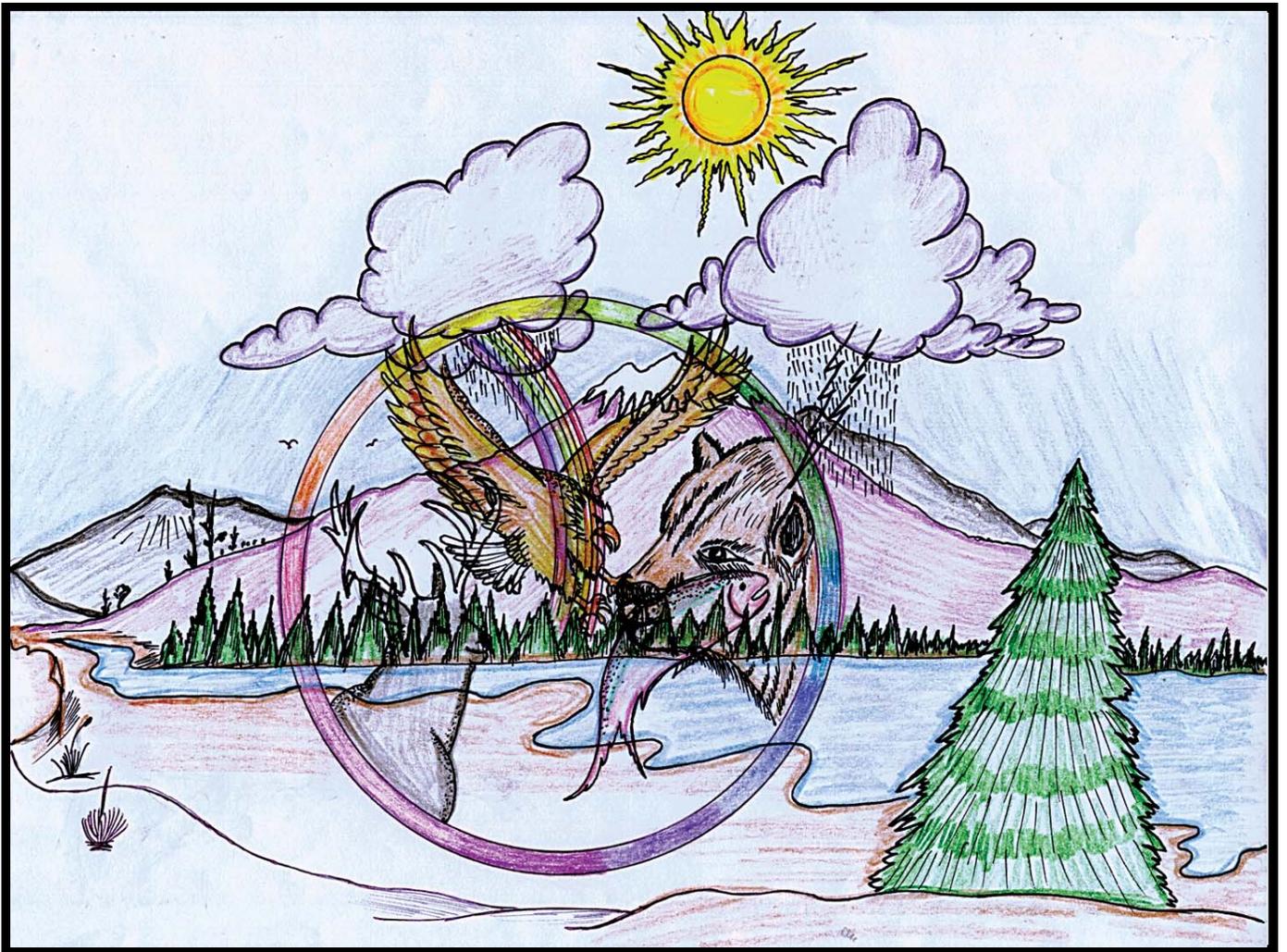


# DINÉ TRADITIONAL TEACHINGS ON WILDLIFE

Diné'ehgo Nahasdzáán dóó Yádiithi Yiyi'  
dóó Yikáá' Hináanii Bee Na'nitin

## A Guide For Teachers



Window Rock Unified School District No. 8  
Fort Defiance, Arizona

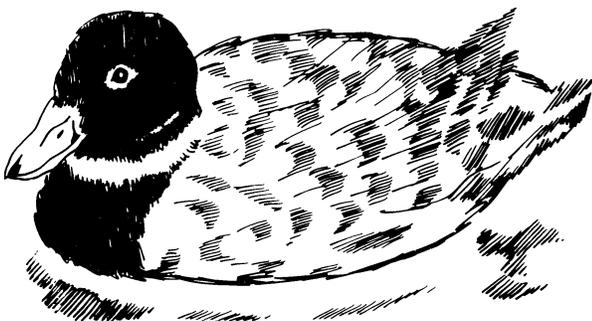
Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Phoenix, Arizona



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Diné'ehgo Nahasdzáan dóó Yádiłhił Yiyi'  
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## A Guide for Teachers



# Diné Traditional Teachings on Wildlife

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## A Guide for Teachers

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### **Funded by:**

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Project Coordinated by Ann Satran

### **Cover design by:**

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Irvin James

### **Illustrations by:**

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Art Nakaidinae, Charles Dixon, and Brian Vasiloff

### **Window Rock Unified School District No. 8**

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#### **District Governing Board**

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Theresa Galvin, *Member*  
Elmer Milford, *Member*  
Rodger Dahozy, *Member*

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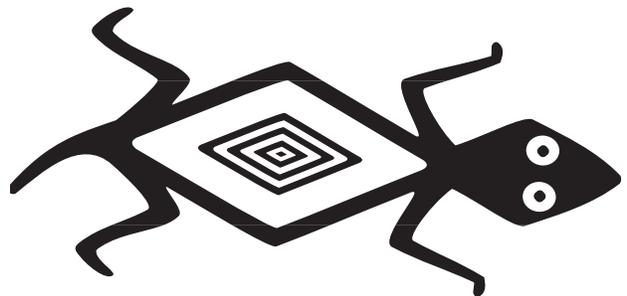
# PREFACE

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The Diné people believe everything in nature has its own place and purpose in the universe. Animals and other living things play a significant role in the origin and existence of the Diné people. This Guide was developed by teachers for teachers who work with Navajo students on the Diné Nation. It provides Navajo cultural information on wildlife to help teachers select appropriate activities and topics for the classroom.

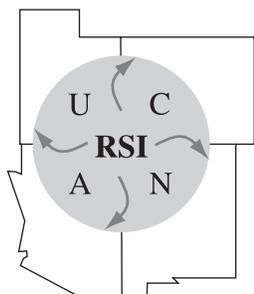
Individuals from across the Diné Nation helped create this Guide. Because stories and beliefs often vary from one area to another, users are encouraged to contact their local medicine man for additional cultural information specific to their area.

The Guide is organized according to the Navajo way of classifying wildlife, based on where the animal occurs: Water, Earth, Mountain, and Sky. Each of these sections include species accounts of animals found on the Navajo Nation. Species accounts include: life history information written by Navajo Fish and Wildlife biologists, cultural beliefs and practices approved and provided by medicine men, appropriate classroom topics and activities written by classroom teachers, and a list of resources recommended by the Guide authors.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This guide is the end-product of over 45 people coming together at a writing workshop held in Fort Defiance, Arizona, June 16-18, 1997. The workshop was funded by the Arizona Game and Fish Department Heritage Fund and the Window Rock Unified School District #8 (WRUSD). Additional funding was provided by: Peabody Western Coal Company, Flagstaff, Arizona; The Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, Window Rock, Arizona; Bashas Community Gifts Program, Chandler, Arizona; Gurley Motor Company, Gallup, New Mexico; El Paso Emergency Service Company, El Paso, Texas; The Pittsburgh and Midway Mining Company, Gallup, New Mexico; BHP Mineral International Inc., Fruitland, New Mexico; Navajo Fish and Wildlife, Window Rock, Arizona; and the California Super Market, Gallup, New Mexico.

The Heritage Grant titled "Wildlife in Navajo Culture for Teachers" was prepared by Ann Satran, Fort Defiance Elementary School Teacher in conjunction with: Maggie Benally, Fort Defiance Navajo Immersion Program Leader; Patrick Graham, WRUSD #8 Special Projects Director; Kathleen McCoy, Navajo Fish and Wildlife Biologist; Al LeCount, Certified Wildlife Biologist; and Dr. Delores Butler, WRUSD #8 Interactive Television Coordinator.

Administrative support was provided by: Larry Watson, Career Ladder Coordinator; Dr. Leheman Burrow, Fort Defiance Elementary School Principal; and Gloria Hale-Showalter, Assistant Superintendent, WRUSD #8.

A special thanks to the following workshop participants who gave additional assistance in culture clarifications for this manuscript: Maggie Benally, Emma Dixon, Kellamay Kelly, Vernon Manuelito, Marilyn Dempsey Begay, Rose Nofchissey, and Sadie Yazzie. Teacher resources were compiled by Ann Satran and Maggie Benally. Additional consultation was provided by Medicine Man Ray Denny of the Diné Language and Culture Center, Window Rock, Arizona.

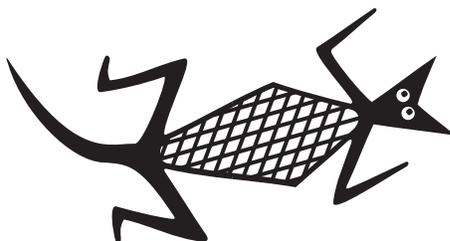
We are grateful to: Larry Haynie, WRUSD #8 for computer assistance; Pat Pedro and Vickie Birch of the Media Center of WRUSD #8 for use of their facilities; and to Window Rock High School students Kendra Dixon, Michelle Cadman, and Dorveil Dahozy for computer inputting species accounts. Most of the Artwork for this Guide was created by Art Nakaidinae, Charles Dixon, and Brian Vasiloff. Some art provided by Arizona Game and Fish Department. Cheryl Mollohan, Al LeCount, Patrick Graham, Maggie Benally, Mac McBee, Dr. Delores Butler, and Ann Satran for providing final editing of this manuscript. Heidi Vasiloff, from the Arizona Game and Fish Department for the final edits and layout.

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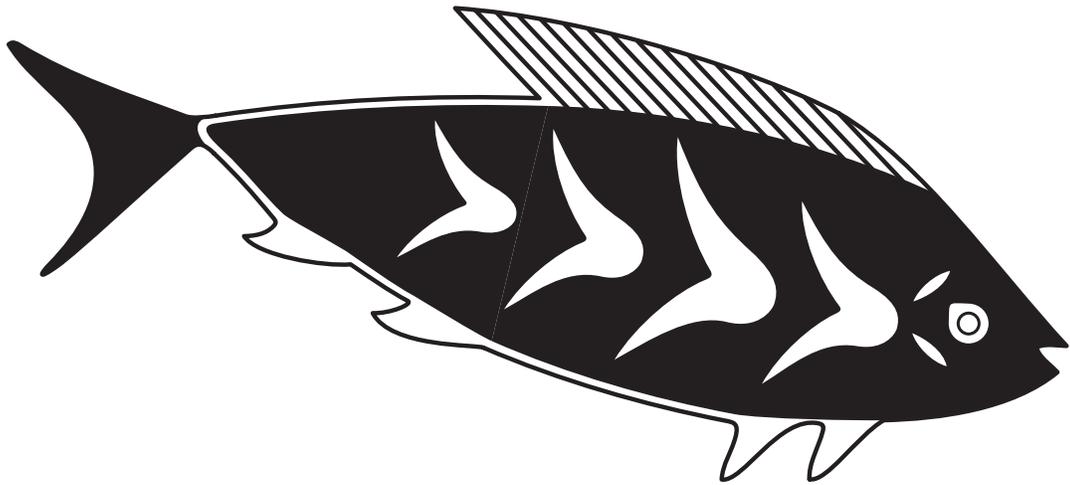




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# WATER

# TÓ





# BEAVER • CHAA'



## BEAVERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Beavers inhabit the mountain streams of the Chuska Mountains and the San Juan River. They can weigh up to 50 pounds, have a broad, flattened scaly tail, and webbed hind feet. Beavers often live in colonies of four to eight related individuals. Adult females can have several young or “kits” each year. Beavers live in streams close to the mountains. They put up dams by chopping down cottonwood trees to slow down the water flow. Beavers are dependent on permanent bodies of water for their survival. They feed on plants that grow near water, and build their dens of these plants in the water, or in river banks. They are excellent swimmers and use their large tail to “slap” the water to warn of danger.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In the Diné culture beavers are very sacred. The medicine men use the beaver’s hide for their medicine bags (bundles) or it can be cut in strips to wrap the sacred sticks used in ceremonies. Beaver hides can be used to make hats and coats. The coat should always be worn inside out (fur to the inside).

Beavers are also included in coyote stories to teach morals. Some Navajo families use the beaver to warn young children about the danger of playing near rivers or lakes by telling them that they might be dragged into the water by the beaver.

Beavers should not be killed needlessly, but rather used for special ceremonial purposes. However, they can be used as food.



## BEAVER IN THE CLASSROOM

When teaching about wildlife, beavers can be studied through reading or watched in videos. Students may draw pictures of them. They can be used in arts and crafts, plays, poems, puppets, etc. When field trips to the zoo are planned, the child must have parental permission, because students should not have direct contact with or come in close proximity to the beaver.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Emerson, G. (Team Coordinator). (1979). *Naaldlooshii Dine'é* (Book IV). Albuquerque, NM: Native Materials Development Center.

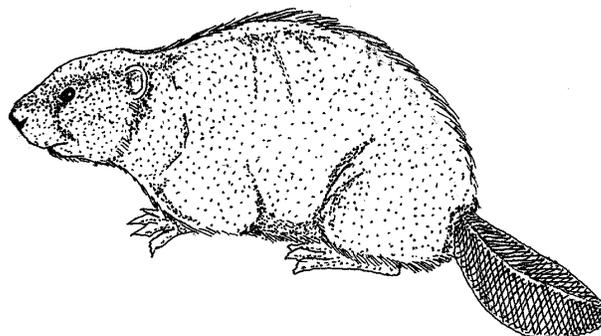
Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (Eds.). (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

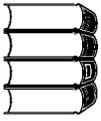
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Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.



## FISH ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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There are seven native fish species and eighteen introduced species found on the Navajo Nation. Among the native species, 4 are protected federally by the Endangered Species Act. They are the Colorado squawfish, razorback sucker, roundtail chub and the humpback chub. These species are endangered due to habitat alteration (damming of rivers) and competition for food and spawning habitat with introduced species such as catfish and carp.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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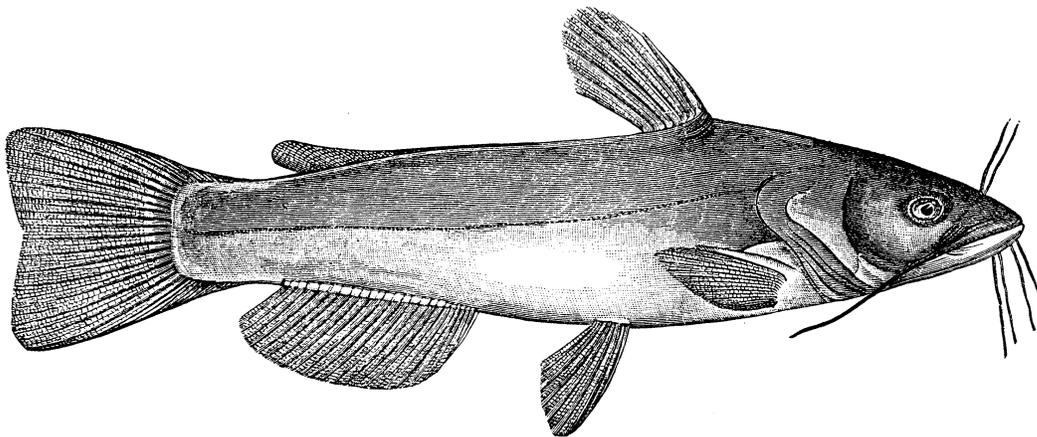
Out of respect to the Water Beings, Diné people believe one should only eat fish as a means of survival. Expectant parents should not fish or eat fish. In certain ceremonies there are songs for the fish. The Fish people are believed to have assisted the entry into the Fourth World. They are mentioned in the Emergence Story. Traditional beliefs discourage the eating of fish or even keeping an aquarium because fish are considered close relatives of the reptiles.



## FISH IN THE CLASSROOM

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When teaching about different types of fish, pictures, audio tapes, and visuals can be utilized for instruction. Before dissecting fish, parents should be notified and careful consideration given to their concerns.



# FROG AND TOAD • CH'AL



## FROGS AND TOADS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Although they have two different names, “frogs” and “toads” are actually very similar biologically. Both are amphibians with four legs and no tails, except when they are tadpoles. Species called frogs, of which there are three on the Navajo Nation, have smooth skins, while those usually called “toads”, of which there are five species, have bumpy or warty skin. This warty skin has given rise to the notion that humans can get warts from handling toads, but this is inaccurate, as warts are caused by viruses.

Both frogs and toads live in moist environments, such as under rocks and logs, in holes or underground, or in and around water. They are generally active at night when the air is more humid and during this time they feed on different types of insects. All eight species of frogs and toads found on the Navajo Nation lay eggs in lakes, ponds, springs, swamps and marshy areas, where they hatch into tadpoles. The tadpoles feed on algae in the water until they transform into small froglets or after four to eight weeks.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The Diné people respect frogs and toads and believe that they are connected to moisture on earth. They are used in the Waterway Ceremonies which are nearly extinct. The frog is used to pray for rain and moisture. You should not step on them, kill or harm them in any way. Expectant parents especially should not bother frogs and toads.



## FROGS AND TOADS IN THE CLASSROOM

Frogs and toads may be studied year-round. Students may read and write about frogs and toads, illustrate them, and depict them in arts and crafts. Comparisons of similarities and differences between frogs and toads can be made using Venn Diagrams or through the use of pictures, films, or videos. Frog costumes may also be used in skits and plays.

Frogs and toads may be brought into the classroom for observation but not kept as classroom pets. Students should not handle them with their bare hands or be allowed to watch them swallow their prey.

Frogs and toads should not be dissected and no body parts should be used for teaching. If dissection is necessary, computer dissection programs are available and preferable.



