We have had snow on the ground for most of December, first month of Winter. Now we are beginning the second Month of Winter, January; while a great part of the middle and southern part of the nation is experiencing higher than normal temperatures, we seem to be experiencing a more normal, in some respects, Vermont winter.

I find the cold white fluffy stuff gives a serene look to the landscape. To me there is something fascinating about the change in seasons, especially when those changes are dynamic. Witnessing just cold temperatures without a change in the view of the landscape wouldn't be as dynamic until we see the snow.

It certainly sends a message to me that humans living in a cottage/house/shelter where it is warm, with food and water are especially lucky. By comparison when looking outside and watching the birds and animals hunting, trying to find or in fact finding food, ravenously feeding from your bird feeders underlines how fortunate we are.

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#1. Winterberry berries covered in snow.
© Dick Harlow

Take the time to investigate the beautiful ice crystals that can form at the end of a snowfall or on particular branches, buds, or berries.



#2 Winterberry Ice crystals along the top edge of the snow that covers these berries. © Dick Harlow

If you look carefully, you will see ice crystals that have formed along the top of the pile of snow that covers these Winterberry berries. **Picture #2** gives a closer look.

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Dwarf Red Pine after a snowfall.
© Dick Harlow

It is hard for me to imagine Vermont having a climate like North Carolina, but that is what is predicted for Vermont's future. It is a prediction that underlines my enjoyment of the present and at my chronological age.

OBSERVATIONS

MAMMALS

Eastern Cottontail Rabbit
Fox tracks
Coydog (Coyote) tracks

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All Measurements taken at solar noon (1230 EST).

PRECIPITATION

Average January Precipitation for Vermont = 2.05 inches and 21 inches of snowfall.

Total precipitation for January was 12.2 mm or 0.48 inches. This means we need to make up **1.57 inches** in the next two weeks just to meet the average for the month.

Overcast Days 1-14: We had 9 days of overcast skies. Of those overcast skies 4 days produced precipitation.