



# Ma'iingan (Wolf)

Maajii-Ojibwemowag (They Begin to Speak Ojibwe) – ANA Language Project  
Teacher/Caregiver Supplemental Document

## WAABANONG SET: MA'IINGAN BOOK OJIBWE LANGUAGE WORD LIST

- **Dagwaagin** – It is fall
- **Ma'iinganag** – Wolves
- **Giiwose** – S/he hunts
- **Oodena** – Town
- **Niiyawen'enh** – My namesake
- **Wiiyawen'enhyan** – His/her namesake
- **Waawaashkeshi** – Deer
- **Bawaajige** – S/he dreams
- **Waasa** – Far away, distant
- **Eya'** – Yes
- **Gaawiin** – No
- **Gichi-Manidoo** – Great Spirit
- **Izhitwaawin** – A certain belief, culture, or religion
- **Inwewin** – A way of speaking, a language, a dialect
- **Inawemaagan** – A relative

## Ma'iingan and the Ojibwe

Ma'iingan is one of the most highly regarded animals to the Ojibwe people. Ma'iingan plays an important role in Ojibwe aadizookaanag (traditional stories). The wolf is noted for being a brother and partner to man. Elder Niiib Aubid of the Sandy Lake/Rice Lake Band, stated that the wolf could understand Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe language). This is how the Ojibwe were once able to communicate with the wolves long ago and some Ojibwe people still hold this belief. To reiterate the connection, Niiib also points to the

prophecy, that whatever happens to Ma'iingan will happen to Ojibwe people, which is a reminder of why it is important to honor the teachings of respecting ma'iingan.

Additionally, Ojibwe teachings directly prohibit the hunting of wolves. Since 2012, many tribes have prohibited wolf hunting on their reservations and some even claiming their land as wolf sanctuaries.

Niiib shared that the wolf was given everything needed to live a good life, just like the

Ojibwe. By watching ma'iingan, the Ojibwe learned how to be good hunters (such as a being patient hunter) and how to take care for their family unit. The wolf also teaches us the importance of protecting the Ojibwe language and way of life.



## Ma'iingan and the Environment

Researchers have published studies demonstrating that wolves are a keystone species in the environment. The wolves presence helps maintain the health and balance of different ecosystems. Wolves help regulate different animal populations and keep them at healthy numbers. In places like Isle Royale and Yellowstone National Parks, the presence of wolves has helped

vegetation once overconsumed come back more abundant. The predator and prey relationship is more balanced and the carcasses left from the wolves leave food for other creatures to scavenge. When the wolf is overhunted, these ecosystems suffer. The animal and plant ratios fall out of balance and they tend to start damaging their own ecosystem. This is why it is vital to maintain wolf populations.



# Endangered Species Act and Ma'iingan

On February 10, 2022, a federal judge restored protections for ma'iingan in Ojibwe country. With the exception of the Northern Rocky Mountain population, ma'iinganag are now protected under the Endangered Species Act in the contiguous 48 states and Mexico. Hunting ma'iinganag is no longer permitted in states from the previous 2020 delisting rule, including Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Allowing reductions of the ma'iingan population could have impacts on the exercise of Ojibwe treaty rights. Ma'iingan helps protect the populations of some important

medical plants, and likely helps reduce the impacts of Chronic Wasting Disease in white-tailed deer in the Ceded Territory.



Want to learn more about the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Gray Wolf? Check out these sites:

- ESA Home: <https://www.fws.gov/angered/?ref=topbar>
- Gray Wolf FAQs: <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2022-Gray-Wolf-FAQs.pdf>

## Additional Resources

Informative, cultural information regarding ma'iingan and the Ojibwe. <https://northernwilds.com/culture-prophecy-bind-ojibwe-people-wolves/#:~:text=Ojibwe%20language%20speakers%20know%20the,social%20groups%20and%20hunting%20afield.>

A project with relevant cultural, and scientific information about Wolves. Cultural information specific to Wisconsin Ojibwe tribes. <https://lux.lawrence.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=luhp>

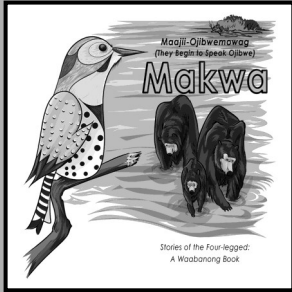
Link with great information about why wolves matter and why they are important to our ecosystem.

<https://www.livingwithwolves.org/about-wolves/why-wolves-matter/>



Questions? Contact:  
GLIFWC ANA Language Staff  
inwe@glifwc.org  
Visit our website - <https://www.glifwc-inwe.com>  
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# Makwa (Black Bear)

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**WAABANONG SET:  
MAKWA BOOK  
OJIBWE  
LANGUAGE WORD  
LIST**

- **Makwa** – Black Bear
- **Makoons** – Baby black bear
- **Miinan** – Blueberries
- **Nashke!** – Look!
- **Aabiding** – Once, one time
- **Bizaan** – Quiet, quietly, still
- **Zegizi** – S/he is scared
- **Bakadewag** – They are hungry
- **Maajaan** – Leave, go away
- **Maanoo** – Don't, don't care, let it be, never mind
- **Minis** – An island
- **Imaa** – There
- **Asemaa** – Tobacco
- **Maamaa** – Mother
- **Dede** – Father

## Makwa and the Ojibwe people

### Traditional Roles in Ojibwe Culture

Makwa (Black Bear) is a valued animal to the Ojibwe people.