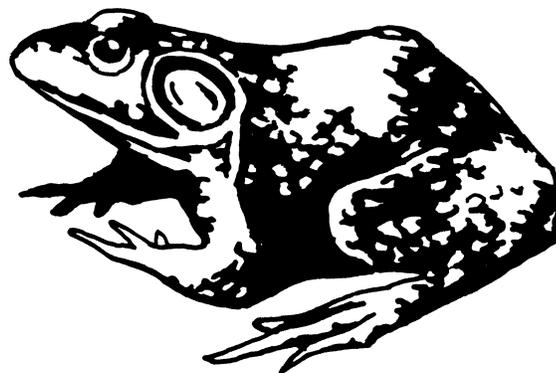
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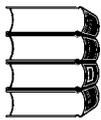
Roessel, R. Jr., & Platero, D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Press.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story* Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Press.



# WATERDOG (TIGER SALAMANDER) • TSILAGHÁÁH

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

DeAngulo, J. (1973). *The unique collection of Indian tales*. New York: Ballantine Books.



## WATERDOGS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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A waterdog is really a tiger salamander. Most of the tiger salamanders found on the Navajo Nation are in the neotenic form, or larval stage, where the gills are external and the tail is used like a fin to aid swimming. Tiger salamanders are black or dark brown in color with light or dark yellowish markings on the sides. Tiger salamanders are amphibians that stay underground most of their lives, except for after spring rains when they congregate in temporary pools and ponds.

Tiger salamanders are widely used as laboratory animals. The “waterdog” stage is easily raised in an aquarium and adults are maintained with a few inches of damp earth. Tiger salamanders eat earth worms and other invertebrates. They are sold commercially as fishing bait.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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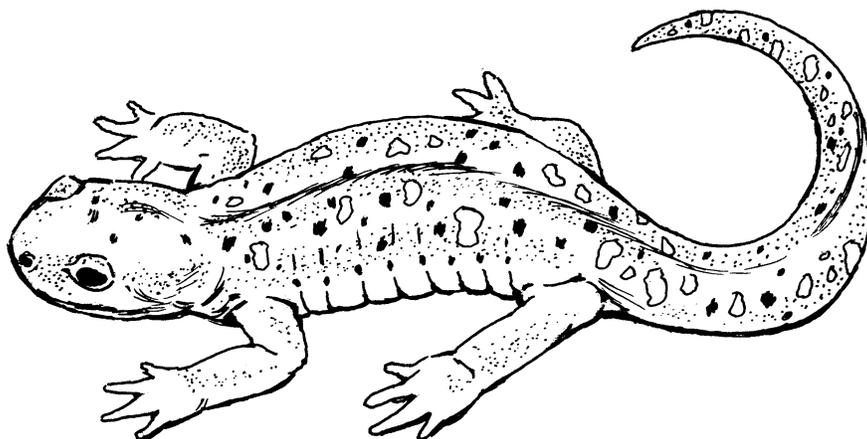
It is said that waterdogs are sacred and are protected by the Lightning Way People. According to the Diné, they are dangerous because they resemble reptiles. They should not be handled, eaten, or killed. Waterdogs should not be kept as pets or used as bait when fishing.



## WATERDOGS IN THE CLASSROOM

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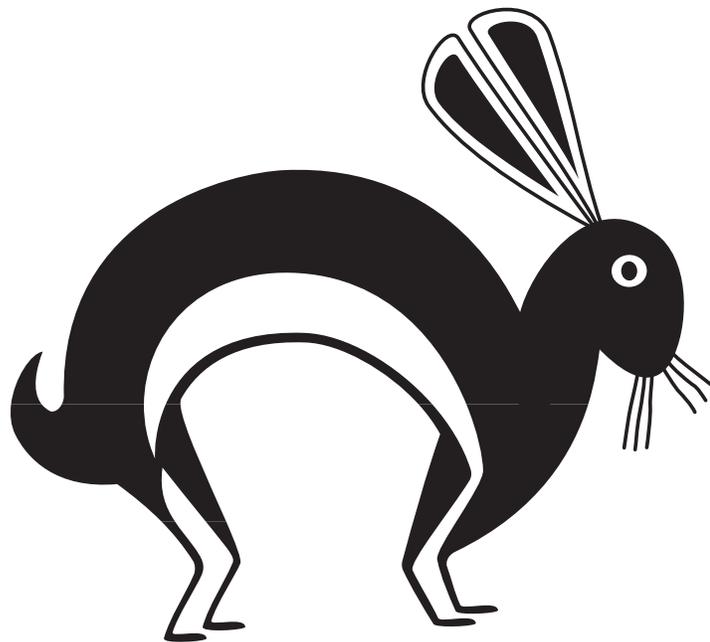
It is acceptable to read and write about waterdogs/salamanders. Films, videos, and illustrations can be used to demonstrate the sequence of growth from larval to adult stage.



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**EARTH**

*NAHASDZÁÁN*





# ANT • WÓLÁCHÍÍ'



## ANTS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

These colonial insects are usually red or black in color. Most live in the soil and pile gravel, sticks, and wood chips into small hills around the entrance to their nests. Their food is largely composed of plant material, but they also prey upon small arthropods. Some ants raid the nests of other species of insects to obtain food. A few species of ants practice slavery. They take unborn ants from other nests and when they hatch these “slaves” become workers. The captive workers are accepted and added to the work force.

Many insect species invade ant nests, especially beetles. Beetles secrete substances that ants like, thus enabling them to survive in the nest. It is thought these secreted substances might actually become “addictive” because the ants spend more time rearing the beetles than their own young.

Ants have poor eyesight. They depend on an odorous chemical substance called a pheromone, to identify and follow each other to food sources.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Ants are considered to have both good and bad magical powers. The hunter story can be told to men who hunt in case they get lost (looking at an ant hill helps give the hunter direction). Ants should only be viewed. To kill, burn, mutilate, disturb, or spit on ants or ant hills will cause sickness and skin problems. Urinating on or near ants or an ant hill may cause one to have bladder problems. Pesticides should not be used. Ants have been used in a special ceremony which is nearly extinct.



## ANTS IN THE CLASSROOM

Children can view, but not handle, ants in the classroom. Ants must be taken outside and released as soon as the lesson is finished. Do not keep “ant farms” in the classroom. Pictures of ants may be drawn, books on ants read, and videos of ants shown.



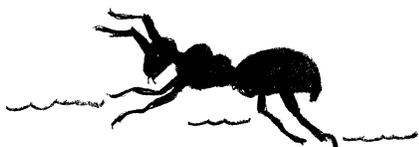
## TEACHER RESOURCES

Thomas, M. (Ed.). (1973). *Navajo winter tales and shoe game song*. Albuquerque, NM: Native American Material Development Center.

Wilcox, M. (1980). The emergence. In M. Thomas (Ed.). *Winter tales: DBA winter workshop '73*. Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

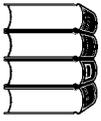
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# BADGER • NAHASHCH'ID

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Ciccarello, E., Menning, E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Atchíní báhane': Navajo children's literature* (Vol.11). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

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Roessel, R. Jr. & Platero, D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press.

Yazzie, A. (1984). *Navajo oral tradition* (Vol. 11). Cortez, CO: Mesa Verde Press.



## BADGERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Badgers are the largest member of the weasel family that occurs on the Navajo Nation. They have a gray body, white face stripe and short legs. They are solitary except during mating season. Badgers are formidable predators and have few natural enemies. They are known for their powerful digging ability. They dig burrows using their front feet to break up dirt and their hind legs to push the dirt out of the way. The burrows are used for temporary shelters and to raise their young.

Badgers occur throughout the Navajo Nation, but are rarely seen due to their secretive nature. They feed on rodents, particularly burrowing ones which they dig out.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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It is the Diné belief that the Badger played a major role in the deciding of night and day. The story and shoe game can only be told and played in the winter.

The badger is to be honored, but considered vicious. Therefore, his spirit is respected in the same way.

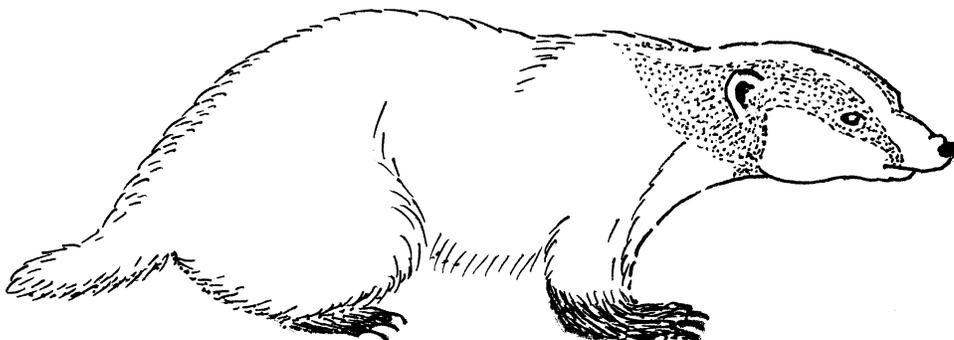
Badgers have been known to dig in graves to consume body parts of the corpse. Thus, it is not to be eaten, but should just be left alone. It should not be teased or touched because it is vicious. The badger should be respected because of its major role in the Navajo Shoe Game and stories. Its skin can be used for quiver bags and other clothing.



## BADGERS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Children can read, write, illustrate and create arts and crafts about the badger. You can only read and play Shoe Games and stories in the winter. You can also use puppets to retell stories. Videos and other resources can be used to learn more about badgers. Compare and contrast the badger to other animals using brainstorming activities.



# COYOTE • MA'II



## COYOTES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Coyotes are found throughout the Navajo Nation. They are a member of the dog family and look very much like a domestic dog. They have a pointed nose and ears, and a long bushy tail with a black tip. Their fur varies from gray to sandy colored with lighter colored underparts. Coyotes average about 18-26 inches in height, 42-50 inches in length, and weigh about 20 to 40 pounds. The coyote is a predator that preys on both wild animals and domestic livestock. At times it will also eat some plant material such as acorns and prickly pear fruits. Coyotes breed in late winter and have their young in the spring. Average litter size is four or five pups.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The coyote is considered to be one of the original sacred animals in Diné culture. He depicts a warrior and survival. His stories are told only in the winter. The stories are humorous but have moral teachings. Some of the Diné language originated with the coyote. Coyotes should not be killed needlessly.

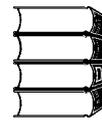
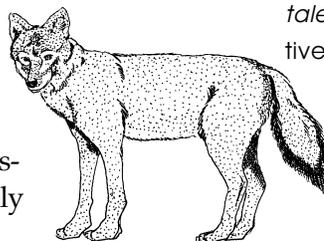
Coyotes possess both negative and positive powers:

- (a) if a coyote crosses your path it is a reminder to you to make an offering, reroute and refocus.
- (b) if it crosses your path to the north, the message is negative and to the south, positive.
- (c) if the coyote is howling, it is looking for a lost person, item or livestock.
- (d) if a coyote heard howling in the early morning or evening means it will rain.
- (e) if a coyote is howling during a ceremony in a low, sad howl to the north it is relaying a negative message.
- (f) if it is a lively and high pitched howl, it conveys a positive message.
- (g) if a coyote comes around a residence, it is a warning of a negative message (message means forethought).



## COYOTES IN THE CLASSROOM

Coyotes can be discussed, pictures can be drawn and movies about coyotes can be shown any time of the year. Diné coyote stories should only be told during the winter months (first frost to first thunder, October to February). Field trips to the zoo may be included only with parents' permission, however, children should not have direct contact with or come in close proximity to coyotes. No skulls, skins, bones, or live coyotes can be brought into the classroom. Video tapes on Navajo Coyote stories can be shown only during the winter.



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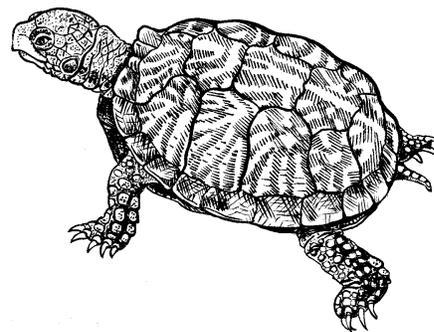
Strauss, S. (1991). *Coyote stories for children*. Hillsboro, OR: Beyond Words Publishing, Inc.

Thomas, M. (1973). *Winter tales*. Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

# DESERT TORTOISE

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## DESERT TORTOISE • CH'ÉÉHDIGHÁHII TURTLE • TSISTEEL



### TEACHER RESOURCES

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

London, J. & Pinola, L. (1993). *Fire race*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Thomarin, S. (1968). *Tales of the North American Indian*. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press.

Van Laan, N. (1995). *In a circle long ago*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.



### TORTOISES/TURTLES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The two animals described as “turtles” by the Navajo people are the desert tortoise and the Sonoran mud turtle. The desert tortoise, which is not aquatic, is a ground dwelling desert animal that lives in some of the most arid lands in Arizona. It has stocky limbs, a short tail and rough greenish skin. Its high-domed, brownish-yellow shell is made up of plate-like segments with deep growth rings. It uses its powerful legs to dig burrows up to 30 feet long. These burrows are used to escape summer heat and for winter hibernation. Desert tortoises are herbivores, eating grasses, flowers and fruits of desert plants. Desert tortoises are a protected species in Arizona and should not be taken from the wild.

Sonoran mud turtles are found in streams, ponds, springs and creeks in the lower two-thirds of Arizona. This turtle depends directly on water, coming onto land to feed, lay eggs or bask in the sun. Sonoran mud turtles are diurnal and nocturnal. They feed on insects, fish, amphibians, snails, crustaceans, and some plant materials. Sonoran mud turtles give off an odor when handled, giving them uncomplimentary nicknames such as “stink pot” and “musk turtle”.



### CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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The tortoise/ turtle does not play a part in the Diné emergence story, but the shell of a young tortoise/ turtle is used as a symbol of protection and is used to administer herbs in certain ceremonies. Turtles and tortoises should not be observed when eating, mating, and birthing (egg hatching). Turtles and tortoises are members of the reptile family and should be treated like other reptiles (i.e. frogs, lizards etc.).



### TORTOISES/TURTLES IN THE CLASSROOM

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When teaching about wildlife, stories about turtles can be read, pictures and videos shown, and drawings made. The shells are not recommended for use in arts and crafts. You can have a turtle in the classroom but it should be purchased from a pet store and not released into the wild. Children can handle turtles in the classroom only with parental permission. Children should wash their hands afterwards.

# GILA MONSTER • TINÍLÉÍ

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## GILA MONSTERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The Gila monster is the only venomous lizard in Arizona, and in the United States. It is a very large lizard, sometimes reaching a length of 14 inches. It has a heavy body, with a short flat tail. Its skin is covered with bead-like scales which are brightly colored orange, pinkish or yellow and black. The face is solid black. It inhabits areas of sandy soils in rocky arid and semiarid regions.

The Gila monster is a predator, feeding on small mammals, ground-nesting birds, reptile eggs and other lizards. It kills by injecting its prey with poisonous venom. The venom glands are located beneath the skin in the lower jaw. Unlike rattlesnakes, Gila monsters do not have fangs. Instead venom ducts carry venom to the edge of small grooved venom-conducting teeth. The Gila monster hunts by grabbing prey with its powerful jaws. The venom travels along the grooves in the teeth into the wound and then into the prey's bloodstream.

The Gila monster is protected by law and cannot be disturbed or killed.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Hausman, G. (Ed.). (1995). *How the chipmunk got tiny feet*. Mexico: Harper Collins Publishers.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Gila Monsters originated from the Capizone Peak near Cuba, which is where Gila monsters are found on the Navajo Nation. They were created by a very powerful healing song. They possess very mystical powers. Diné medicine men use the Gila monster as a tool to diagnose ailments. Its name is used as a prayer in the healing process, thus the Gila monster is respected and honored.

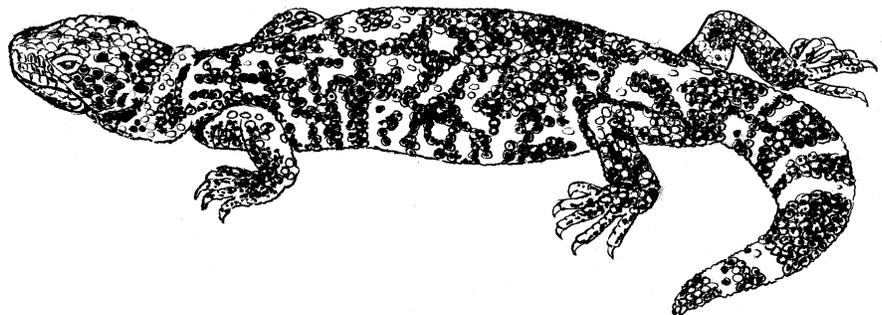
It is also believed some Diné women create weaving patterns which are based on the skin designs of the Gila Monster.



## GILA MONSTERS IN THE CLASSROOM

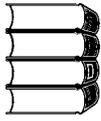
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Gila Monsters should not be brought into the classroom. Students should not feed, kill nor harm them. Students can read books, draw pictures, view videos and do art activities about Gila monsters.



# GOPHER • NA'AZÍSÍ

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Callaway, S. (1974). *Grandfather stories of the Navajos*. Rough Rock, AZ: O'Sullivan Woodside Co.

Haile, B. (1984). *Navajo coyote tales*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Platero, L., Menning, E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane': Navajo children's literature* (Vol.11). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). (1977). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Press.



## GOPHERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Gophers are common in valley and mountain meadow areas where the soil is fairly sandy. They have enlarged front claws for efficient digging and are generally brown in color. They spend most of their time underground in burrows but their presence can be detected by a series of sand or dirt mounds that result from their burrowing activity. Gophers feed mainly on roots and tubers, and rarely on surface vegetation. They are generally considered to be harmful in areas where agriculture is a primary source of income because they eat the roots of farm crops.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Gophers play an important role in the Diné Legend Story and Shoe Game. According to history, Gopher was instrumental in the emergence of the Diné. Gopher played a significant role in getting rid of Naayéé' (monsters). He made a path in the underground for Monster Slayer to kill Déélgééd (Horned Monster).

Gophers are used to kill bacteria in certain diseases. They are also used in the Mountain Top Ceremony. Gophers should not be kept as pets. They should only be killed if they become pests in corn fields. They should not be eaten.



## GOPHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Gophers should not be kept as classroom pets but can be studied through the use of pictures, videos and literature.



