

# Gijigijigaaneshiinh (Chickadee)

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

## The Story of Mashkiigwaatig and Gijigijigaaneshiinh *From Ojibwe story teller Ann M. Dunn*

Every year, at the beginning of dagwaagin (fall), mashkiigwaatig (tamarack tree) loses its needles and does not regain them until ziiigwan (spring). That was not always the case.

Long ago, mashkiigwaatig used to keep its needles all year and was always green, like wenda-zhingwaak (red pine). The Ojibwe say its beautiful green needles graced the woodlands all through the long winter.

One day during a terrible storm, Gijigijigaaneshiinh was injured. It was so cold he was near death. The little bineshii struggled through the blowing snow until he stood at the foot of the tall mashkiigwaatig.

"Please drop some of your lower branches to shelter me from the storm," Gijigijigaaneshiinh cried.

"I want to live!"

"I will not," Mashkiigwaatig

quickly replied. "I did not grow big beautiful branches to break them off for you. I'm sorry, but I prefer to keep my fine form."

Distraught, Gijigijigaaneshiinh pulled his small battered body to the foot of the tall wenda-zhingwaak and repeated his pleas for protection.

Wenda-zhingwaak pitied Gijigijigaaneshiinh and quickly dropped enough branches to shelter the little bineshii.

Gichi-Manidoo (Great Spirit/Creator) saw what happened and said to Wenda-zhingwaak, "From this day you will always drop your lower branches to remind others that you paid a high price so a small bineshii could live."

When Mashkiigwaatig heard this, he was glad he had not dropped any of his branches.

"Now," he thought. "I will keep my fine form."

"Yes Mashkiigwaatig,"

Gichi-Manidoo said, "you will keep your fine form. But from this day, your needles will begin to turn brown, then they will fall off. Soon you will die and be forgotten."

Mashkiigwaatig wept. "The punishment is too harsh," he cried.

Gijigijigaaneshiinh had crept out from under the red-pine branches lying on the snow. He pitied Mashkiigwaatig.

"Oh Gichi-Manidoo," Gijigijigaaneshiinh prayed. "Please don't let Mashkiigwaatig die and be forgotten."

"Very well," Gichi-Manidoo said to the little bineshii.

Then turning to Mashkiigwaatig, Gichi-Manidoo added, "You will not die and be forgotten. But every autumn, your fine green needles will turn brown and fall off. Then you will stand naked in the forest all winter, as a reminder to others that it is always better to be kind and merciful than it is to be vain and selfish."



### Giwednong Set: Gijigijigaaneshiinh Book Ojibwe Language Word List

- **Gijigijigaaneshiinyag** – chickadees
- **Ajidamoo**– squirrel
- **Gigizhebaa**– breakfast
- **Wiisiniwag**– they eat
- **Daki**– cold, cool
- **Ayaa**- it is
- **Noongom**– today, now
- **Gaazhige**– s/he is a greedy eater, gluttonous
- **A'aw**– That
- **Gii-kidaanawed**- s/he ate everything up
- **Gii-ani-nishkaadiziwag**– they are getting mad
- **Agiw**– those
- **Nishkenim**– feel angry at
- **Geget**– sure, certainly, really, indeed
- **Diindisi**– blue jay
- **Daazhim**– talk, gossip about



# Different Types of Gijigijigaaneshiinyag

Did you know there are different colored gijigijigaaneshiinyag found throughout Turtle Island?



**Black-capped gijigijigaaneshiinh** is the one featured in the story. It can be found in Canada and the northern U.S.



**Mountain gijigijigaaneshiinh** resides in coniferous forests in New Mexico, Arizona, and the Rocky Mountain region. They have more of a grey tone.



**Chestnut-backed gijigijigaaneshiinh** Is found in the Pacific Northwest, western Canada and southern Alaska. Its back is chestnut colored.



**Yellow gijigijigaaneshiinh** is often confused for a aginjibagwesi (goldfinch) because of its yellow feathers. They are found all over Canada and the northern U.S.

