

Winter Wonderland

“The recipe for wintering game,” according to Aldo Leopold, “is corn and cover. As in other recipes, success depends on where, when, and how the makings are put together.” Dense grass cover, cattail sloughs, and shelterbelts protect birds from heavy snow and wind chill. Close proximity to high-energy foods is critical for success.

Counting Calories

Winter survival depends not only on adequate cover, but also on [increasing metabolic rate](#) in response to cold temperatures. In winter, bobwhites need about 60 kcal/ day and pheasants need about 500 kcal/day to sustain daily activities. Corn, milo, sunflower, and ragweed seeds provide over 100 kcal/oz. of usable energy to help stay warm and maintain body condition.

Food Plots

Pheasants Forever’s Signature Series [food and cover seed mixes](#) are designed to carry gamebirds through tough winters. Pick up seed orders at the Nebraska State Habitat Meeting.



Hen pheasant sitting on a snow drift.

‘Tis the Season

Go over the river and through the woods to [Nebraska State Parks](#) for fruit cake flings, bird counts, dinner plays, scavenger hunts, sparkling lights, and other fun filled holiday happenings.

O Christmas Tree!

Before the existence of tree lots, wild [eastern redcedars](#) were the tree of choice for many pioneers. For a fun, old-fashioned family Christmas, head out to the country and saw down a lonely redcedar. In the words of Clark W. Griswold, “This is what our forefathers did. They walked out into the woods, picked out that special tree and they cut it down with their bare hands.”

Christmas Bird Count

Since 1900, citizen scientists have been counting birds to help study the distribution and status of bird populations across North America. The [Christmas Bird Count](#) has helped document the sharp decline of common birds, including the Northern Bobwhite. The 117th CBC season occurs from December 14 to January 5. [Find a count circle](#) near you.

December 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1 Deer Muzzleloader, Bobcat Season	2 Nebraska Prescribed Fire Conference @ Kearney	3 Nemaha Valley Youth Mentor Hunt
4	5	6 Learn to Hunt Predators @ Lincoln	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Christmas Bird Count Dec. 14 –Jan. 5	15	16	17 Yule Log @ Platte River State Park
18	19 Burn brush piles after a good snowfall	20	21 First Day of Winter	22 Remember 1989? Record low of -46° F at Crescent Lake, NE	23	24
25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29	30	31 Winterfest @ Ponca State Park
1 New Years Day	2	NOTES				



Habitat Tips:

- [Conservation tillage](#) increases food availability and reduces downwind drifting of snow into winter cover areas.
- With snow on the ground, winter is a good time to [burn tree piles](#). Now is also a good time to write your burn plan for next spring.
- Turn brush piles trees into [fish habitat](#). Christmas trees are too dense to hold big fish. Instead, sink bundles of hardwood limbs.

Wildlife, Wildflowers, and More:

Bright red fruits of Silver Buffaloberry persist into winter adding interest to the landscape and food for Sharp-tailed Grouse. With feathered legs, prairie grouse are well-adapted to winter. Bobwhites gather around in roost formations to stay warm at night. Look for wildlife tracks and signs in the snow to see what stories they tell; they might lead you to a colorful bouquet of pheasants.