# HORNED LIZARD • NA'ASH± 'II DICH'ÍZHII



## HORNED LIZARDS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Horned lizards, sometimes called “horned toads”, are true reptiles and not amphibians. They get their name from the presence of large spiny scales, especially on the head. The only species of horned lizard found on the Navajo Nation is the short-horned lizard, which occurs in many different habitats, from the desert grassland to the ponderosa pine forests. Because of their coloration and flat body shape, horned lizards can be hard to see as they rest on the ground.

Their food is primarily ants, although they will eat other small insects and spiders. Females give birth to 5-20 live young in July or August. Males and females are difficult to distinguish from one another, except for the enlarged scales at the base of the underside of the tail in males; this area may also be swollen in males in the spring breeding season.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In the Diné culture Horned Toad is addressed as “grandpa” (shicheii). It possesses spiritual power. When you see one, pick it up and rub it on your chest and say, “I will be in good health and harmony.” If you have corn pollen sprinkle it as an offering and then let the horned lizard loose where you found it. You will then have good health and harmony.

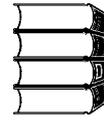
It is believed that the horned toad is dressed with an armored shield, which is called arrowhead. The spiky horns on the body represent the arrowheads. This protects the horned toad from predators. It was placed on earth with songs and prayers so that in the future the Diné would utilize it. The Diné still know and use its sacred prayers and songs for protection.



## HORNED LIZARDS IN THE CLASSROOM

Horned lizards may be brought into the classroom but only for a short time (not over a day) and then immediately returned to the location where they were found. They should always be handled with care and respect and not be squeezed, harassed, fed, or dissected.

Students may read and write about horned lizards, look at, draw, and color pictures of horned lizards.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

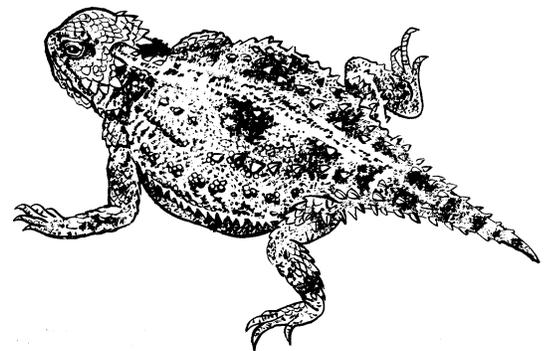
DeGroat, J. (Team Coordinator). (1981). *Yáadilá!* (Book V). Albuquerque, NM: American Materials Development Center.

Haile, B. (1984). *Navajo coyote tales*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Platero, L. & Menning E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane’*: Navajo children’s literature (Vol. II). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

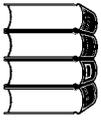
Tibbetts, K. (Producer). (1996). *Coyote and the horned toad* (Video). Blanding, UT: San Juan County School District.

Yazzie, L. (1984). *Coyote and the lizards*. In E. Ciccarello (Ed.), *Átchíní bá hane’*: Navajo children’s literature. (Vol. I). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.



# KIT FOX • MA'IIŁTSOOÍ

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Caduto, M. & Bruchae, J. (Eds). (1992). *Native American animal stories*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Johnson, C. (1977). *Southwest mammals: Navajo beliefs and legends*. Blanding, UT: San Juan School District.

Van Laan, N. (1995). *In a circle long ago*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc.



## KIT FOX ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Kit foxes are very small tan colored desert foxes. They inhabit open country and live in burrows which they dig themselves. Kit foxes mate from December through February. The pair often mate for life, but they also may also stay together seasonally. Litters can range in size from four to five young. Pups are on their own about five months after being born.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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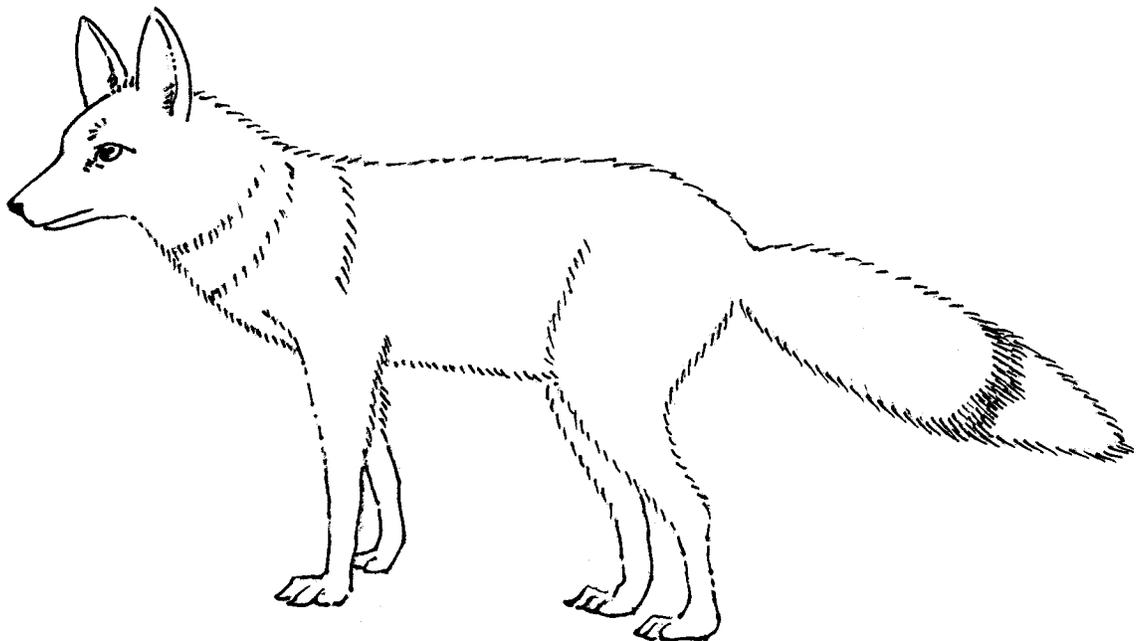
Culturally, kit foxes represent material goods. Their hides and tails are used in Yé'ii Bi Cheii and other ceremonies. Overall, they are positive in Navajo culture. Unlike the coyote, the kit fox brings good luck if it crosses your path. It is respected for its speed and quickness in rough country. There are no restrictions regarding hunting of kit foxes or use of their pelts (fur).



## KIT FOX IN THE CLASSROOM

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When teaching about wildlife, the kit fox can be talked about and pictures drawn by the students. Discussions of cultural beliefs about the kit fox are encouraged. Field trips to the zoo and to its natural habitat to attempt to see the kit fox are allowed. The pelt of the kit fox is okay to bring into the classroom, but no bones or any other interior parts of the animal should be brought into the classroom.



# LIZARD • NA'ASH± 'IILBÁHÍ



## LIZARDS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

In addition to the horned lizard, one of the most recognizable lizards, there are at least 14 other species of lizards on the Navajo Nation. Some, such as the earless, whiptail, and collared lizards, are fast-moving ground dwellers, while the chuckwalla is a slow-moving inhabitant of rocky areas and canyons. With the exception of the night lizard, all are diurnal, or active during the day. Most lizards on the Navajo Nation lay eggs in rotting vegetation or in the sand, except the night lizard and horned lizard, which give birth to live young. Insects and spiders are the main diet of lizards on the Navajo Nation, except the chuckwalla which is largely a plant eater.



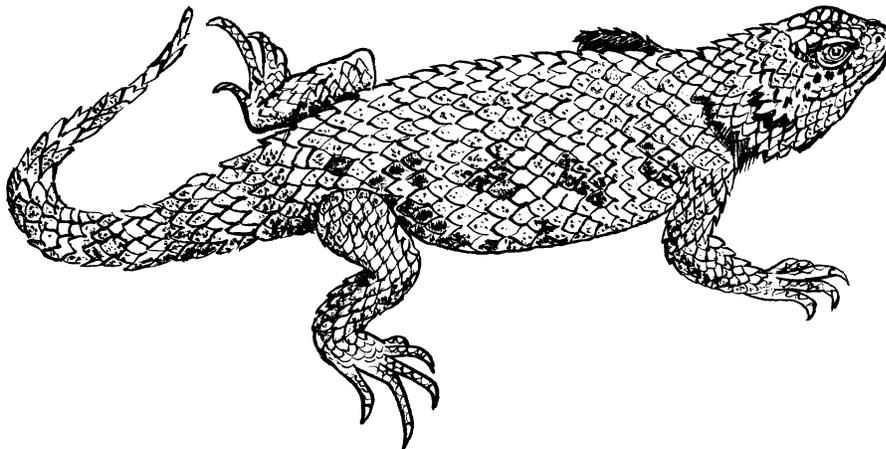
## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In the Diné culture lizards do not have much significance, although they do appear in traditional Diné Coyote Stories. Diné are afraid to touch all lizards, except horned lizards, because their secretions can cause sickness to the person handling the lizard. This can occur if children handle a lizard and then put their hands in their mouth before washing. Lizards should not be killed or eaten.



## LIZARDS IN THE CLASSROOM

It is okay to study and observe lizards in a terrarium. They can be used in stories, writing, and drama plays. Students should not handle lizards.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

DeGroat, J. (Team Coordinator). (1981). *Yáadilá* (Book V). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

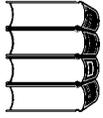
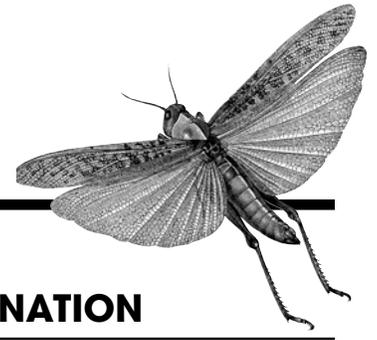
Haile, B. (1984). *Navajo coyote stories*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Platero, L., Menning, E. & Benally R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane': Navajo children's literature* (Vol. II). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Tibbetts, K. (Producer). (1996). *Coyote and lizard*. (Video). Blanding, UT: San Juan County School District.

Yazzie, L. (1984). *Coyote and the lizards*. In E. Ciccarello & E. Manning (Eds). *Átchíní bá hane': Navajo children's literature* (Vol.I). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

# LOCUST • NAHACHAGII CICADA • WÍNEESHCH'ÓDII



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Platero, L. & Menning, E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane'*: Navajo children's literature. Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Salabye, R. & Begay, M. (1980). The locust. In M. Thomas (Ed.). *DBA Winter Workshop '73* (rev. ed.). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Yazzie, A. (1984). *Navajo oral tradition* (Vol. II). Cortez, CO: Mesa Verde Press.

Yazzie, E., (Ed.). (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane'*: The Navajo creation story. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.



## LOCUSTS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

The insects known as locusts by the Diné people are actually cicadas, and not true locusts which are actually grasshoppers. These large (1-2 in.), noisy insects are common in Arizona. They appear in periodic cycles (some species every 17 years and others every 13 years), being abundant locally some times and widespread at other times. They are blackish to green in color and have transparent wings. They produce loud humming sounds through sound organs at the base of their abdomen. Locusts lay eggs on twigs which break off of trees. The nymphs then move about on the ground, feeding on plant roots. The nymphs are wingless and brown in color. The nymphs then crawl up under the bark of a tree to molt, leaving behind a fragile yellow shell after they molt. The adults live in trees and can be heard calling from May through August. Their sound often startles people because it sounds like a rattlesnake rattling.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Diné used locusts for food by removing the legs, wings, and heads and then roasting them in hot coals. They then can be fed to children, cats, and dogs, but not to reptiles. Locusts emerge when it gets warm in the spring. Small black locusts appear first followed by the larger type. Both are edible and they are said to taste like pinón nuts. In seasonal winter stories, locust won the world for the Diné during the Emergence of the Fourth World. He went through several tests to show perseverance and tolerance. Locust represents a winning ability to overcome sickness and gambling. His songs are used to win in Shoe Games. If a lot of locusts (cicadas) are heard, it means there will be a bountiful pinón crop. Some people also put locusts on their throats to give them voice.



## LOCUST IN THE CLASSROOM

When teaching about wildlife, locusts (cicadas) can be discussed only during the winter months. Pictures can be shown and drawn, and movies and videos on locust can be shown throughout the year. Discussion of the locust is encouraged. They were utilized as food in the past. Have students relate their own knowledge about locusts i.e., Have they ever seen, heard, or eaten one?

# MOUSE • NA'ATS'QQSÍ

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## THE MOUSE ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The deer mouse inhabits nearly every dry-land habitat on the Navajo Nation; grassland, piñon juniper and ponderosa pine forest. They nest in burrows, trees, stumps and buildings. Deer mice feed on seeds, nuts, acorns, and insects, and also stored food.

The home range of the deer mouse is one-half to three acres or more. Deer mice rarely live more than two years in the wild, but may live five to eight years in captivity. Females may display territorial behavior during the breeding season. They usually have two to four litters of three to five young a year.

Deer mice have a body two to four inches long with a tail two to five inches long and weigh two-thirds to one and one-fourth ounces. They vary in color, but the tail is always sharply bi-colored, white below and dark above.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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The mouse is mentioned in the Creation story. Due to the nature of the content it is advisable not to get into the details of the story.

It is believed if a mouse gets into your belongings and chews on them, that an offering should be made to a specific type of rock formation. In this case, the rock is a symbol of the mouse.

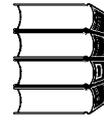
If a mouse is found in a person's home or belongings, the individual is thought of as careless and not very responsible.



## THE MOUSE IN THE CLASSROOM

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When teaching about wildlife, the mouse can be discussed and pictures drawn. Students can look at or view the mouse from a distance, but should never touch. Due to the disease issue (hantavirus) deer mice should never be brought into the classroom.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (Eds.). (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

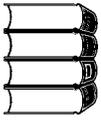
Johnson, C. (1977). *Southwest mammals: Navajo beliefs and legends*. Blanding UT: San Juan School District.

Van Laan, N. (1995). *In a circle long ago*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Yazzie, A. (1984). *Navajo oral tradition* (Vol.II). Cortez, CO: Mesa Verde Press.



# PRAIRIE DOG • DL+++ '



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Chacon, L., Wheeler, G. & Yazzie, L. (1979). *Third grade curriculum guide*. Chinle, AZ: Chinle School Dist. # 24.

Clark, A. (1994). *Who wants to be a prairie dog?* Flagstaff, AZ: The Salina Bookshelf.

DeGroat, J. (Team Coordinator). (1981). *Yáadilá!* Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Kee, L. & Raefaelito, A. (1977). *Tsá'áshi'*. Ramah, NM: Tsá'Aszi Printing.



## PRAIRIE DOGS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Prairie dogs occur throughout the Navajo Nation. They are rodents and have sharp teeth for eating grass and other vegetation, with sharp claws for digging burrows. Prairie dogs live in communities known as “towns”, and prefer to live in areas that have low grass cover. During the summer they are active throughout the day but during the winter they hibernate. They live approximately three years.

Prairie dogs are very vocal. There is always a “look out” watching for danger as other members of the community go about the business of eating, digging burrows, and raising young. At the first sign of a potential predator, the “look out” gives a sharp loud whistle and everyone immediately scampers down their burrow to safety.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In Diné culture, prairie dogs are very sacred and should only be killed for food. There are several stories about prairie dogs which convey positive and moral teachings including the following: There was a young woman who was not taking care of her children properly. She would often neglect and abandon her children. On one of these occasions she went off to gamble. Her children, a boy and a girl, dug themselves a burrow looking for food and shelter. Upon her return the mother tried her best to persuade them to come back to her but they hid in the burrow. From then on the children were adopted by the prairie dog.

It is also believed that prairie dogs resemble children because of their similar anatomy.



## PRAIRIE DOGS IN THE CLASSROOM

When teaching about wildlife, prairie dogs can be drawn and talked about without restrictions. Prairie dogs can be used as classroom pets, but they should be captured and cared for when young so they can be domesticated. It is also believed that necessary offerings should be given before the prairie dog is used for educational purposes.

**Warning: prairie dog fleas can carry bubonic plague.  
Do not handle with bare hands.**



# RABBIT • GAH

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## RABBITS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Three species of rabbits are common on the Navajo Nation. The jackrabbit is found in the open prairies and sparsely vegetated deserts. The mountain cottontail is found in thickets, sagebrush, rocks and cliffs in forested upland areas. The desert cottontail is found in plains, foothills, valleys and pinõn-juniper habitats of lower elevations. Rabbits are crepuscular (most active in the evening and early morning). Cottontails are an important small game species. Rabbits are plant eaters.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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In Diné culture rabbits were once known as Rabbit People. In the past the Diné hunted rabbits for food. They tanned rabbit hides and made gloves, caps, and bags. Hides were also used as cradle board cushions or padding for cradle boards.

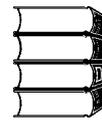
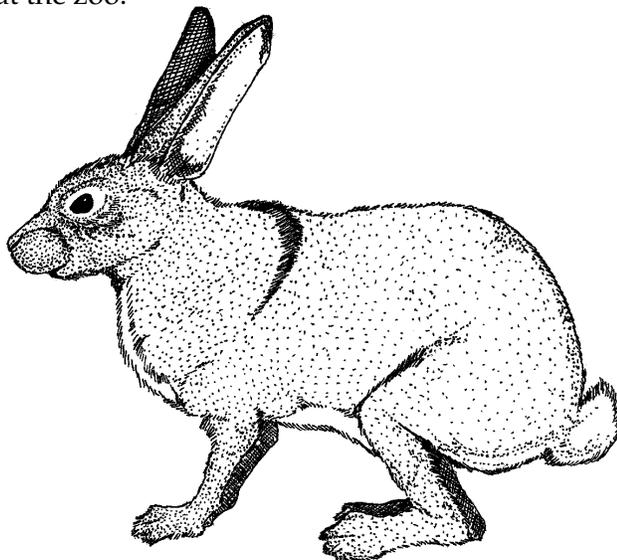
Wild rabbits cannot be kept as pets, but in the past they were raised for food and pelts. People who raised wild rabbits said the rabbits acted as watch dogs to alert you when something or someone approached your camp. During the Snake Ceremony, the rabbit is used in some sand paintings, and is also used in sand painting in the Feather Ceremony. Wild rabbits should not be harmed or killed needlessly.



## RABBITS IN THE CLASSROOM

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A domestic rabbit may be used as a classroom pet if it is properly cared for. Teachers can show pictures, slides, or videos of wild rabbits. Wild rabbits can be viewed at the zoo.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Caduto, M. & Bruchac, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Native American animal stories*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishers.

Grossman, V. (1991). *Ten little rabbits*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Mayo, G. (1994). *Here comes tricky rabbit*. New York: Walker and Co.

