



VIRTUAL GUIDED NATURE WALKS, SPECIES ALMANAC

INTRODUCTION

Come outside with us! Come let us show you some of the really fascinating things that live here. We'll show you six kinds of mosses you can recognize from your car window, four kinds of trees you can name just from the look of their bark. Listen in as a flock of chickadees keeps in touch with one another. Learn to recognize when a robin is really cross and when the crows are warning that an eagle is about to come flying by. Look at our rocks and not only recognize Deer Isle granite but know what the pink stripes are.

First the VIRTUAL GUIDED NATURE WALKS serve as leisurely introductions to the Deer Isle natural world, perhaps to be read at home, in off-season, on rainy days. They provide a context and we know now that we learn best by linking facts to concepts and context. Download to your mobile device for use on the trails. We guide you through the habitats, identifying species and pointing out ecological concepts. Humans are great at assigning categories, perceiving and making patterns. We perceive the parts and the whole simultaneously. This is how our brain works - and repetition is key to retaining our insights.

Now for the Species Almanac. In the recent digital decades there has been a revolution in apps and field guides. There is a specialized vocabulary for plant (and bird) anatomy that one might eventually want to master, but the beginner is likely to forsake laboriously keying out species and ask instead: What does it look like? How big? What color, what is its context, and give me some little detail that tells me just which of several possibilities I should choose.

For this we offer the Species Almanac to help in sorting out what is likely on Deer Isle in a given place, at a given time, so we can usefully approach the vast resources of the Internet. Finally, learning is not a passive enterprise. Why learn? We have been leading nature walks here on Deer Isle for more than fifty years and we are convinced that the more you know about your natural surroundings, the more you appreciate. You can feel that smile, that glow of recognition when you come across a plant or animal you have met before. Increasingly research is showing that even seeing Nature images is good for our health. Being alive is a remarkable gift that we share with a fascinating host of creatures. Reason enough.

Out we go, and enjoy. That's how you become a naturalist.



Marnie and Ken Crowell