## How to get gijigijigaaneshiinyag in your yard:

If you want to try and see some gijigijigaaneshiinyag in your yard, there are a few ways to attract them. One sure way to lure them in is with a bird feeder, which you can fill with:

- Safflower seeds
- Nyjer seeds
- Peanuts
- Suet
- Peanut butter
- Black oil sunflower seeds
- Pecans
- Walnuts
- Meal worms



Another great way to get gijigijigaaneshiinyag in your yard is to put out a **birdbath**. These little bineshiiwag don't get too much water in their diet as they get so busy foraging and catching food. They also like to bathe in water from time to time. Putting out a birdbath will attract gijigijigaaneshiinyag to come drink some refreshments and get a good bath in as well. Just make sure the bath is nice and shallow and not too deep.



**Boreal gijigijigaaneshiinh** prefers the cold climate of Canada but sometimes resides in the northern U.S. as well. Its feathers have a rust color and dusty tone to it. This little bineshiiwag is slower and tinier than the black-capped gijigijigaaneshiinh.

## Extra Resources:

**More facts on gijigijigaaneshiinyag**

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped\\_Chickadee/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Black-capped_Chickadee/overview)

<https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Birds/Black-Capped-Chickadee>

## Giiwedinong Set: Gijigijigaaneshiinh Book Ojibwe Language Word List Continued

- **Gaaskanazo**– s/he whispers
- **Mangiwane**– s/he carries a big pack
- **Asanjigowag**– they stash, store something
- **Wiisiniwin**– food
- **Gaazo**– s/he hides
- **Ogazootawaawaan**– they hide from
- **Gimoojimiijimewag**– they steal food
- **Waanikewag**– they dig a hole or trench
- **Ingiw**– those
- **Bibaagi**– s/he shouts
- **Maadademo**– s/he starts to cry
- **Agooziwag**– they are perched up on something
- **Imaa**– there
- **Ganawenindiwag**– they take care of each other
- **Maada'oonidiwag**– they share with each other
- **Mii iw**– that's it



Document prepared by:  
Robin Lynn Armagost  
Ojibwe Language Project Assistant  
Questions? Contact: [inwe@glifwc.org](mailto:inwe@glifwc.org)  
Visit our website—<https://www.glifwc-inwe.com>  
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# Aginjibagwesi (Goldfinch)

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“Tony” by Blaire Truer

“The goldfinch is a constant in my work. It is the language bird in Ojibwe culture. In my work however, I’ve expanded their representation to include the entire Ojibwe cultural and spiritual “tool box” if you will, which also includes the language. The birds represent that depth of knowledge and understanding that my family and other Ojibwe people who follow a traditional path possess about who they are, where they come from, and what their purpose is while they are here. This portrait is about my husband’s life work as an educator and an activist preserving his language and culture for generations to come. The goldfinches are flying out of his mouth as he bestows these gifts to our son.”

*-Blaire Truer*

## Aginjibagwesi Facts

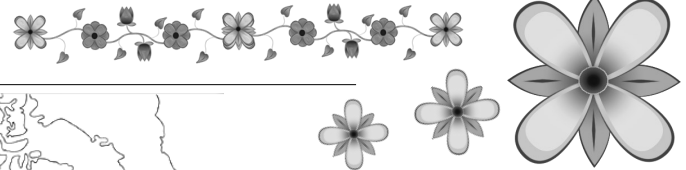


- Aginjibagwesiwag are very strict vegetarians. Besides accidentally ingesting an insect once in awhile, they stick to consuming vegetation.
- While the average lifespan of a wild aginjibagwesi is 2-4 years, the oldest known aginjibagwesi lived to be 10 years old! In 2007, Maryland researchers were putting tags on aginjibagwesiwas to track and study them. One of the tagged birds was confirmed to be 10 years and 9 months old.
- Aginjibagwesiwag have a very unique flight call. When they’re ready to take flight, they will make a four-syllable call that sounds like “po-ta-to-chip.”
- Aginjibagwesiwag use spiderwebs to build their nests. The webbing allows twigs and branches to stick together, and the nests are even able to temporarily hold water in them.
- The little yellow bineshiwag have their own insulation! At the end of summer, aginjibagwesiwag grow a soft undercoat of feathers that helps keep themselves warm throughout the winter.
- While they do grow an undercoat to help with colder winter months, these bineshiwage still prefer to migrate to the south as they cannot survive well in temperatures below 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