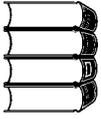
Monetathchi, V. & Begay, M. (1973). The story of rabbit shoe game song. In M. Thomas (Ed.). *Winter shoe game songs: DBA Winter Workshop '73*. (pp.17-20). St. Michaels, AZ: St. Michael's Press.

Roessel, R. Jr. & Platero D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press.

Tibbetts, K. (Producer). (1996). *Coyote and rabbit*. (Video). Blanding, UT: San Juan County School District.

# ROADRUNNER • NAATSÉDLÓZII

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Buchanan, K. & Buchanan, D. (1974). *It rained on the desert today*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing Co.

Clark, A. (1969). *Along sandy trails*. New York: The Viking Press.

Rinard, J. (1976). *Wonders of the desert world*. National Geographic Society.



## ROADRUNNERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Roadrunners are found on the Navajo Nation near Oraibi, Leupp, Tuba City, Keams Canyon, and Many Farms. They are a large ground dwelling member of the Cuckoo family and are most commonly known from the “Roadrunner and Coyote cartoons”. The roadrunner is streaked with brown and white which camouflages it well in the desert scrub and other arid brush areas it inhabits. Roadrunners have very good eyesight for finding prey, and strong legs for speed in catching their prey on the ground. Prey consists of insects, lizards, snakes, rodents, and even small birds. Its song is a low cooing sound much like that of the mourning dove.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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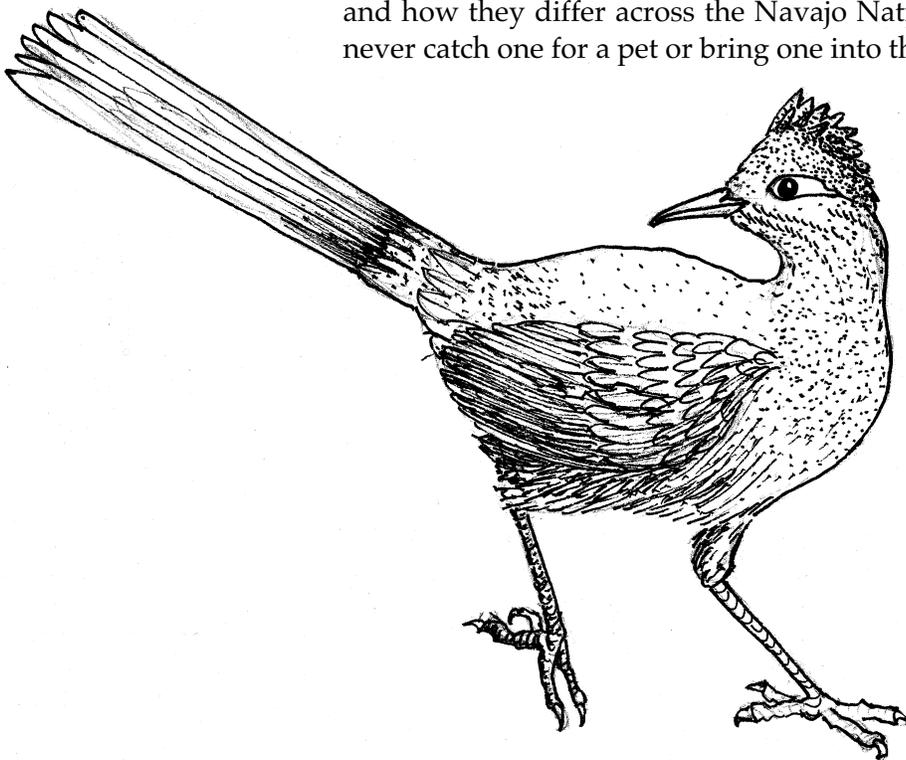
The feathers of the roadrunner can be used in ceremonies. You cannot kill or harm a roadrunner. The medicine man must make an offering if the feathers of a roadrunner are going to be used in a ceremony.



## ROADRUNNERS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Roadrunners can be talked about in the classroom and students can draw and color pictures. Discussion of cultural beliefs concerning the roadrunner and how they differ across the Navajo Nation are encouraged. However, never catch one for a pet or bring one into the classroom.



# SCORPION • SÉÍGO'

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## SCORPIONS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Scorpions are closely related to spiders and are not insects. Scorpions have large claw-like forearms called pedipalps. Pedipalps are used for defense and for capturing prey, which consist of insects and very small animals. Scorpions have a long, segmented tail that has a large stinger at the end. Most scorpion stings are painful but not deadly. Scorpions are nocturnal and can be found easily at night using a black light, because they glow in the dark with such a light.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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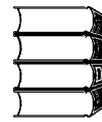
The Scorpions, along with the dark colored insects, stirred the balance in the First World. The Diné respect them in the sense that they can do grave harm. If they are found around the house, they are captured and relocated into their natural habitat away from the human dwelling.



## SCORPIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

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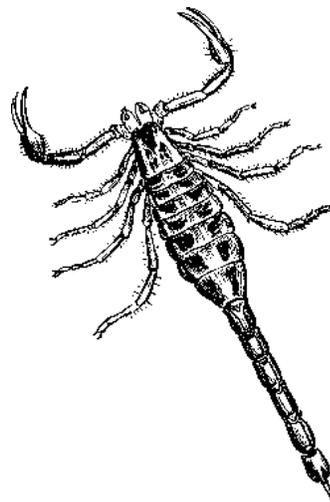
Live scorpions should not be kept in the classroom. Models of scorpions can be used as a teaching aide, and pictures and drawings of scorpions are allowed.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

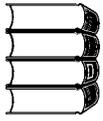
Rinard, J. (1976). *Wonders of the desert world*. National Geographic Society.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.



# SKUNK • GÓLÍZHII

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Ciccarello, E. (Ed.) (1984). *Átchíní bá hane’*: Navajo children’s literature (Vol.1). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Haile, B. (1984). *Navajo coyote tales*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Roessel, R. Jr. & Platero, D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Press.

Silentman, I. (1973). *Chidítsooi dóó gólízhii*. Albuquerque, NM: Navajo Reading Study.

Tibbitts, K. (Producer). (1996). *Coyote and the skunk* (Video). Blanding, UT: San Juan County School District.



## SKUNKS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Two species of skunks occur on the Navajo Nation, the spotted skunk (black with broken white stripes) and the striped skunk (black with two white stripes down the back). Spotted skunks prefer rocky areas, whereas striped skunks are usually found near water (streams, creeks, rivers), within wooded areas, mountain ranges, and high mesas. Home ranges vary from 10 to 160 acres. Skunks build nests under buildings and in rock piles, and can climb trees to escape danger. When alarmed or threatened skunks may discharge a strong scent that is very difficult to remove. Skunks eat a variety of foods, such as mice, bird eggs, insects, and some plant material. The young are born in May through June. Litter sizes usually range from four to seven.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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In Diné culture skunks possess mystical powers. Medicine men use the scent glands for the treatment of colds, sinus problems, and migraine headaches.



## SKUNKS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Skunks should only be talked about during the winter if they are associated with Coyote stories. Otherwise, skunks can be talked about any time of the year. Do not bring them into the classroom. Pictures and videos can be incorporated into the lessons.



# SNAKE • TŁ'IIISH



## SNAKES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Nine different species of snakes occur on the Navajo Nation but only five are common. Although snakes appear to be smooth and slippery, they are not slimy. Their body is covered with hundreds of small, over-lapping scales which give a smooth appearance. As snakes grow, they shed the outer skin layer, often in one piece. Snakes have no legs, but as reptiles they are closely related to lizards.

All snakes are carnivores, with some feeding on fish and frogs, while others eat birds and small mammals. Some species, such as the gopher (bull) snake, striped whip snake, and glossy snake lay eggs in the late spring or early summer. Eggs are usually deposited in decaying vegetation and hatch in about two months. The terrestrial garter snake and western rattlesnake give birth to live young in late summer.

All snakes on the Navajo Nation hibernate during the winter, with some species coming together in large denning aggregations. Most snakes can be active during the day or night, depending upon the weather.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In Diné culture the snake is closely associated with lightning and electrical energy. Snakes also play a major role in the history of the Diné clans. The snake was given to the Tódíich'íí'nii (Bitter Water) Clan as their protector and guide as they journeyed to the new world. The snake got tired near Kayenta and asked to be left in the desert to reside there forever. He asked that his people be left alone and not be disturbed. He said he had protecting powers that would remove sickness and physical ailments resulting from snake contact.

Do not watch a snake shed its skin, eat, or mate. Do not walk on its track or path, and do not kill a snake unless absolutely necessary. If a person is affected by a snake it can be cured by a ceremony. "Sh-h" is a word commonly used by the Navajo that came from the snake, it is a warning signal to be quiet, just like when the snake gives a warning signal.



## SNAKES IN THE CLASSROOM

Snakes can be viewed in videos and pictures as long as they are not shown in the process of eating, shedding their skin, or killing prey. Children's stories and literature about snakes can be read and studied. Snakes should not be brought into the classroom, should not be handled by students, and students should not be allowed to watch them shed their skin, or kill and eat prey. Field trips to view snakes should be taken only with parental permission.



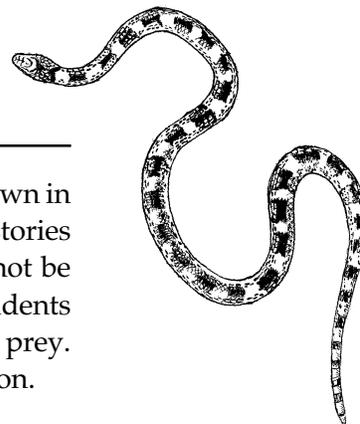
## TEACHER RESOURCES

Ita, T. (1989). *Baby rattle-snakes*. San Francisco: Children's Book Press.

Bulow, E. (1991). *Navajo taboos*. Gallup, NM: Buffalo Medicine Books.

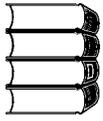
DeGroat, J. (1981). *Yáadilá!* Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, R. (Eds.). (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.



# SPIDER • NA'ASHJÉ'II

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Duncan, L. (1996). *The magic of spider woman*. New York: Scholastic Inc.

Keams, G. (1995). *Grandmother spider brings the sun*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing Co.

Spencer, H. (NA) *Spider woman: creator of Navajo weaving*. Chinle, AZ: Chinle Public School District.

Tsosie, C. (1973). Spider woman. In M. Thomas (Ed.), *Winter tales: DBA winter workshop* (pp. 17-18). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.



## SPIDERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Spiders, although sometimes thought of as a type of insect, are actually arachnids. An easy way to differentiate spiders from insects is that spiders have eight legs, while insects have only six. All spiders are capable of spinning silk, and many of them use this silk to make webs. Spider webs are very strong for their size, and they are frequently utilized by birds, such as hummingbirds, to construct their nests. Some spiders, such as the tarantula, do not make webs to trap their prey, but rather actively hunt for their food.

All spiders are venomous, delivering their venom to their prey through hollow fangs located in the mouth region. The venom of only a few, such as the black widow, are potentially dangerous to humans, but other kinds of spiders can deliver painful bites. Female spiders usually lay their eggs in an egg case that they carry about with them or suspend in the web or on nearby vegetation until the eggs hatch into tiny spiders.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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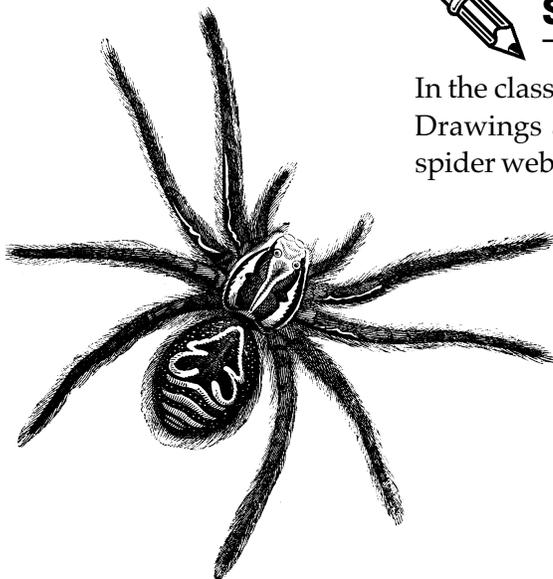
The spider originated as part of the Diné Creation Story. The spider woman brought artistic ability to the Diné people, especially rug weavers. Spider Woman was very intelligent and creative. An orb weaving spider web (like a dream catcher) taken from the ceiling of a hogan or out in nature and rubbed on the hands of a young girl, during her puberty ceremony into womanhood, will bring her artistic ability and creative knowledge like the Spider Woman. The spider is also used in ceremonies for protection and victory. Spiders should be respected, not killed.



## SPIDERS IN THE CLASSROOM

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In the classroom students can read and view pictures and videos of spiders. Drawings and illustrations can be made and colored of both spiders and spider webs. Spiders can be used in the classroom for observation but should be released immediately after the lesson is completed. Because all spiders are poisonous or can be harmful, they should not be handled or placed on the body. Creation stories about spiders should only be told during the winter.



# STINK BUG • K'ÍNEEDLÍSHII

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## STINK BUGS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Stink bugs are not true bugs, but are members of the beetle family. If threatened, they stand on their head with their rear elevated and release a noxious odor, thus the name “stink bug.” Stink bugs are very common in the desert portions of the Navajo Nation. The adult beetles are scavengers while the larvae feed on roots of grasses and other plants.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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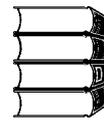
The Diné believe that stink bugs can be used for treating thrush, and babies and children bed wetting, and when used with ch'ith, the healing of measles and chicken pox. Since snakes fear stink bugs, they can also be used as a snake repellent.



## STINK BUGS IN THE CLASSROOM

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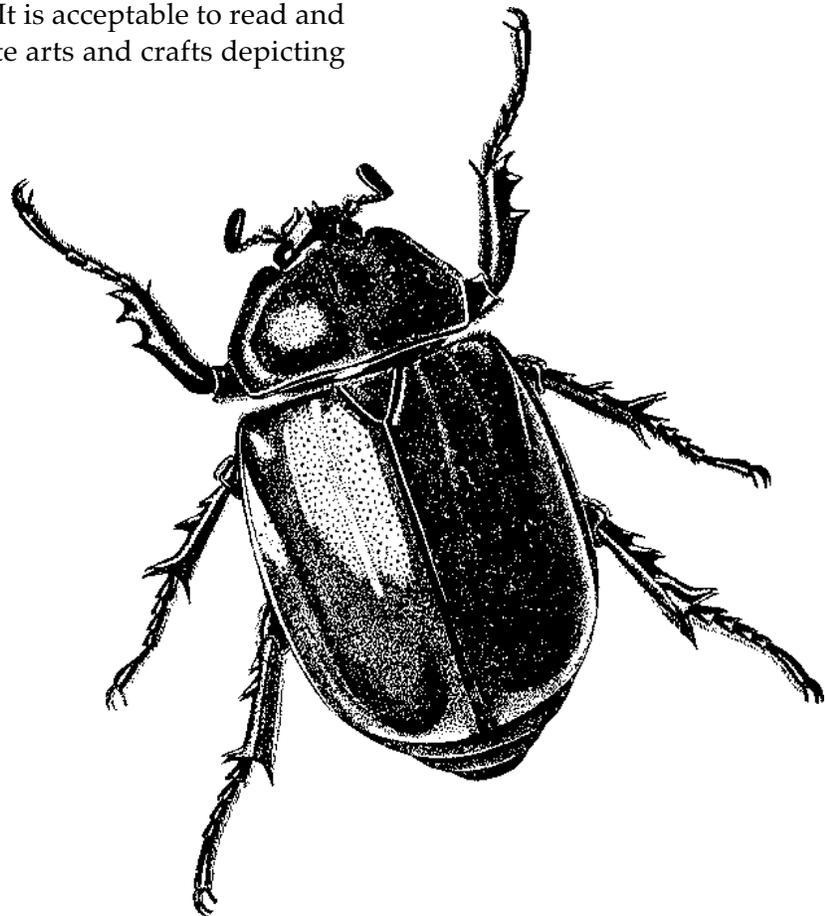
Stink bugs can be brought into the classroom for observation, but should be released as soon as the lesson is completed. It is acceptable to read and write about stink bugs, and illustrate and create arts and crafts depicting stink bugs.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Bulow, E. (1991). *Navajo taboos*. Gallup, NM: Buffalo Medicine Books.

Mabery, M. (1991). *Right after sundown: teaching stories of the Navajos*. Tsaille, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.

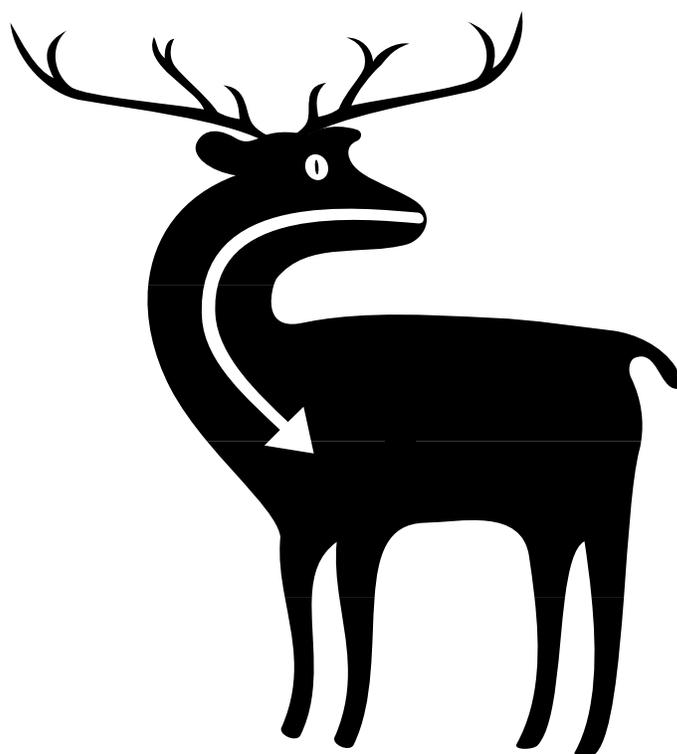




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# MOUNTAIN

*DZIŁ*





# BEAR • SHASH



## BEARS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Black bears occur throughout the Chuska mountains and the Fort Defiance area of the Navajo Nation. Although called black bears, they range in color from black to light brown or blonde. Adult males weigh about 275 pounds and adult females about 150 pounds. They can live to be over 20 years of age.