The Ojibwe follow a clan system. Each clan is represented by an animal or bird, with a few exceptions. There are seven main clans, each holding a societal role. Makwa has the largest clan membership. .

Traditionally, the bear clan were known as the medicine people and as the protectors (police). Makwa patrols the

woods and scares away any predators that might harm smaller animals and knows which medicines to eat in order to heal themselves. This is why the Ojibwe pay attention to what makwa eats in order to learn which medicines to use to help heal the sick. These medicines can be



eaten, carried in pouches, used to smudge with, and much more.

Bear clan members also assume the roles and responsibilities of the protector. One example is the Bear Clan Patrol in Canada. This group of bear clan members patrol their community's streets to ensure their people are safe from harm and racist acts of aggression.

### How the Ojibwe people honor makwa

If a bear is harvested, there are certain cultural protocols that are followed to honor the bear's life. The Ojibwe people use makwa in many ways.

Traditionally, when makwa is harvested, every part of the bear is used and nothing goes to waste.

The bear hide and paws are often used in different ceremonies. For example, bear claws can be used in traditional regalia. Bear grease is also made from the fat and used topically for different skin and bone ailments. In addition, it helps hair to grow strong.

Elders say consuming bear meat will heal you due to all the medicines that makwa eats. However, in some communities it is taboo for bear clan members to eat bear meat. It is always good cultural practice to consult with elders in your community.

# Cultural considerations & hunting makwa

While tribal members have harvested approximately 45 makwa annually in the decade between 2007– 2017 (GLIFWC Deer, Elk, and Bear Harvest in 1836, 1837, 1842 Ceded Territories of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota 2007–2017) , Ojibwe communities with strong bear clan representation often discourage the hunts. An informal hunting ban on the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation (LCO), for example, has made bears off-limits for decades. Ojibwe bear clan members were the first to settle the LCO area in the mid-1700s and continue to have an influential voice in cultural and policy decisions. Makwa clan members sometimes utilize things like bear grease (rendered fat) from animals harvested by others. On rare occasions, the LCO Tribal Governing Board issues special ceremonial permits for a one-time bear harvest.

## Tribal Black Bear Harvesting:

GLIFWC member tribes oversee plans within the ceded territory. A tribal member can harvest within these boundaries as long as they possess a ceded territory license to harvest bear. For more information, check with local tribal conservation departments or GLIFWC’s harvest regulations page: <https://data.glifwc.org/regulations/bear.php>

## 🐾 Extra Resources 🐾

GLIFWC Ojibwe Treaty Rights Understanding and Impact: <https://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/OTRUI2006.pdf>

*Beargrease rich in tradition*, by Charlie Otto Rasmussen, GLIFWC *Niibiin* 2016, Page 15: <https://www.glifwc.org/Mazinaigan/Summer2016/flipbook/files/inc/23376475ba.pdf>

Ojibwe People’s Dictionary, Ojibwe language Resource: <https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/>

KBIC Health– Ojibwe Medicine. Good information on Ojibwe views of healing and wellness, clan systems, and other teachings: <https://www.kbichealth.org/ojibwe-medicine>

## Bear Grease Information



*Rendering bear fat*

All the plants, medicines, and nutrients that the bear consumes are stored in its fat. This is essential for the bear to be able to sustain itself during winter hibernation. It is also why bear fat has a number of uses such as: joint pain, sealant, conditioner, etc.

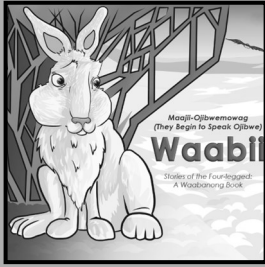


**Fun Fact:** Some Ojibwe communities call the month of March: Makoons gaa-nitaawigiwaatawid Giizis, which translates to the month when the bear cubs are born. It is also said that when it is foggy in late January/Early February, bear cubs are being born.



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GLIFWC ANA Language Staff  
[inwe@glifwc.org](mailto:inwe@glifwc.org)  
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# Waabooz

## (Snowshoe Hare)

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- **Biboon** – It is winter
- **Waabooz** – Rabbit, hare
- **Waaboozoog** – Rabbits (plural)
- **Waaboozoons** – Young/ tiny rabbit
- **Mewinzha** – A long time ago
- **Ozaawizi** – S/he is yellow, brown
- **Waabishkizi** – S/he is white
- **Ozow** – His/her tail
- **Otawagan** – His/her ears
- **Ozidan** – His/her feet
- **Oninjiin** – His/her hands
- **Goon** – Snow
- **Migizi** – Bald Eagle
- **Babiinziikawaagan** – Jacket
- **Oshkibabiinziikawaagane** – S/he has a new coat
- **Nozhis** – My grandchild
- **Nookomis** – My Grandmother
- **Gaawiin** – No
- **Eya'** – Yes

## Waabooz and the Ojibwe

Waabooz, the snowshoe hare, is an important animal to the Ojibwe People. The snowshoe hare was a staple to surviving the winter when the Ojibwe lived in waaginogaanan (lodges, wigwams).

