



The Coming of Winter 2022

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As Autumn is leaving, daylight is reduced, night and nighttime arrives earlier, and it becomes colder. Winter is coming. Here are some of the local signs snow season is about to occur.

Perhaps, for me, the earliest sign of Winter is when the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services ((NHDES) Dam Bureau pulls the stop logs at Dolloff Dam and lifts the gate at Drowns Dam just after Indigenous Peoples' Day as the Draw Down. Although there was a slight delay because of the drought and rain, the annual [Draw Down](#) did occur in early October. Once initiated the lake level drops dramatically. Two flamingos show level differences.



April 2022 Lake full



November 2022 Lake dropped

Gardeners prepared for the end of the growing season and get ready for Winter. They covered up things



The prepared garden

And in the garden and across the landscape, with cold nights and semi-warm days, there is morning frost on the entire terrain.



Frost in the morning



Frost on the fields

The woods entered what is called “stick season”. That means the fall foliage is on the snowless ground. I learned Northern New England has 6 seasons- Fall, Stick, Winter, Mud, Spring, and Summer. And with stick season can observe many things hidden in the other ones. These include rocks and logs.



Stick Season



Stick Seasons allows you to see deep into the wood

Leaves partly or completely cover the trail.



Where's the trail?

The white birch trees stand ready to handle the snow. They will bend under the weight of the white stuff, but they do break.



The white birch corridor waiting for the snow.

But the white birch corridor has another message about Winter. I found a series of downed birch trees. They were dead ones. Here is the point. Literature and art have depicted the cycle of life in the seasons. Birth or rebirth is represented by Spring., Summer growing, and Fall, maturity. Following that logic, Winter comes to mean the end of life or death.



White birch burial ground.

Seeing all the dead birch trees, offered me one consolation. Their decay will nourish the woods and other birch trees.

As I walked into the woods, it suddenly hit me-silence. Yes, it was Simon & Garfunkel's *The Sound of Silence*. The lack of sound was profound. Usually, I hear a variety of bird songs as I wander in the wilderness. Today, occasionally I heard one bird chirping. Later, the silence was destroyed by a person near the woods using a leaf blower. How loud was it? So loud as Ed McMann would say on the Johnny Carson show, it was so loud it justified all the COVID-19 Zoom working-from-home complaints.

The dirt roads become rippled and develop holes. When it rains, the roads now have puddles. With the colder nights, these water holes freeze. Once driven through, vehicles break the ice.



My road

All was in waiting. On NH 101 on Sunday, December 11, 2022, there were mounted flashing warning signs: *Winter Weather Later Today*. They were accurate. That evening it snowed, Here is what we found on Monday. The garden, front lawn, and adjacent woods displayed their snow covering. The road had been plowed indicating the town officially noted it as 'real' snow.



Real snow

And on the lake shore, the flamingos, canoe, and kayaks displayed their snow coats. A snow-covered tongue of ice for the first time appeared on Pawtuckaway Lake. It indicated the lake would soon be ice-covered.



Snow on the shore and the ice.

For all intents and purposes, Winter has arrived. Yes, according to the calendar, Winter begins on December 21 aka the Winter Solstice, the shortest daylight of the year. But, as far as I am concerned it is Winter now! Time for cross-country skiing and snow shoes.