Black bears are not true hibernators. They go into dens in October and November although they may become active several times during warm winter days. They exit their winter dens in April and May. They den in a variety of places, under large boulders and the roots of trees, and in natural holes and caves.

The cubs are born in the den. Two is the average litter size but occasionally there will be three cubs born. The cubs weigh about eight ounces at birth, and four to six pounds when they leave the den three to four months later. Female black bears give birth every other year.

Black bears are omnivores, eating both plants and animals, but most of their diet is plant material. They feed on grass in the spring, bugs and berries during the summer, and acorns in the fall. Unlike other winter hibernators that store food in caches or in their dens, black bears store winter food in their body in the form of fat.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In Diné culture the bear is one of the most sacred of animals, possessing power and strength. At the beginning of the Diné culture Black Bear was given to the Kinyaa'áanii (Towering House) as a protector and guide as they returned to the new world. Bear gave them prayer and the Diné language. He said he would go back to the mountains, claim them as his territory and proclaim himself master of the wilderness. He left the Diné people the open areas of land. Since then, bears have been considered sacred and should not be harmed in any way.

Bears sometimes venture down to the lower elevations seeking prayers and blessings. If a bear is seen, corn pollen should be offered from a safe distance. A Diné individual may go through a specific ceremony to gain protection and power from the bear.

Any Diné person can be negatively affected by the bear if proper precautions are not practiced. Do not use the bear's Diné name (shash) when in the mountains or bear habitat.



## BEARS IN THE CLASSROOM

Students may read and write about bears. Stories about bears from children's literature are acceptable. Students may also draw or color pictures of bears, and field trips to the zoo to see bears is also permitted. No bear parts such as skulls, bones, or skins should be brought into the classroom. Cultural and traditional stories about bears should not be performed in plays or skits by children.



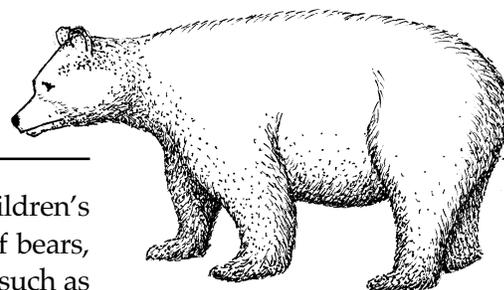
## TEACHER RESOURCES

Bulow, E. (1991). *Navajo taboos*. Gallup, NM: Buffalo Medicine Books.

Frazier, E. & Begay, L. (1974). Shash Baahane'. In M. Thomas (Ed.). *Winter shoe games songs: DBA winter workshop '73* (pp.15-16). St. Michaels, AZ: St. Michael's Press.

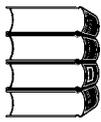
Nofchissey, R. (1972). *At'ééltsooi dóó shash táá'*. Albuquerque: NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

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# BIGHORN SHEEP • TSÉTAH DIBÉ

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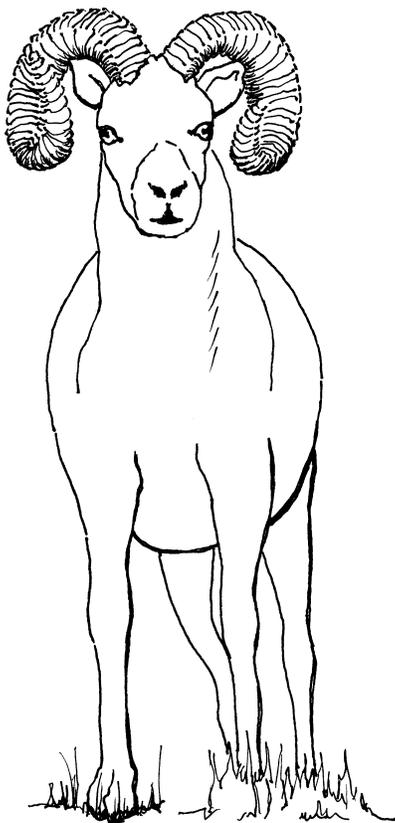
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Chacon, L., Wheeler, G. & Yazzie, L. (1979). *Third grade curriculum guide*. Chinle, AZ: Chinle School Dist. #24.

Downs, J. (1972). *The Navajo*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Clark, A. (1988). *Little herder in autumn*. Sante Fe, NM: Ancient City Press.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.



## BIGHORN SHEEP ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Bighorn, also known as mountain sheep, live in rough, rocky areas along the San Juan, Colorado and Little Colorado rivers on the Navajo Nation. They are especially adapted to climbing on rocks and running fast through rugged terrain. They eat many kinds of grasses, weeds and shrubs. They are light brown to buff colored. Ewes (females) have small horns, while rams (males) have large, curling ones.

Ewes give birth to a single lamb in spring, with twins rarely born. Bighorns can live to be 15 to 30 years old. Rams stay together in bachelor herds except during the fall and winter breeding season when they join the ewe and lamb groups. Bighorns are well known for their ability to go without water for long periods of time (sometimes several days) and to drink large quantities of water (several gallons) at one time.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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The bighorn sheep are sacred animals to Diné. There are many stories that depict the bighorn sheep in Diné history and philosophy. The La Plata mountains (Dibé Nitsaa), the sacred mountain to the north, is named after this animal. Diné believe that if they desire to possess more domestic sheep, they can go up to the La Plata Mountains and perform special prayers.

Certain body parts, such as horns and fat of the bighorn sheep, are used in ceremonies for purification and blessings.

Some Diné believe bighorn sheep should not be eaten, while others believe it is okay. These differences represent regional cultural beliefs surrounding the bighorn on the Navajo Nation.



## BIGHORN SHEEP IN THE CLASSROOM

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Children may observe bighorn sheep at the zoo. However they should not be kept as pets. Children can watch them in movies or videos, draw them, and use them in stories. Horns and other parts may be handled from a bighorn that was killed by a hunter. However, other sheep parts or horns that have been found may not be picked up, because the cause of death is unknown.

# BOBCAT • NÁSHDÓÍLBÁHÍ



## BOBCATS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Bobcats, although secretive and rarely seen, are common throughout the canyons, mesas and mountains of the Navajo Nation. They are the Navajo Nation's only spotted cats (mountain lions are solid colored) and get their name from their short tail. Bobcats are active mainly at night. They eat small mammals and birds.



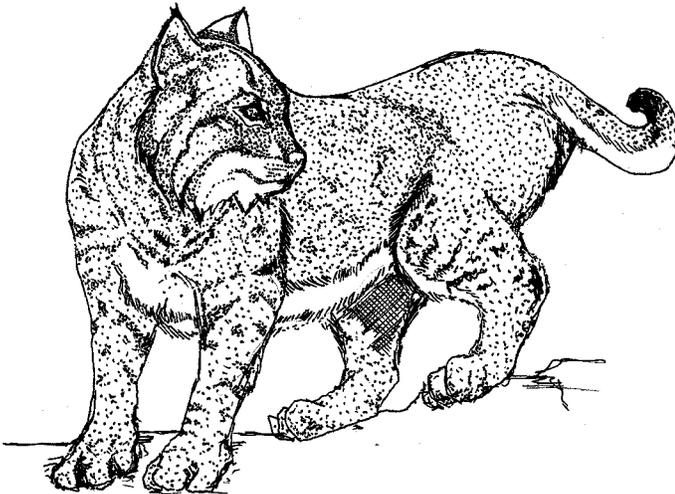
## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The bobcat is portrayed in Diné Coyote Stories. The claws and bile are used in ceremonies. Bobcat meat is edible and the pelts, turned inside out, are fashioned into clothing such as hats, gloves and vests.



## BOBCATS IN THE CLASSROOM

All standard classroom activities are acceptable (i.e., drawing, watching films and videos, field trips, coloring, and role playing). It is permissible to observe a live bobcat at the zoo.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

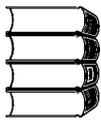
Henderson, J. (1973). *Ma'ii dóó náshdóí baa hane'*. Albuquerque: NM: Panorama Press.

Mayo, G. (1974). *Here comes tricky rabbit*. New York: Walker and Co.

Platero, L., Menning, E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane'*: Navajo children's literature (Vol. 1). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Wilcox, M. (1974). The bobcat. In M. Thomas (Ed.). *Winter shoe game songs: DBA winter workshop '73* (pp. 28-29). St. Michaels, AZ: St. Michael's Press.

# ELK • DZÉÉH



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (Eds.). (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Haile, B. (1984). *Navajo coyote tales*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Roessel, R. Jr. & Platero, D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press.

Lyons, O. (1972). *High elk's treasure*. New York: Holiday House Inc.



## ELK ON THE NAVAJO NATION

An elk is a large member of the deer group with a pale yellowish rump patch, small white tail, and reddish brown body. Males are easily identified by their chestnut-brown neck and mane which is absent in females. In late summer and fall males sport huge spreading antlers.

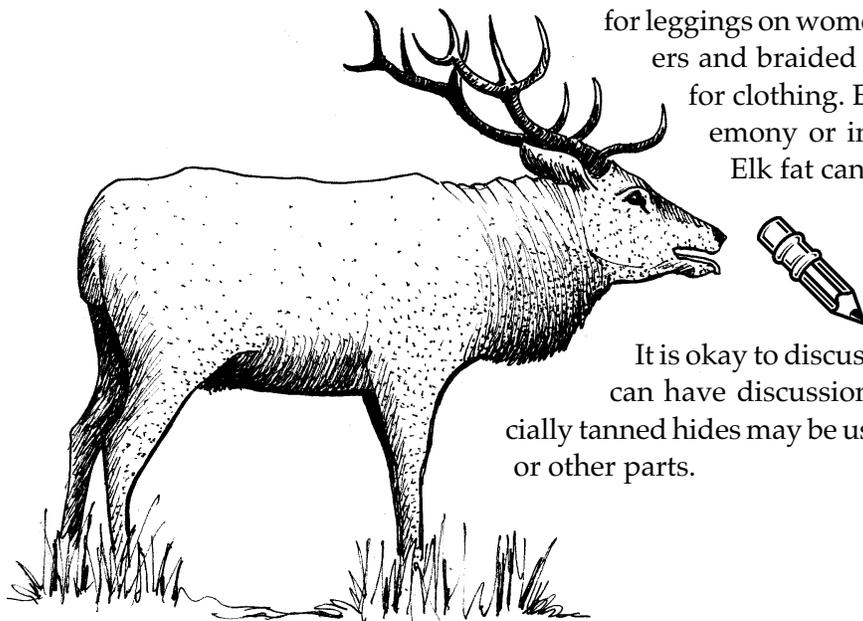
Elk are most active in the morning and evening hours. Females (cows) and young (calves) band together with young of the prior year during the summer months. Males (bulls) are largely solitary or may be found with 1 or 2 other bulls. The breeding season occurs in the fall when adult bulls gather cows into "harems" which they attempt to defend from other bulls. It is at this time that the "bugling" vocalization of the male fills the air.

In the winter, elk are usually seen in groups of 25 or more with both sexes together. In the spring, elk migrate up into the mountains to higher elevations, while in the fall this migration is reversed. Males shed their antlers each year in February or March and then begin to grow a new set in the spring. The velvet from the antlers is shed in August when antlers cease growing and harden. Elk calves, usually one and rarely two, are born in May and June. Elk feed on a variety of plants, and will also utilize grain fields and haystacks.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Elk antlers, horns, or bones should not be handled or used because the Beauty Way Ceremony is near extinction. Do not bother the live animal because it can harm you. The hide can only be used after it is tanned by traditional hunters. Elk hide can be used for some articles of clothing except for leggings on womens' moccasins. It can also be used for quivers and braided into hunting ropes. The skin can be used for clothing. Elk can be hunted only after a hunting ceremony or initiation, and they can be eaten for food. Elk fat can be used to grease bows and arrows.



## ELK IN THE CLASSROOM

It is okay to discuss elk and students may draw pictures. You can have discussions of cultural beliefs about elk. Commercially tanned hides may be used in the classroom, but not antlers, bones, or other parts.

# MOUNTAIN LION • NÁSHDÓÍTSOH

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## MOUNTAIN LIONS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Mountain lions are solitary animals except during courtship. They are a large, tan to grayish cat, with a long black-tipped tail. The backs of the ears and sides of the nose are also black. At night, the eyes of a mountain lion shine green. Mountain lions are difficult to see because they are very shy and secretive and not very common. They are exceptionally strong and powerful with keen eyesight. Adult males weigh 140 to 160 pounds and females weigh 90 to 110 pounds. Females are about seven feet long and males about eight feet from the tip of their nose to the end of their tail.

Mountain lions prefer to live and hunt in dense cover in rocky, rugged terrain, but also occur in deserts and swamps in other parts of their range in North America. On the Navajo Nation, they are commonly associated with the pinón-juniper / oak and ponderosa pine forests.

Mountain lions are predators and will eat almost any animal they can catch. When available, mule deer are their primary food. Sometimes mountain lions will eat cattle or sheep. The size of their home range (area of activity) varies with prey abundance and habitat type. On the Navajo Nation an average home range is 15 to 31 square miles. Male lions often have much larger home ranges than females.

Mountain lions have a wide range of vocalizations including chirps, peeps, and whistles. A threatened lion will lower and lay back its ears, and usually growl or hiss or both.

Mountain lions are very mobile, often traveling distances of 20 to 25 miles in one day. They can and do climb trees when threatened, and can swim when necessary.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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The mountain lion is considered a sacred animal because it is a guardian of the Honágháahnii Clan, one of the four original clans. Certain body parts of the lion are used in a variety of ceremonies including the skin, which is used in the initiation of a warrior, and the fat and claws which are used in other ceremonies. An arrow quiver made from mountain lion skin will provide protection to its carrier. You should not track or harm mountain lions, unless there is a good reason such as livestock depredation, because they will retaliate.

You should not feed or watch mountain lions eat. Man cannot hunt them when his wife is expecting a child. The mountain lion is considered the same as a bear (shash) in sacredness.



## MOUNTAIN LIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Students can draw mountain lions or parts of the animal (head, paws) in the classroom. During the winter, the lion can be discussed in conjunction with its cousin, the coyote. It can be viewed in zoos. In winter, students can play Shoe Games and sing songs about the mountain lion. You cannot bring parts of or a live mountain lion into the classroom.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Baylor, B. (1972). *Clay sings*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

London, J. & Pinola, L (1993). *Fire race*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

Mabery, M. (1991). *Right after sundown*. Tsale, AZ: Navajo Community Press.



# MULE DEER • B<sup>OH</sup>



## TEACHER RESOURCES

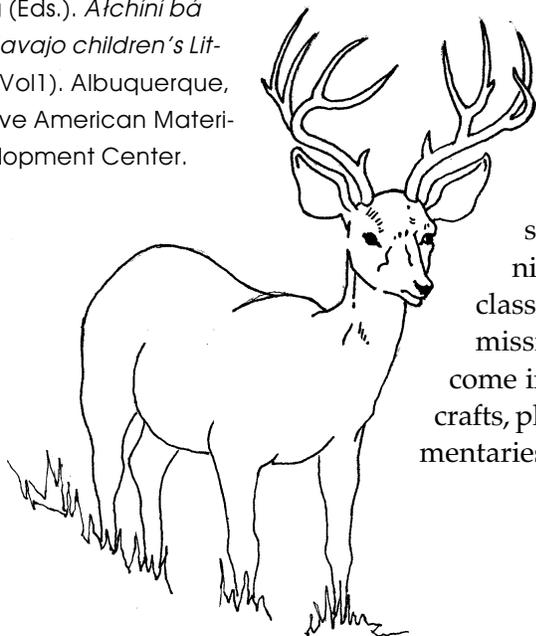
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Johnson, C. (1977). *Southwest mammals: Navajo beliefs and legends*. Blanding, UT: San Juan School District.

Roessel, R. Jr. & Platero, D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press.

Yazzie, E. (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.

Yazzie, L. (1984). Coyote and the deer. In E. Ciccarello & E. Manning (Eds.), *Atchíní bá hane': Navajo children's Literature* (Vol 1). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.



## MULE DEER ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Mule deer are a common mammal on the Navajo Nation. They live in pinõn-juniper woodland and ponderosa pine-Douglas fir forest such as on the Defiance Plateau and in the Chuska mountains. Small herds of females (does) and young (fawns) live together and are joined by males (bucks) in winter. They eat a variety of plants, especially the leaves and twigs of shrubs. In the fall they eat acorns to put on fat for the winter. Mule deer may live to be 10-20 years old. The buck grows antlers, which are living tissue, each spring and sheds them the following February or March. The doe usually gives birth to twins in late June or early July. Fawns are spotted for three months to enable them to better hide from predators like coyotes, mountain lions, bears and bobcats. Mule deer are an important game animal on the Navajo Nation, usually hunted in the fall.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Hunting for deer and butchering a deer are both highly respected activities. Special ceremonies precede the hunting of deer. Women cannot go hunting nor can husbands of pregnant women. Neither can watch a deer being butchered. Before butchering, the deer must be turned to face the east.

All parts of the deer are used either for religious ceremonies, food, or clothing. Hoofs are used in ceremonial rattles. Items made from tanned deer hide include: womens' leggings, quivers, and drum covers. It is believed that a tanned deer hide can be hung in a home to bring good luck. The antlers, droppings, and untanned hides of deer should not be touched by Diné children or adults because of cultural and ceremonial beliefs.



## MULE DEER IN THE CLASSROOM

Students should be taught to respect all living things with special emphasis made on those used for religious ceremonies. Mule deer can be discussed without reservation in the classroom. Field trips to the zoo are okay with parental permission. However, students should not have direct contact or come in close proximity to a deer. They can be used in arts and crafts, plays, poems, puppets, etc. Videos (entertainment and documentaries) are permissible.

# PORCUPINE • DAHSÁNÍ

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## PORCUPINES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The porcupine is a large, blackish colored rodent with an overlay of yellow tipped hairs. It is a gnawing animal with large orange teeth that continually grow throughout its life. The porcupine weighs about 10 to 28 pounds. It is a clumsy and slow moving animal with a deep red eye shine at night. It is most active at night, but may be seen during the day, especially in the tops of trees. The porcupine feeds on the buds, small twigs, and inner bark of trees. It is also fond of salt.

The porcupine finds shelter in hollow trees or natural cavities in rocks. It does not hibernate and remains active all winter. It climbs awkwardly but is more at home in trees than on the ground. It is solitary in summer, but may be colonial in winter.