When a rabbit is killed, all parts of the rabbit are used. The meat, heart, and liver is eaten, and the stomach is saved and used for medicine.

The hide and fur are used in a number of ways. The rabbit skins are sometimes tanned with the fur on to line moccasins. The fur hide can also be used to

make caps, mittens, scarves, and ankle coverings.

Rabbit skins were also tanned in the winter time after turning white, to make waaboozwaanag (rabbit skin blankets), which could be as big as six feet.

Tanned fur hides were also cut into strips to make fur blankets. The strips would then be curled and weaved together to make a double-sided rabbit fur blanket. Other fur scraps were used to fill in any holes in the waaginogaanan.



Snowshoe Hare



Waabooz Snare



Waabooz in snare

## Harvesting Waabooz

Hunting waabooz is important and is one of the milestone markers in an Ojibwe child's life. This is one of the first animals to harvest. After a boy or girl snares their first rabbit, in traditional Ojibwe custom, a feast is held. The rabbit is boiled or roasted and is fed to the family. This is often a

mark of transition into becoming a young man/ woman.

The Ojibwe use a snare when harvesting waabooz. A snare is made out of rope or wire. It is fashioned into a noose, and the hole should be about the size of a fist. Waabooz tracks are easy

to see in the snow and the snare is hung along one of the rabbit's trails. When the rabbit comes down the trail, its head goes into the noose and the rabbit is snared.

For harvest regulations for waabooz, visit: <https://data.glifwc.org/regulations/small.game.php>

# Vulnerable Waabooz

GLIFWC Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

GLIFWC Climate Change staff worked with tribal elders to determine concerns for specific beings/ species affected by climate change, supported by Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Scientific Ecological Knowledge (SEK).

Amongst these species, waabooz (snowshoe hare - *Lepus americanus*) was determined to be Moderately to Extremely Vulnerable to climate change, due to a number of factors, however, their dependence on snow cover or ice placed them in the 94th percentile on the vulnerability assessment.

While discussing waabooz, nearly all of the tribal elders expressed concern over the decline in the population, noting the lack of waabooz tracks in the backyard in the winter. The tribal elders detailed the lower snowfalls during this decline, which they feel plays a key part in fewer waaboozoog.

With the decline in waabooz, the tribal elders fear there will be a loss of rabbit traditions and stories, and traditional hunting practices will be lost.

Vulnerability Assessment: [https://www.glifwc.org/ClimateChange/GLIFWC Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Version1 April2018.pdf](https://www.glifwc.org/ClimateChange/GLIFWC%20Climate%20Change%20Vulnerability%20Assessment%20Version1%20April2018.pdf)

## Extra Resources

Great Waabooz activity for kids on Page 17: <http://www.glifwc.org/Mazinaigan/Winter2018/inc/pdf/flipbook.pdf>

Great informational resource on Ojibwe harvesting/hunting lifeways, specifically for snaring rabbits, by Anton Treuer. [https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/young\\_naturalists/young-naturalists-article/ojibwe/ojibwe.pdf](https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/young_naturalists/young-naturalists-article/ojibwe/ojibwe.pdf)

Another great resource for seasonal lifestyles of the Ojibwe people. <https://www.nps.gov/grpo/planyourvisit/upload/Winterlifeways.pdf>

A collection of Ojibwe, handmade moccasins and mukluks. <https://www.whetung.com/collections/moccasins>

Story about Waabooz. <https://www.duluthnewstribune.com/opinion/4189865-rabbits-wintertime>

## Waaboozwaaboo Recipe:

### Ingredients:

- The bones of 1 or more Rabbit
- 1 to 2 quarts water
- Sliced carrots
- Chopped onions
- Pre-soaked lentils or fresh split peas
- Canned tomatoes
- Salt and pepper
- A little butter

*Note: There are no specific amounts of ingredients to allow for variance and preference, and what is available on hand.*

### Preparation:

1. Boil the bones and water in a good-sized stock pot. Then remove the bones from the stock and scrape all the meat from them.
2. Return the chunks of rabbit to the broth and add the carrots, onions, lentils or split peas, and tomatoes plus any other vegetables you may wish to include in your soup.
3. Season, add butter, and simmer until the vegetables are tender.

Recipe: <https://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/rabbit-soup-recipe-zmaz78mjzgoe>



*Credit: painting by Ron Klinger from Kays and Wilson's Mammals of North America, © Princeton University Press (2002)*



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