### Giiwedning Set: Aginjibagwesi Ojibwe Language Word List

- **Nindizhinikaaz**– I am called
- **Nindaaw**– I am
- **Ojibwemodaa**– let’s speak Ojibwe
- **Goshkozidaa**- let’s wake up
- **Banajaanyag**– little birds
- **Baakadawaabiyok**– open your eyes
- **Giziibiigiingweyok**– wash your face
- **Giziibiigininjiiyok**– wash your hands
- **Asemaadaa**– lets offer asema
- **Omaa**– here
- **Agamiing**- at the lake; at the water; on the shore
- **Gigizhebaa-wisinidaa** – let’s eat breakfast
- **Wiigwaasi**- a birch
- **Miinikaan**– a seed
- **Minopogwad**– it tastes good
- **Wewiibitaayok**– hurry
- **Mii**– It is, it is that
- **Apii**– at the time; then; when
- **Miinawaa**– and
- **Onow**– these

# Aginjibagwesi Location



Aginjibagwesiwag can be found across most of Turtle Island. The top colored section represents where they like to breed. The middle section is where they reside year round. The southern portion is where the nonbreeding aginjibagwesiwag resides, who looks a bit different than the breeding



The breeding aginjibagwesi with its signature yellow feathers



Non breeding aginjibagwesi with its yellow face and brown feathers

## Giiwedining Set: Aginjibagwesi Book Ojibwe Language Word List Continued

- **Gikinoo'amaagoziyeg**– they go to school
- **Bizaan-ayaadaa**– let's be quiet
- **Bizindaagedaa**– let's listen
- **Maadagindaasodaa**– let's start counting
- **Ninga-agindaanan**– I shall count
- **Aniibiishan**– leaves
- **Giminotaagozim**– you sound good
- **Ginitaa-ojibwemom**– you know how to speak Ojibwe
- **Ninooshkaachige**– I am windowing
- **Niwiidookage**– I am helping
- **Odaminoyok**– go play
- **Agwajiing**– outside, outdoors
- **Baaga'adowedaa**– let's play lacrosse
- **Gibakadem Ina?**– Are you hungry?
- **Onaagoshi-wiisinidaa**– Let's eat supper
- **Gawishimodaa**– Let's go to bed
- **Minogwaamiyok**–

Sleep well

## Want aginjibagwesiwag in your yard? Plant a garden for them!

Aginjibagwesiwag are seed eaters, so some great plants to grow in your yard to attract them would be:

- Sunflowers
- Coneflowers
- Milkweed
- Thistle plants
- Zinnias
- Dandelions



Aginjibagwesiwag will be attracted by bird feeders as well, just make sure to:

- Check to make sure seeds inside the feeder are not spoiled. Believe or not, seeds can rot and get mold, which isn't good for aginjibagwesiwag.
- Clean up hulls and spilled seed around the feeder. This will reduce the spread of diseases among aginjibagwesiwag and other ground foragers.



### Extra Resources:

More Aginjibagwesi Information & Facts  
[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American\\_Goldfinch/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Goldfinch/overview)  
<https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/american-goldfinch>  
<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-attract-goldfinches-386247>



Document prepared by:  
 Robin Lynn Armagost  
 Ojibwe Language Project Assistant  
 Questions? Contact: [inwe@glifwc.org](mailto:inwe@glifwc.org)  
 Visit our website—<https://www.glifwc-inwe.com>  
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# Opichi (Robin)

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## The Story of Opichi

Since very long ago, the Anishinaabeg have a tradition of sending children out to the forest to build a lodge, fast, and wait for a dream or vision once they are old enough.

There was once a young boy named Opichi who's father was very respected in the community. Instead of waiting for the last snow to leave the ground before sending his child into the woods as was custom, his eager father sent him out with snow still covering everything. The father believed his son would become stronger from going

into the cold and would have a stronger vision.

Eager to please his parents, young Opichi went out into the woods to build his lodge, fast, and wait for his vision.