When a porcupine is born it is furry, the eyes are open, and the quills are about 1/4 inch long. The quills are soft at birth but become hard and effective within minutes. The porcupine makes a variety of sounds including grunts, groans and high pitched cries.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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The porcupine can be eaten. Children should not handle or bother porcupines. Adults can handle the porcupine. Quills should be burned and disposed of, and should not be kept for any reason. Porcupines appear in the Winter Stories of the Diné.



## PORCUPINES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Porcupines can be discussed in the classroom. Videos can be shown, porcupines can be talked about, and other activities about porcupines can be used.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Haile, B. (1984). *Navajo coyote tales*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Platero, L., Menning, E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane': Navajo children's literature* (Vol.11). Albuquerque, NM. Native American Materials Development Center.

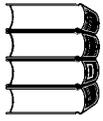
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# TURKEY • TAZHII

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

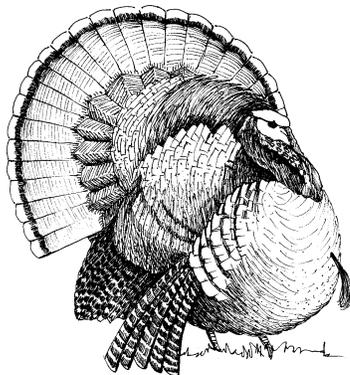
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Roessel, R. Jr. & Platero, D. (1974). *Coyote stories of the Navajo people*. Phoenix, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center Press.

Rucki, A. (1992). *Turkey's gift to the people*. Flagstaff, AZ: Northland Publishing.

Platero, L. Menning, E. & Benally, R. (1984). *Átchíní bá hane': Navajo children's literature* (Vol.11). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.



## WILD TURKEYS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Turkeys live in the ponderosa pine forests of the Chuska Mountains and Defiance Plateau. In winter, when snow is deep in the mountains they move down to the lower part of the forest and into the pinõn juniper woodland. Turkeys like to feed in meadows on grass and weed seeds, grasshoppers and other insects. In fall and winter they eat acorns and pinõn nuts. When the Anasazi lived in the area, they raised turkeys to make feather blankets.

Male turkeys are a little larger, stockier and have darker feathers than the females. The male turkey is called a gobbler because of the sound it makes during the spring breeding season. The female turkey, or hen, lays 10 to 14 eggs in springtime in a nest built on the ground, often near the base of a large tree or log that is sheltered from bad weather and hidden from predators. Baby turkeys are called poults. Turkeys communicate with each other by making clucking noises that sound similar to chickens. They are excellent flyers. They will fly to avoid predators and also to their roost site each night which is usually in the top of a large conifer tree.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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In Diné culture the turkey is a very important and sacred bird. In the Emergence Story of Diné Culture, the People and other beings were traveling up to the Glittering (Fourth World) as the flood waters rose behind them. Turkey was the last being to emerge into the Fourth World. The flood waters were so close behind Turkey, that the tips of its tail feathers dipped into the foam, and that is why, today, the turkey has white tipped tail feathers.

The turkey is considered food and is eaten as food by people all over the world. Wild turkeys are hunted by the Diné only to be eaten as food. In Diné culture, Turkey brought seeds and kernels to the Fourth world. These seeds were planted by the People and there was an abundance of melons, squashes, corn, beans, etc. All parts of the turkey are used in various ceremonies. Feathers, claws, and wattles are used in both female and male ceremonies. Turkey plays a part in the Shoe Game Songs and Winter Stories.



## TURKEYS IN THE CLASSROOM

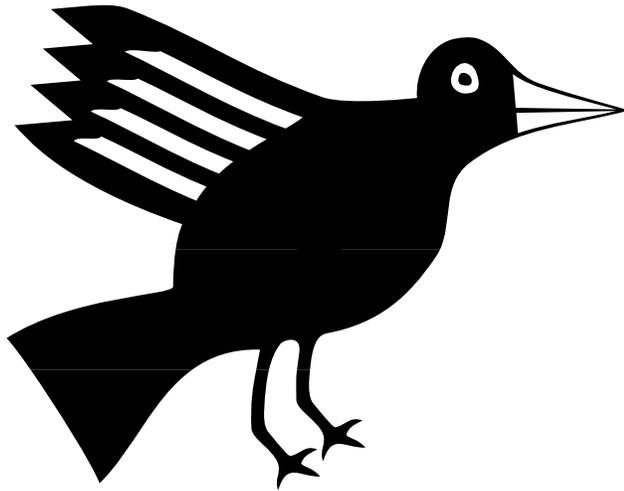
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Wild turkeys are not to be kept as pets. Turkey feathers should be handled with caution by adults only because they can cause skin disorders. Some people have domestic turkeys as pets, or raise domestic turkeys for food. A (poult) domestic turkey can be brought into a classroom for show and tell. Pictures, slides, and videos of wild turkeys can be shown in the classroom. Wild turkeys can be viewed in the zoo. The first Thanksgiving story can be shared in the classroom as children's literature.

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SKY

YÁ





# BAT • JAA'ABANÍ



## BATS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

The Navajo Nation is home to 19 species of bats. They range in color from brown to silver and yellow. Bat ear size ranges from large to very small. Their tails are mostly enclosed in a large flap of skin extending to their feet; several species have a small section of tail extending beyond this skin. All bats on the Navajo Nation have sharp toe nails that they use to cling to rocky ledges at roost sites. Most bats have only one offspring each year, although occasionally they will have twins. Bats mate in the late fall and the young are born in the spring.

All bats that live on the Navajo Nation eat insects - the Pallid Bat also eats scorpions or desert centipedes that it catches on the ground. Although bats are really not blind, they rely primarily on their hearing, using a specialized hearing and vocalization system to navigate the night sky and locate prey, called “echolocation.”

Bats are the only mammals with true flight. Unlike other “flying mammals” such as the flying squirrels, which are really gliders, bats are able to fly without wind and do not have to rely on gliding. Western pipistrelle (the smallest bat in North America) flies and hunts in the early evening, and may be seen flying in canyonlands before dark.



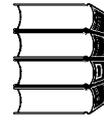
## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Bats are used in ceremonies and sand paintings. They appear in winter stories which help to explain why bats look the way they do. According to Diné legend the bat’s head was formed by taking the head of the coyote and placing it over his own. To this day the bat’s head resembles the coyote’s. The bat plays a role in the Emergence stories and in the Shoe Game.



## BATS IN THE CLASSROOM

When you are teaching about wildlife, bats can be talked about. Discussions and research of cultural differences about bats in various parts of the Diné Nation is encouraged. Field trips to the zoo or forest to attempt to see bats, while encouraged, should only be done with parental permission. Students can draw pictures of bats. Students should never handle bats, and if visiting caves they should stand outside and watch the bats emerge. Students should never go to bat caves without adult supervision. Teachers can teach about bats throughout the year, but should only teach about the cultural aspects during the winter, along with the Shoe Game.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Johnson, C. (1977). *Southwest Mammals: Navajo beliefs and legends*. Blanding, UT: San Juan School District.

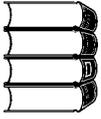
Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Rinard, J. (1977). *Creatures of the night*. National Geographic Society.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane’: The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Press.

# BLUEBIRD • DÓLII

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. Blanding, UT: San Juan School District.

Hayes, J. (1983). *Coyote-Native American folk tales*. Sante Fe, NM: Mariposa Publishing.

Yazzie, D. (Ed. (1970). *Navajo music for classroom enrichment*. Chinle, AZ: Navajo Curriculum Center.



## BLUEBIRDS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Western bluebirds and Mountain bluebirds can be found in open woodlands, farm lands, and mountains throughout the Navajo Nation. The male Western bluebird has a deep blue purplish head, neck and back with reddish flanks, while the Mountain bluebird is all blue. The female has a more grayish head and bluish back. The underside is rusty in color. Bluebirds nest in holes in trees and posts. Bluebirds are year-round residents (non-migratory) but may be absent during periods of extreme cold.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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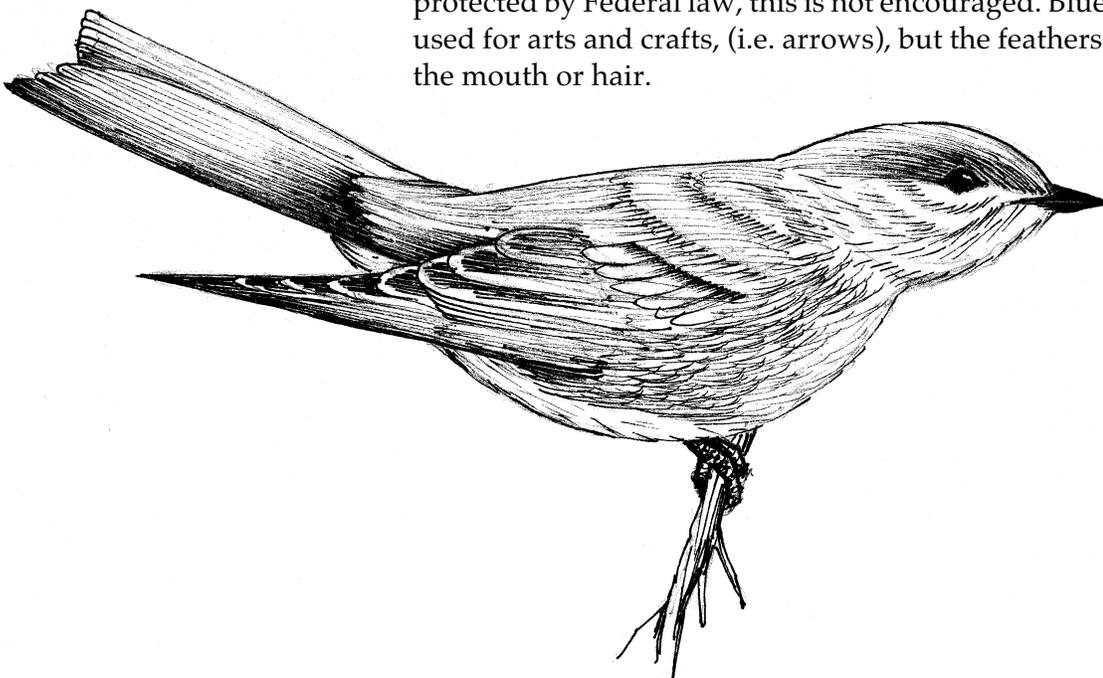
In Diné culture, the bluebird possesses positive spiritual strength. If it comes to your home or you hear it sing, it brings you prosperity. The bluebird represents the positive side of the Sky People, and is very sacred. Medicine men use it in ceremonies. Diné people value and treasure this bird very much because it is hard to find, especially by people who live away from the mountains. You should not harm bluebirds.



## BLUEBIRDS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Bluebirds may be used in art work, stories, songs, poems and other classroom activities. Also the building of bluebird houses is encouraged. Bluebirds may be brought into the classroom for study, but since they are protected by Federal law, this is not encouraged. Bluebird feathers may be used for arts and crafts, (i.e. arrows), but the feathers should not be put in the mouth or hair.



# BLUE JAY • JOOGII DOOTŁ'IZHII

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## BLUE JAYS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Three species of jays occur on the Navajo Nation. The pinõn and scrub jays are large (10-11 inches) light blue colored birds. They often occur in noisy, gregarious groups. They have harsh calls and can be quite aggressive. The Stellar's jay is dark blue with a prominent crest on its head. It occurs in the higher mountain areas of the Navajo Nation. Jays are easily seen and identified by their large size, raucous calls and gregarious habits. They often frequent campsites, scavenging anything campers leave behind.

Jays lay their eggs in a large cup shaped nest made from plant material and feathers. They lay two to six eggs and incubate them 13-15 days. The female incubates the eggs. The male brings her food while she is on the nest. Both parents care for the young. After hatching, chicks leave the nest in about three weeks.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (Ed.). (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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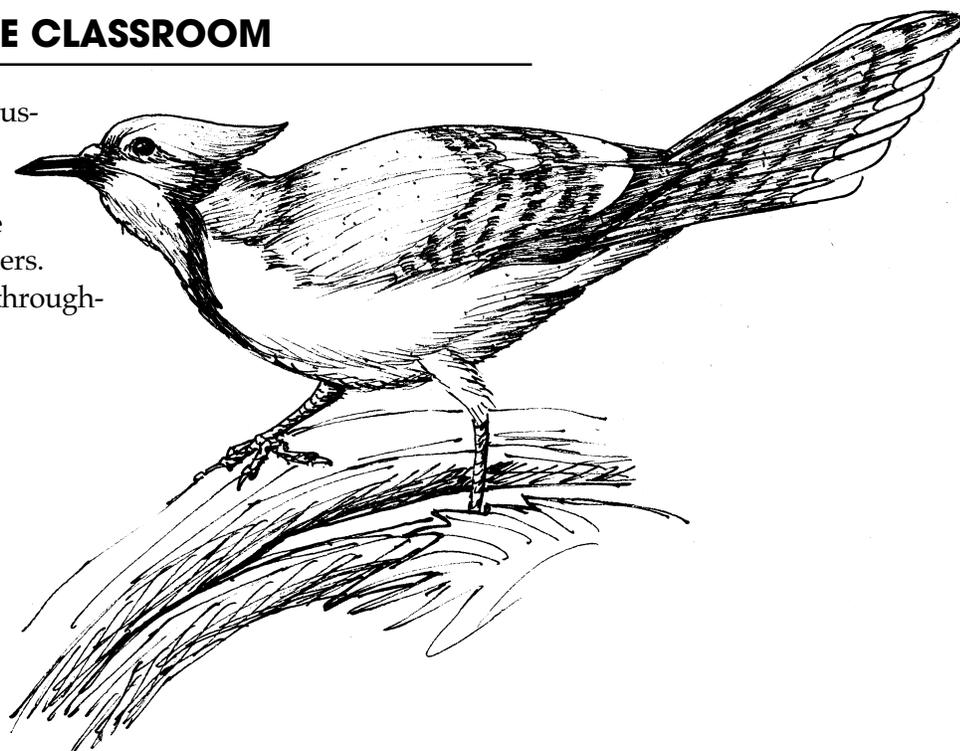
The blue jay is used in the Mountain Top Ceremony. The bird's crest represents a cap. The jay's feathers are shiny, and very colorful. The changing colors of the feathers can affect you in a positive or negative manner. It should not be killed except for a specific reason such as a ceremony. Blue jays should not be eaten.



## BLUE JAYS IN THE CLASSROOM

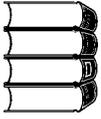
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When teaching about wildlife, discussion of blue jays is encouraged. Discussions can include: where they originated and the importance of the changing colors of the feathers. Pictures can be shown and drawn throughout the year.



# BUTTERFLY • K'AALÓGII

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Baylor, B. (1972). *Clay sings*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Benally, M. (1986). *Wódiít'ooí*. Fort Defiance, AZ: Window Rock Unified School District Media Center.

Caduto, M. & Bruchac, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Native American animal stories*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Hausman, G. (Ed.). (1995). *How chipmunk got tiny feet*. Mexico: Harper Collins Publishers.



## BUTTERFLIES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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There are many different species of butterflies on the Navajo Nation. Butterflies are insects which have a special life cycle that involve distinct stages. The adult stage, the “butterfly” as we know it, is the winged and frequently colorful form which feeds on the nectar of flowers. The wings are covered with tiny scales that rub off in the hand like powder. Butterflies lay their eggs on plants, usually on the underside of leaves, where they hatch into the caterpillar stage. Caterpillars are worm-like creatures with legs. Unlike their parents, they eat leaves with their chewing mouth parts. Before becoming an adult the caterpillars change shape in the pupal stage that may remain dormant until the next spring, when warm weather causes their transformation to the butterfly stage to start the cycle anew. Butterflies are mostly active during the day, unlike the related moths, which are primarily nocturnal.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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A mountain west of Albuquerque (K'aalógii Dziil) is considered a female butterfly mountain because it brings peace to a person. When you catch a butterfly you can rub the wing scales on your body to feel peaceful, or on your legs to capture the swiftness of a butterfly. Butterfly scales rubbed on female livestock will help them produce healthy, beautiful young.



## BUTTERFLIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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In the classroom butterflies can be handled but should not be harmed or killed. They should not be kept or confined as part of a class project. Metamorphosis of butterflies can be illustrated and discussed, and you can read, tell stories, and show videos about butterflies.



# CROW AND RAVEN

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CROW • GÁAGII AŁCHINÍ

RAVEN • GÁAGII



## **CROWS AND RAVENS ON THE NAVAJO NATION**

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Both ravens and crows are found on the Navajo Nation. Ravens are found throughout all habitats on the Navajo Nation and are more common than crows. It has a heavy bill, wedge shaped tail, and flaps its wings less than the crow. The crow is much less common than the raven and is found in a wide variety of habitats. The crow also has a heavy bill but it is noticeably smaller than the raven's. The fan-shaped tail of the raven distinguishes it from crows in flight.



## **CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

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The Diné people consider the crow/raven an unclean bird because it eats dead carcasses. The shedding from the skin of the crow or raven is considered harmful if it comes in contact with the skin. The raven head and beak are used in the Enemy Way Ceremonies. Only a young maiden may kill the raven to be used in the ceremony. Crow feathers are burned and used for the blackening of a patient during the Enemy Way ceremony. The Winged Creature stories are usually told in the winter time. Crows and ravens should not be eaten.



## **CROWS AND RAVENS IN THE CLASSROOM**

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Crows and ravens should not be handled in the classroom and their feathers should not be used for demonstration. Videos, films, books and magazines about crows and ravens are acceptable for classroom use. Illustrations may be drawn and puppets of crows and ravens created to compare their similarities and differences.



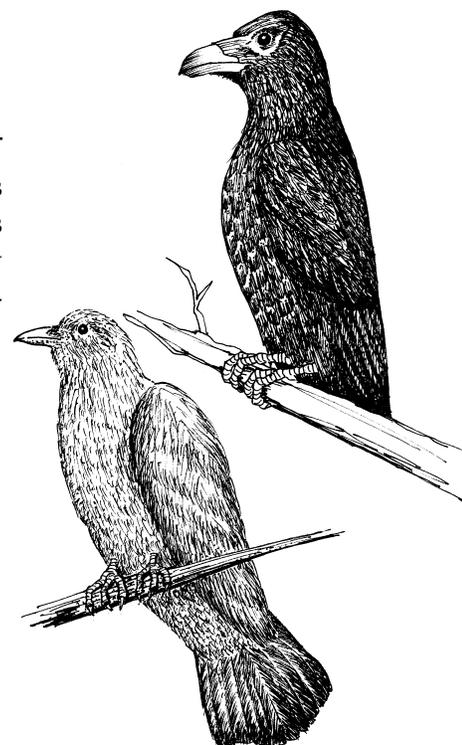
## **TEACHER RESOURCES**

Caduto, M. & Bruchac J. (Eds.). (1992). *Native American animal stories*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

McDermott, G. (1993). *Raven*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & CO.

