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GROUNDHOG DAY 2026:

Six more weeks of winter weather predicted



Spectators gather in Punxsutawny, Pa., to observe the Groundhog Day ceremony on Feb. 2, 2026. The ceremony dates back to the late 19th century.
PHOTOGRAPH BY @PUNXSYPHIL ON INSTAGRAM

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Every year, people revive a centuries-old tradition: letting a rodent predict the weather forecast on Feb. 2, as part of the celebration known as Groundhog Day. This year, the groundhogs of record predicted another six weeks of winter conditions.

> **"America turns 250, and I'm at least 139. Let's celebrate all: young, old, babies, or millennial—and kick off America's semi-quincentennial."**
>
> **PHIL'S OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION**

Punxsutawney Phil, dubbed the "seer of seers," emerged early Monday morning from his burrow and saw his shadow at "Gobbler's Knob" in Punxsutawney, a community about an hour north of Altoona in Western Pennsylvania. Tradition dictates that if Phil sees his shadow, "he regards it as an omen of six more weeks of bad weather and returns to his hole."

"It is my great honor to answer your annual call, so I rise again this morning to greet you all," reads Phil's official proclamation. "America turns 250, and I'm at least 139. Let's celebrate all: young, old, babies, or millennial — and kick off America's semi-quincentennial."

The prognostication was made in sub-zero temperatures before a crowd of thousands of bundled-up spectators, flashing cameras, and Phil's keepers: the top-hatted members of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club's "inner circle." Groundhog-themed musical performances and live radio and television broadcasts heard nationwide rounded out the festivities.

"I think it's just fun — folks having a good time," Rick Siger, Pennsylvania's secretary of community and economic development, told the Associated Press at his fourth straight Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney. "It brings people together at a challenging time. It is a unifying force that showcases the best of Pennsylvania."

The club upholds Phil as the only true prognosticator – and that the groundhog we see today is in fact the same rodent who started the trend in 1887. His fame and prestige haven't deterred other groundhogs from getting in on the action, though.

Chuckles the Woodchuck, who resides at the Lutz Children's Museum in Manchester, is Connecticut's official groundhog — and has been forecasting since 1968. He also saw his shadow this year, placing his prediction in line with Phil.

He purportedly whispers his prediction in the ear of Manchester city mayor Jay Moran, the only Connecticut public official who speaks groundhogese.

"Chuckles told me: 'Mayor, have you been living in Florida the last two weeks? Six more weeks of winter folks, sorry,'" Moran said, to much disappointment from the crowd of revelers.

According to reporting from the Connecticut Mirror from 2024, Chuckles has had a 60% accuracy rate based off of temperature data since the Lutz started publishing the data on the web in 2008. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in a similar analysis of groundhog predictions nationwide, gave Punxsutawney Phil a score of only 35%.

Although more accurate, Chuckles has come under fire in the past for false predictions. In 2024, he predicted an early spring, right before Winter Storm Birch swept Connecticut. Guilford police labeled him "Chuck the Liar" and even issued a warrant for his arrest.

Staten Island Chuck, New York City's groundhog, may have participated in the rodents' pre-prognostication conference call: He also announced six more weeks of winter Monday morning. In NOAA's 2025 analysis, Chuck, who resides at the Staten Island Zoo in New York City, topped the list receiving an 85% accuracy rating.

It's a prediction that appears to be more common than an early spring; this is the fifth time in six years that Phil has bestowed upon us the "bad news." Groundhog-Day.com, a webpage dedicated to tracking and promoting the holiday, says it received 36 reports of a prolonged winter prediction and 33 for an early spring this year, from groundhogs across the country.

The holiday also rose to prominence through the 1993 film "Groundhog Day," set in a fictionalized Punxsutawney, PA and starring Bill Murray as a narcissistic weatherman stuck in a time-loop, forced to re-live Feb. 2 day-after-day. The film's release has been a boon to the real-life celebrations in Punxsutawney according to Tom Dunkel, President of the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club, in an article from local TV station WTAJ.

"We have a lot of people who now come for a renewal, for a start over, and to get a new start in life," Dunkel said. "It's funny how often people will say that to me, that they were moved by the movie and they wanted to come to...get a new, fresh start."

However you celebrate the holiday, Groundhog Day is a fun reminder that spring is right around the corner, but NOAA suggests that staying updated with an accurate forecast may offer a more relevant weather outlook than the groundhogs' predictions.

To stay updated with Connecticut weather, visit the National Weather Service's webpages for their New York and Boston stations, in addition to the forecasts provided by local radio and television stations. For more information about Groundhog Day history and celebrations, visit groundhog.org.



Groundhog Punxsutawny Phil emerges out of his cave. According to the NOAA, Punxsutawny Phil has had a 35% accuracy rate on predicting the weather. PHOTO COURTESY OF @PUNXSY ON INSTAGRAM.

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