Each day his father would check up on him and ask his son what he had seen. The boy was visited by many animals, beaver, hawk, wolf, and bear, who all gave him teachings. His father was happy to hear this but wanted Opichi to stay longer, believing his son would grow stronger the more visions he saw. His

father didn't seem to notice his cold and shivering son getting weaker by the day.

After four days Opichi's mother was too concerned about her son's health and safety, so she told the father it was time to get their son. Once they arrived however, they couldn't find their son anywhere around the lodge he had built and stayed in for the past four days.

All of a sudden, a bird with a red chest flew out of the lodge making a noise resembling their son's name: *opi chi chi chi, opi chi chi chi*.

The bird then landed on a tree branch and spoke: "My parents," said the bird, "the son you knew is gone. You sent him out too early and asked him to wait out there for too long. Now I will return at the beginning of each spring, and my song will let people know when it is the time for a child to go on a dream fast. Now you must also help to remind parents not to make their child go out too early or stay out too long."



### Giiwedinong Set: Opichi Book Ojibwe Language Word List

- **Aaniin**– hello
- **Indizhinikaaz**– I am called
- **Ziigwan**– it is Spring
- **Nindoozaawaakigane** – I have an orange chest
- **Nimiskwaakigane**– I have a red chest
- **Gigizhebaawagad**- it is morning time
- **Naabe-bineshiinh**– a male bird
- **Nagamodaa**– let's sing
- **Ishkwaagamizigewag**- they finish boiling sap
- **Ingiw**– those
- **Anishinaabeg**– Anishinaabe people
- **Nibakade**– I am hungry
- **Mooseg**– worms
- **Niminwendaan**– I like
- **Gaye**– and, also, as for, too
- **Niin**– I, me
- **Indoozhitoomin**– we are building
- **Waziswan**- a nest
- **Omaa**– here
- **Zhingwaakong**– white pine
- **Nashke!**- Look!



# Opichi Migration Map



-Opichiwig have a very large migration range, they can travel from as far north as Alaska to as far south as Guatemala!

-The northern section of the map is the breeding area in the spring time, the middle section is where they are most likely to hang out year-round, and the lower section is where most like to be during the cold winter months.

-Why do opichiwig migrate during the winter?

In the winter the ground becomes too cold and frozen for them to get mooseg out of the ground to eat, so they must fly south to where the ground is warmer and easier to pull out mooseg.

-Opichiwig typically fly at a speed of 30-36 mph and can travel as far as 100-200 miles per day! They mostly journey south during the daytime, but some continue on overnight as well.

-Opichiwig tend to cruise together in flocks, so they don't get too lonely. During migration when they don't have much time for pulling out mooseg they eat a lot of berries.

-Why don't opichiwig just stay in the south? The soil in the south can get so warm in the summer time that the mooseg burrow deeper into the soil, making it very difficult for opichiwig to get their food.

That's why they make the journey back up north after the snow melts, the ground unfreezes, and the cold goes away.



## Giiwedining Set: Opichi Book Ojibwe Language Word List Continued

- **Nisinoon**– There are three
- **Iniw**– That, those
- **Waawan**– an egg
- **Bashkaawe'omag**– they are hatching
- **Banajaanyag**– baby birds
- **Wenda**– really; completely
- **Mawiwag**– They are crying
- **Giwii-amwaawaa**– do you want to eat
- **Wiisinidaa**– let's eat
- **Ashamishin**– feed me
- **Niibin**– It is summer
- **Inga-zoongide'e**– I shall be brave
- **Weweni**– Be careful
- **Mawinzodaa**– let's pick berries
- **Odatagaagominag**– blackberries
- **Manoomin**– wild rice
- **Dagwaagin**– it is fall
- **Aniibiishan**– leaves
- **Waatebagaa**– there are bright and colorful leaves
- **Maajipon**– it starts to snow
- **Gisinaa**– it is cold

### Extra Resources:

#### More opichi Information & Facts:

[https://journeynorth.org/tm/robin/facts\\_migration.html](https://journeynorth.org/tm/robin/facts_migration.html)

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American\\_Robin/lifehistory#](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Robin/lifehistory#story#)

#### Bineshii migration map explorer:

<https://explorer.audubon.org/explore/species/1055/american-robin/migration?sidebar=collapse&layersPanel=expand>



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