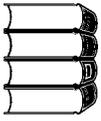
Severson, L. (1991). *Thematic unit: Native Americans*. Huntington Beach, CA: Teacher Created Materials, Inc.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.



# DUCK • NAAL'EEŁÍ

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Erdoes, R. & Ortiz, A. (Eds.). (1984). *American Indian myths and legends*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Jacobs, B. (1986). *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi reservations*. Sycamore, MO: Jacobs Publishing Co.



## DUCKS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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At least six species of ducks breed on the lakes and ponds of the Navajo Nation; while approximately 15 species use the waterways during spring and fall migrations. One species that breeds in limited numbers is the ring-necked duck, which flies swiftly and its wing beats are rapid. It has a black breast, back and wing, and gray sides. The black head appears angular rather than rounded. The female's call is described as a soft "purring growl." The feet and neck are gray-blue.

Ring-necked ducks are known to breed in a few small isolated breeding colonies off the Navajo Nation. However, they do occasionally stop on large lakes to rest and feed. The ducks feed in shallow water (usually less than 6 feet). They feed on leaves, stems and root stalks of pond weeds and will also eat snails.

Ring-necked ducks nest in marshes, particularly favoring those at least partially surrounded by wooded vegetation. A few flattened plants provide the base for the first eggs, but not until about the sixth egg does the nest assume a cup shape. Some down is then added. Seven to nine eggs are laid. Young ducks can dive into the water when only a few days old.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Ducks are one of the most harmless groups of animals on earth. They can be hunted and consumed by people unless these activities are restricted by a medicine man. The feathers are used in many arts and crafts. Some Navajos believe expectant parents should not eat duck.



## DUCKS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Ducks can be illustrated in the classroom. They can be used in arts and crafts activities. Ducks can be kept as pets, and students can feed them. They should not be harmed. You should never put a duck feather in your mouth or wear duck feathers in your hair.



# EAGLE • ATSÁ



## EAGLES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

The golden eagle is a large bird of prey which prefers to live on high cliffs or volcanic plugs where man and animal cannot access the large nest. The wing span of a female eagle is about six and one-half feet to seven feet. While perched at the side of her nest, the female eagle stands about two and one-half to three and one-half feet high. The golden eagle is dark brown in color with speckled white tail feathers. The talons are very powerful hunting tools which are used to capture black-tailed jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, prairie dogs, snakes, and sometimes even small lambs or goats.

The eagle may have more than one nest in its territory but will only repair one each season before laying one to three eggs. The nest is four to six feet wide and two to three feet deep. The golden eagle is a powerful bird and has eyesight much keener than a human's. It is protected by several different laws (Navajo Endangered Species Code, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Eagle Protection Act); to harm or harass this animal is against the law and comes with fines and penalties.

The Bald Eagle is another large raptor (bird with grasping talons) that mainly lives around lakes and rivers with large fish, and waterfowl, the bald eagle's primary foods. There are no known breeding areas on the Navajo Nation, however bald eagles do migrate through the Navajo Nation and sometimes winter near Red Lake, Black Lake, San Juan River, Lake Powell or the Little Colorado River. The bald eagle stands about three and one-fourth to three and three-fourths feet and its wing span is seven to eight feet wide. It prefers to nest in large cottonwood trees which provide a commanding view of a lake or river. The bald eagle is protected by the Eagle Protection Act, Navajo Endangered Species Code and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. To harm or harass this animal is against the law and comes with fines and penalties.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Eagles are very sacred in Navajo culture. The eagle's life stages are used as names of the months: Atsá Biyaázh and Wóózhch'íí́d (February and March). Eagles are said to have both bad and good magical powers. All parts of the eagle are used in various Navajo ceremonies. Parts of the eagle may also be used in curing ills and diseases. Students should not watch eagles eat or feed them. You can keep an eagle feather only after it is blessed properly.



## EAGLES IN THE CLASSROOM

The "blessed" feathers can be viewed and touched. There are various books on eagles which can be read to students. Seasonal stories about eagles may be read or told to the children. Since there is a law prohibiting the possession of any eagle parts, live eagles are not allowed in the classroom and it is culturally wrong to bring a live eagle into the classroom. It is okay for students to watch a video of eagles eating. The drawing and painting of eagles and eagle dances, with parental consent, are okay for the classroom.

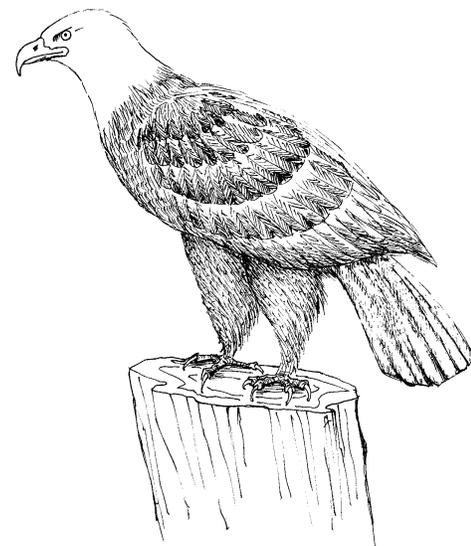


## TEACHER RESOURCES

Caduto, M. & Bruchac, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Native American animal stories*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Fenady, A. (1984). *Claws of the eagle*. New York: Walker & Co.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.



# GOLDFINCH • TSÍDIIŁTSOOÍ

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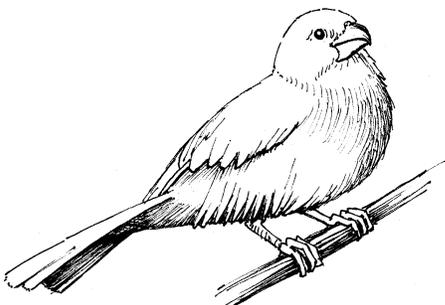


## TEACHER RESOURCES

Jacobs, B. (1986). *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi reservations*. Sycamore, MO: Jacobs Publishing Co.

Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Press.



## GOLDFINCHES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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There are actually two species of goldfinches on the Navajo Nation, the Lesser and the American, but the American is only a winter resident here. The American goldfinch is the most colorful, with males showing bright yellow coloration with black patches on the head, wings, and tail feathers. The females are less colorful with brown coloration on the head and back. Their food consists primarily of seeds and small insects, gleaned from grass fields and roadsides where these birds are most commonly seen. Four to six blue to greenish-blue eggs are laid in a nest constructed in shrubs or trees, often near water. Goldfinches are unique among summer nesting birds in that the young in the nest are fed seeds instead of insects. As winter arrives, Lesser goldfinches migrate south from the Navajo Nation, while American Goldfinches may be found here during winter.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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In Diné culture Goldfinches (Yellow Birds) were considered the Yellow Bird People and were known to have come into existence in the Yellow World (Third World) before the Emergence. It is still today the traditional belief that the Yellow Bird People were placed in the West direction by the Holy People. This is the reason songs and prayers of Goldfinches (Yellow Birds) are included in the prayers and songs of certain ceremonies.

Goldfinch feathers are used as offerings in certain ceremonies. The “pol-len” (dustings) of the goldfinch can be collected and used on domestic animals like horses, sheep, or cows, so they will produce yellowish colored young. It can also be used on a pregnant lady to help her have a beautiful baby with light colored hair.



## GOLDFINCHES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Goldfinches cannot be harmed or killed for any reason, nor can they be kept as classroom pets. The feathers should not be collected or kept. Goldfinches can be brought into classrooms for show and tell but only by legally authorized individuals since they are protected by federal law. Photos, slides and videos of goldfinches can be shown in the classroom, and they can be drawn, colored, and reproductions made using paper plates, construction paper, etc.

# GREAT HORNED OWL • N É'ÉSHJAA'



## GREAT HORNED OWLS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Owls are mainly nocturnal (active at night). Great horned owls are usually found nesting in pinõn-juniper or ponderosa pine areas in trees or caves or on cliffs. They can take prey as large as skunks, small birds (including other owls), snakes, and squirrels. Great horned owls can live for 15 years or more. They are the largest owl found on the Navajo Nation with a wing span of nearly five foot. Their call is three to eight loud hoots.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

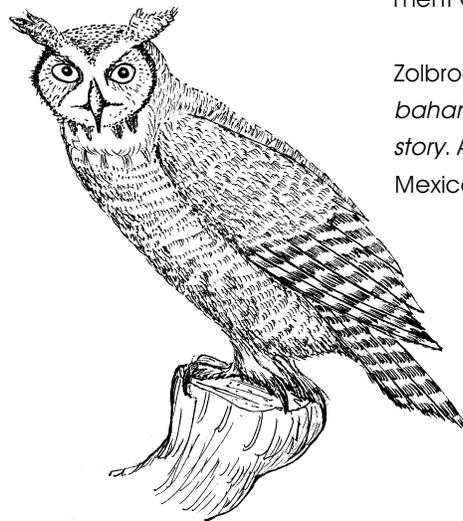
In Navajo oral history it is believed that in the Third World a flying dinosaur bird was born near Shiprock, Arizona. The mother and father of Great Bird were killed by the Monster Slayer. It was learned that Great Bird had two children who were brought down to the ground. One baby bird was made into an eagle, and the other baby bird into an owl.

It is believed that the owl is a messenger of a good and bad spirit. When an owl crosses your path, it is giving you a warning. If you do not adhere to its warning with an offering, bad things could happen. It is also believed that you don't put any feathers, such as the owl's, in your mouth because it will cause terminal illness. Don't keep birds such as owls as pets, because the dander from bird feathers will cause terminal illness over time. Owls should not be harmed without a reason.



## GREAT HORNED OWLS IN THE CLASSROOM

Owls can be talked about and pictures can be drawn and displayed. Discussion of cultural beliefs about owls are encouraged.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Begay, K. & Willink, R. (1974). In M. Thomas (Ed.). *Winter Shoe game songs: DBA winter workshop '73* St. Michaels, AZ: St. Michael's Press.

Craven, M. (1973). *I heard the owl call my name*. New York: Doubleday & Company.

Hausman, G. (Ed.). (1986). *Meditations with animals*. Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co.

Yazzie, E. (Ed.). (1971). *Navajo history*. Many Farms, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.

Yazzie, L. (1984). The killing of the owl. In E. Ciccarello (Ed.) *Átchíní bá hane': Navajo children's literature (Vol.1)*. Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Press.

# HUMMINGBIRD • DAHIITÍHÍ

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Callaway, S. (1974). *Grandfather stories of the Navajos*. Rough Rock, AZ: O'Sullivan Woodside and Company.

Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Press.



## HUMMINGBIRDS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Hummingbirds are small specialized birds, adapted to feeding on the nectar produced by flowers. Rapidly beating wings allow them to hover about flowers and insert their long beaks into the flower to get nectar. They are most commonly seen in fields of wildflowers, and are especially attracted to red and blue colors. In addition to nectar, they also eat large numbers of small insects.

Two species of hummingbirds, the broad-tailed and black-chinned, are residents on the Navajo Nation and have similar habits. They occur in a variety of habitats, wherever there are enough flowers to provide nectar for food. Both males and females have shiny green backs and heads, but the males have red or purple chins and throats, while the females lack this coloration. The female lays two tiny eggs in a small nest in the late spring or early summer and the young hatch in June. Adult hummingbirds, which are no more than three inches long, are very territorial, chasing others away from their territory while uttering a high-pitched chattering noise.

In late September, as the blooms of flowering plants fade, hummingbirds migrate to southern Arizona and Mexico for the winter.

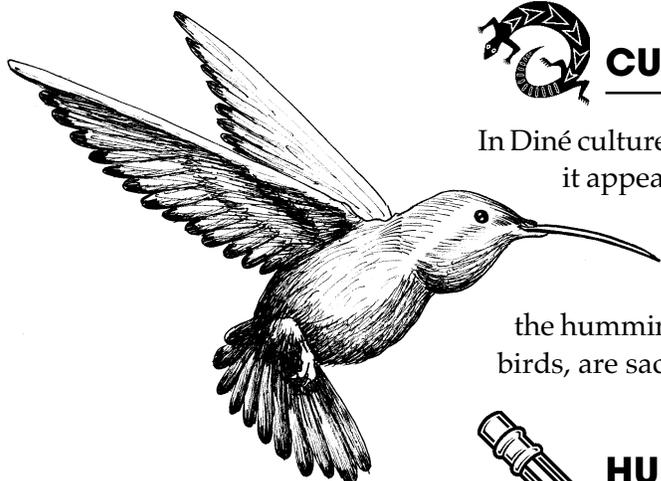


## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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In Diné culture the hummingbird is believed to live in the cleanest air. When it appears at your home, it brings messages from the bird and animal people that they need offerings of pollen or sacred stones.

The only time you should catch a hummingbird is when it actually comes into your home. If this does happen, give the hummingbird an offering and then release it. Hummingbirds, like all birds, are sacred and should not be harmed or mistreated in any way.



## HUMMINGBIRDS IN THE CLASSROOM

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You can talk about hummingbirds as a lesson in the classroom. You can also show pictures, film strips, and videos about hummingbirds. It is also okay for students to read about hummingbirds, draw or color pictures of them, or actually make hummingbirds out of paper plates and construction paper for display in the classroom. You can also put up hummingbird feeders near a window so students can observe them.

# MAGPIE • II'Á'II

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## MAGPIES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The black-billed magpie is so named because of its black and white markings. The white wing patches are especially obvious and can be seen during flight. Black-billed magpies also have an unusually long tail and iridescent green highlights. They are a striking and easily identified bird. On the Navajo Nation, magpies are commonly found along the San Juan River, Chinle Valley, Chuska Dam area, Red Lake, and Red Valley.

Areas inhabited by magpies are usually along water courses in open woodlands, and thickets in rangelands and foothills. Their natural diet consists of arthropods, but they will take advantage of scraps thrown out of a house, and can often be found in farm areas around corn patches.

Magpies have a loud, noisy call consisting of “mag” and “chuck.” They nest in the “V” of a tree branch. The nest is about a foot in diameter and six to ten inches deep. This bird is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and should not be harassed or harmed.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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The magpie is considered sacred because of its special song. This song is used in the Male Shooting Way with the Blackening Ceremony. The tail feathers of the magpie are generally used as fans. Magpies should not be used as pets nor be caged.



## MAGPIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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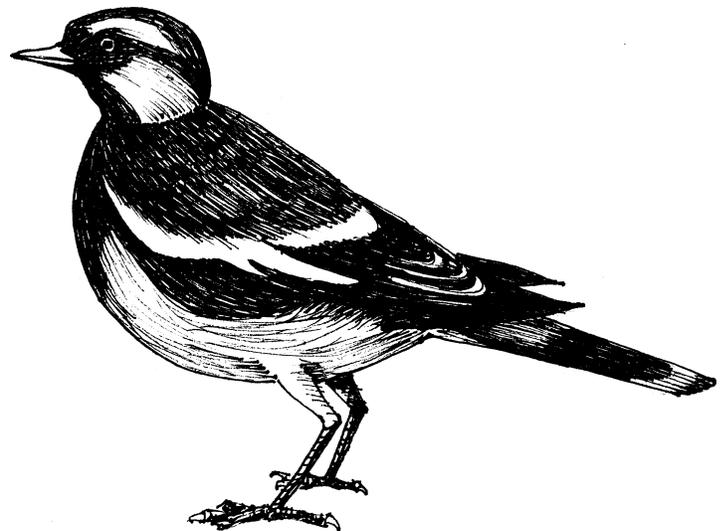
Magpies can be used in lessons and activities and can be drawn and colored. They also can be used as sounds in music activities, since their Diné name is derived for the sounds they make.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Charley, N. (1973). The magpie. In M. Thomas (Ed.), *Winter shoe game songs: DBA winter workshop '73* (pp. 38-39). St. Michaels, AZ: St. Michael's Press.

Jacobs, B. (1986). *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi reservations*. Sycamore, MO: Jacobs Publishing Co.



# MOCKINGBIRD • ZAHALÁNII

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Haile, B. (1979). *Waterway: a Navajo ceremonial* (Vol.V). Flagstaff, AZ: Museum of Northern Arizona Press.

Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.



## MOCKINGBIRDS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Mockingbirds inhabit grassy lowlands, mesas and mountainous ranges of the Navajo Nation. They are easily identified by their gray bodies and large white patches on the wings and tail. Mockingbirds lay three to six blue-green eggs in nests hidden in shrubs and coniferous trees. Male mockingbirds sing from high perches to defend territories. Their songs often mimic that of other birds, or even other sounds such as a cat meowing or a car horn. Mockingbirds feed on insects. They are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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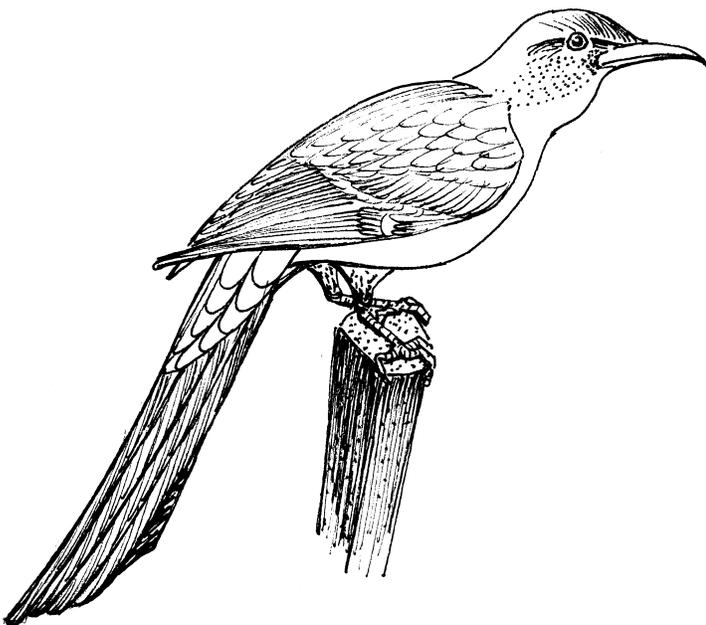
The mockingbird is sacred in Diné culture. In the Creation Story, Mockingbird was a messenger between the Holy People and Earth People. Traditional medicine men can sprinkle corn pollen on a baby mockingbird, and the dusting (baḡah nanoogáád) is then collected and put on a young child to help him/her become an energetic person. Mockingbirds should not be domesticated or caged, since they represent children of all walks of life, peace, and harmony. They are admired and praised for their ability to imitate sounds of different animals and their ability to tune their voice to different sound levels.



## MOCKINGBIRDS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Pictures of mockingbirds can be displayed and drawn. It is permissible to discuss the mockingbird's ability to mimic birds and other sounds.



# MOTH • 'IICH'ĀHII

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## MOTHS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Moths are very similar to butterflies in their life cycles (see Butterflies). Moths spin a cocoon when the caterpillar stage is ready to become dormant before becoming an adult. Almost all moths are nocturnal (active at night), while most butterflies are diurnal (active during the day). Moths help pollinate many night blooming plants. The hawk moth feeds on nectar produced by the large, white flowers of jimson weed (*Datura*) and thus pollinates the plant.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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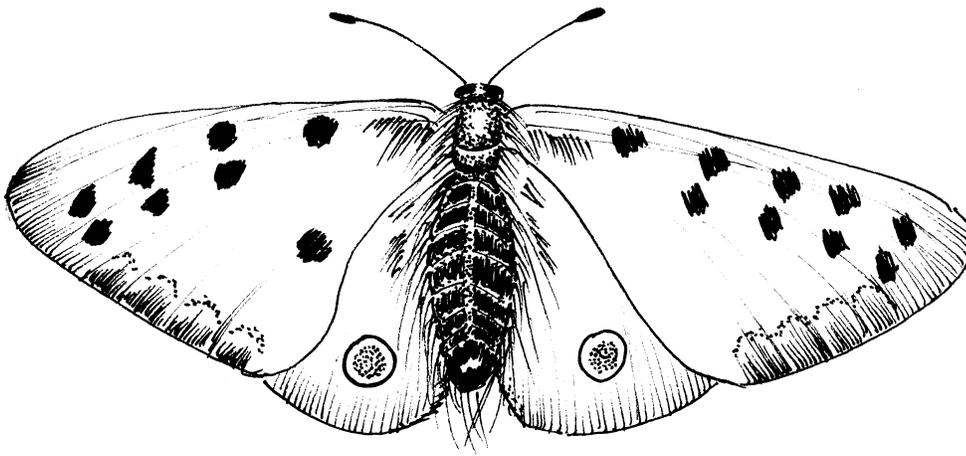
Clanship teachings consider moths sacred and dangerous. They play an important role in traditional family behavior. In Diné culture moths represent incest. Do not handle moths, but they can be killed in and around the house. Discard food or water that a moth has landed in.



## MOTHS IN THE CLASSROOM

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It is okay to teach the life cycle of the moth with pictures, diagrams, and drawings, read stories about moths, and study their physical structure. However, do not dissect them or keep them as classroom pets.



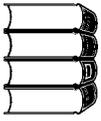
## TEACHER RESOURCES

Hogner, D. (1964). *Moths*.  
New York: Thomas V. Crowell  
Co.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné  
bahane': The Navajo creation  
story* Albuquerque, NM: Univer-  
sity of New Mexico Press.

# MOURNING DOVE • HASBÍDÍ

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## TEACHER RESOURCES

Jacobs, B. (1986). *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi reservations*. Sycamore, MO: Jacobs Publishing Co.

Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Zolbrood, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.



## MOURNING DOVES ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The mourning dove is a common bird found throughout the Navajo Nation. Its name comes from the mournful cooing sound made by the males during the breeding season. The bird is a light brownish-gray above, pale buff-color below, and the wings are dark with black spots along the sides. They have a light blue eye ring, and a very long central tail feather with sharply tapered white-tipped outer tail feathers. Mourning doves build their nests of loosely constructed twigs on a limb of a tree, low bush, or on the ground.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Feathers of the mourning dove are not used, and it is forbidden to touch the bird or its feathers. It is believed that if it is touched, one will get boils on the skin.



## MOURNING DOVES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Students can study about mourning doves in all kinds of activities. They should not bring the bird or the feathers into the classroom.



# POOR-WILL • HOOSHÓDII

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## POOR-WILLS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The common poor-will, whose song is whistled “poor will,” is found in sagebrush and coniferous woodlands. Poorwills are night hunters, opening their wide mouths while in flight to “funnel” in insects. During the day they roost on the ground or rest lengthwise along low tree branches. The poor-will does not build a nest. Instead, the eggs are laid in an open site on the ground on a bed of dead leaves. The whip-poor-will, a closely related species, breeds in central and southeastern Arizona and derives its name from its loud song “whip-poor-will.”



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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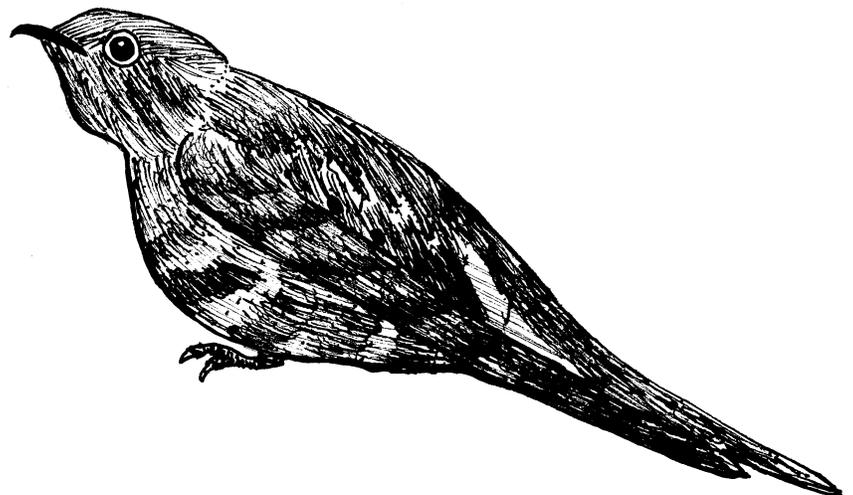
The Diné associate poor-wills with owls. If you hear a poor-will calling, a ceremony must be performed to neutralize the effect. If the population of poor-wills increases near a Diné home it may bring bad luck. Poor-wills should not be kept for pets, or touched or bothered. The person that does touch a poor-will may end up with boils.



## POOR-WILLS IN THE CLASSROOM

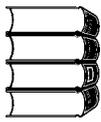
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It is okay to use literature, pictures, video, or films about poor-wills in the classroom. Skins or feathers should not be brought into the classroom.



# RED-TAILED HAWK • ATSEEŁTSOOÍ

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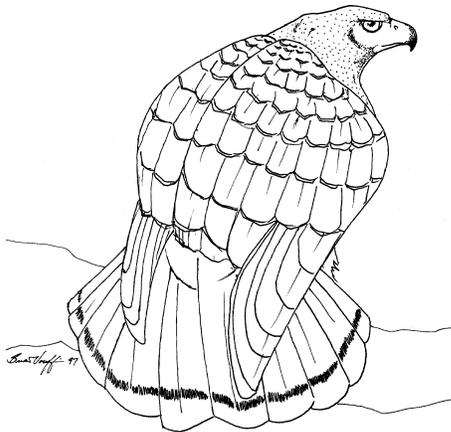


## TEACHER RESOURCES

Hausman, G. (Ed.). (1995). *How chipmunk got tiny feet*. Mexico: Harper Collins Publishers.

Jacobs, B. (1986). *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi reservations*. Sycamore, MO: Jacobs Publishing Co.

Zolbrod, P. (1984). *Diné bahane': The Navajo creation story*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.



## RED-TAILED HAWKS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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The red-tailed hawk is the common hawk seen throughout the Navajo Nation. The adult red-tail stands about one and three-fourths feet tall and has a wing span of four feet. The wings are broad and rounded for soaring on the slightest wind currents. There are several color phases of this bird, but most of the time red tail feathers can be seen, making it one of the easiest hawks to identify. Red-tailed hawks roost and nest on high, inaccessible cliffs or large trees with a commanding view of the surrounding area. Their nests are made of medium sized branches and are about two to three feet wide and six inches deep. Red-tails use warm air currents or “thermals” to soar very high above the ground. They then use their excellent eyesight (much keener than human’s) to spot small prey such as squirrels, chipmunks, mice, voles and even rabbits. The hawk swoops down silently and grasps its prey in its talons.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Feathers of the red-tailed hawk are used in ceremonies by medicine men. They are also used on arrows to enhance balance, direction and control. Three feathers are placed at the end of the arrow for accuracy, speed, and direction. The nests and eggs of red-tailed hawks must be left alone. The bird is not edible.



## RED-TAILED HAWKS IN THE CLASSROOM

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Discussions, literature, and stories about red-tailed hawks may be used in the classroom, along with videos and films about the bird. Pictures may also be drawn and colored. Feathers from these hawks cannot be used in art and craft activities.

# ROBIN • TÉÉLHALCHÍ'Í

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## ROBINS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

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Robins are summer visitors to the Navajo Nation, traveling south for the winter. They are most commonly seen in the woodlands and forests of the Navajo Nation. One of the largest of the songbirds, robins are gray-brown above with a darker head and tail, and a brick-red breast. They eat berries, insects and earth worms. Nests can be found in shrubs, trees, and even on sheltered window sills.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Robin feathers are used in some ceremonies. They are not considered edible. Killing a robin is forbidden. They hold the same place in Diné culture as other songbirds.



## ROBINS IN THE CLASSROOM

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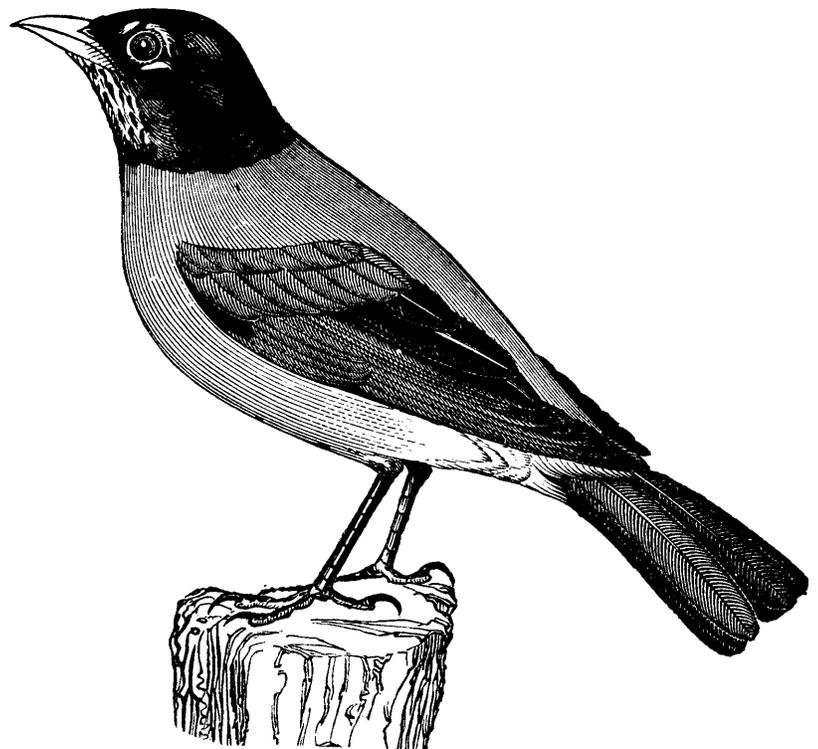
In the classroom the students can learn about robins with no restrictions. Videos and magazine pictures of robins can be shown and students can draw and color pictures of robins. Activities that enhance the students' learning of the life history of robins are encouraged.



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.

Jacobs, B. (1986). *Birding on the Navajo and Hopi reservations*. Sycamore, MO: Jacobs Publishing Co.



# WOODPECKER • TS<sup>o</sup>ŁKAAŁII



## TEACHER RESOURCES

Caduto, M. & Bruchac, J. (Eds.). (1992). *Native American animal stories*. Golden, CO.: Fulcrum Publishing.

DeGroat, J. (Team Coordinator). (1981). *Yáadilá!* (Book V). Albuquerque, NM: Native American Materials Development Center.

Mayo, G. (1994). *Here comes tricky rabbit*. New York: Walker and Company.

Newcomb, F. (1970). *Navajo bird tales*. Wheaton, IL: The Theosophical Publishing House.



## WOODPECKERS ON THE NAVAJO NATION

Woodpeckers have strong claws, short legs, and stiff tail feathers, all of which enable them to climb tree trunks. The characteristic strong bill is used to chisel out insect food and nest holes and to drum a territorial signal to rivals.

Sapsuckers are woodpeckers who drill evenly spaced rows of holes in trees, then repeatedly visit the “wells” for sap and insects to eat.

The Williamson’s sapsucker is common on the Navajo Nation inhabiting the mountain pine forests. The male has a black back, white rump, large white wing patch, black head with narrow white stripes, and a bright red chin and throat. The breast is black and the belly yellow. The flanks are barred with black and white. The female’s head is brown, with its wings and sides barred brown and white. The rump is white but the female lacks the white wing patch and red chin. The breast has a large dark patch with the belly varying in yellowness.

The Williamson’s sapsucker nests in holes excavated in the trunk of a conifer tree. Favorite trees are used often and repeatedly over the years, with a new hole drilled each time. Elevation of the nest can vary from five to fifty feet. Five to six eggs are laid in the nest.



## CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The feathers of the woodpecker are widely used in ceremonies, and thus are considered sacred. Woodpecker feathers are used in the Yé’ii Bi Cheii dances. If you want to keep and use the feathers you should wash them with yucca root and water.



## WOODPECKERS IN THE CLASSROOM

Do not kill a woodpecker needlessly. Do not use as a pet like a parrot or parakeet.

Students can read and write about woodpeckers, look at pictures, or view on films and videos and draw pictures. Students can compare and contrast woodpeckers with other birds. They can construct a bird kite or wind sock.

# WILDLIFE IN NAVAJO CULTURE WORKSHOP

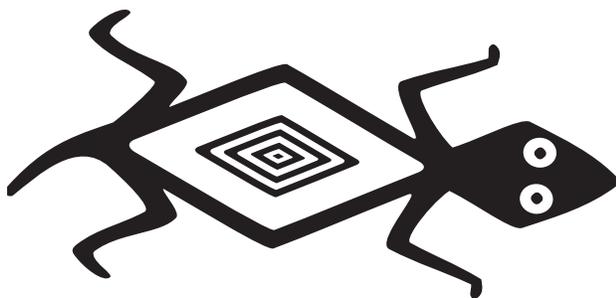
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JUNE 16-18, 1997

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

---

Dr. Marie Allen .....	Window Rock School District	Vernon Manuelito .....	Window Rock High School
Alvin Begay .....	Tse Ho Tso Middle School	Mike Mitchell .....	Medicine Man, Diné Nation
Ella Jackson-Begay .....	Window Rock High School	Dolly Manson-Montoya .....	Ganado Middle School
Marilyn Begay .....	Tse Ho Tso Middle School	Sally McCabe .....	Tuba City Elementary School
Victoria Begay .....	Fort Defiance Elementary School	Kathleen McCoy .....	Navajo Fish and Wildlife
Maggie Benally .....	Fort Defiance Elementary School	Jack Meyer .....	Navajo Fish and Wildlife
Nellie Billie .....	Smith Lake Elementary School	Art Nakaidinae .....	Diné Artist
Lucinda Bitsoi .....	Tohatchi High School	Rose Nofchissey .....	Tse Ho Tso Middle School
Dorothy Carson .....	Nataani Nez Elementary School	Diana Parrish .....	Kayenta School District
Emma Dixon .....	Fort Defiance Elementary School	Darlene Redhair .....	Diné Writer/Editor
Della Halwood .....	Chinle Kindergarten Center	Caleb Roanhorse .....	Ganado School District
Marie Chavez Herbert .....	Naschitti School	Ann Satran .....	Fort Defiance Elementary School
Grace Henry .....	Naschitti School	Elizabeth Silversmith .....	Bloomfield School District
Raymond Jim .....	Medicine Man, Diné Nation	Ella Shortey .....	Window Rock Elementary School
Gloria John .....	Northern Arizona University - UCAN	Peter Thomas .....	Diné Writer/Editor
Louise Johnson .....	Nataani Nez Elementary	Joan Thompson .....	Ganado Primary School
Filbert Kinlichee .....	Navajo Fish and Wildlife	Ruthie Thompson .....	Kayenta School District
Kellamay Kelly .....	Sawmill Primary School	Shirley Tolth .....	Borrego Pass Elementary School
Jack Jackson .....	Medicine Man, Diné Nation	Charlene Valentine .....	Navajo Fish and Wildlife
Lorene Legah .....	Diné College	Heidi Vasiloff .....	Arizona Game and Fish Department
Al LeCount .....	Wildlife Biologist/Facilitator	Helen Williams .....	Ganado School District
		Paul Williams Jr. ....	Ganado School District
		Marita Van Winkle .....	Ganado School District
		Debra Yazzie .....	Navajo Fish and Wildlife
		Dollie Yazzie .....	Tohatchi Elementary School
		Sadie Yazzie .....	Window Rock Elementary School
		Rose Yellowman .....	Chinle Kindergarten Center



# ADDITIONAL TEACHER RESOURCES

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## Children's Books On Places

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Diné Bikéyah Nizhóní Coloring Book

Colorful Arizona Book

The Navajo Forest

Navajo Chapters

Slippery Rock

Desert Wildlife of the Southwest

Coyote, the Millionaire

Rainbow Crow

Supper for Crow

Spider Spins a Story, Fourteen Legends from Native America

## Children's Books on Animals

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Creatures

Haye's Birds We Should Know

The Fox and The Wolf

The Neighbor's Dog

Billy Goat

The Giant and the Horned Toad

Mr. Goat's New Hogan

The Two Goats (with cassette tape)

The Black Ram (with cassette tape)

Coyote and Deer

Coyote and Crow

The Legend of the First Dog

The Dog Who Wanted A Home (with cassette tape)

The Lazy Donkey (with cassette tape)

The Grey Mare (with cassette tape)

Mountain Lion and Coyote

Sherry and the Underground Owl (with activity book/  
work book/ teachers addition)

When Animals Were Like People

How the Lizard Found the Sun

The Monkey, The Buzzard, and the Eagle

How Cats Were Made

## Locally Developed Materials for Children

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Rodeo is Navajo Stuff

Welcome to Fort Defiance

Old Coyote Stories

New Coyote Stories

Navajo Nation Fair

Coyote Stories

That's Spooky

Our School

Traditional Navajo Dress

Coyote Makes Snowman

Fry Bread Comics

