

2020-2021
INDIGENOUS
THEME:
SKYWORLD
TEACHINGS

February & *Matootisan*:

The Sweat Lodge

Corona Borealis



FEBRUARY STAR SIGHTINGS



It's still cold and snowy...but the days are slowly getting longer! Luckily, the night sky is still crisp and dark and always full of stars.

The next installment of our CDSBEO Indigenous Theme of *Skyworld* continues with Corona Borealis, but in our continued efforts to decolonize language, we will refer to this constellation in the language of the Cree people.

This constellation is called:
MATOOTISAN.



(The Sweat Lodge)

THE TIME TO TELL STORIES

"Traditional storytelling is reserved for the winter months... This was a practical choice given the fact that during the other seasons, people were busy growing, gathering, and hunting food. It was in the winter, with the long dark evenings, the snow and wind blowing outside, that telling stories was a way to entertain and teach" - Dennis Zotigh



Wilfred Buck's video "Orienteering With The Sky" is an account of when he found himself lost in the bush and used the sky to help him find his way home. It is a reminder of the powerful and important [Skyworld](#).

WHAT IS MATOOTISAN?

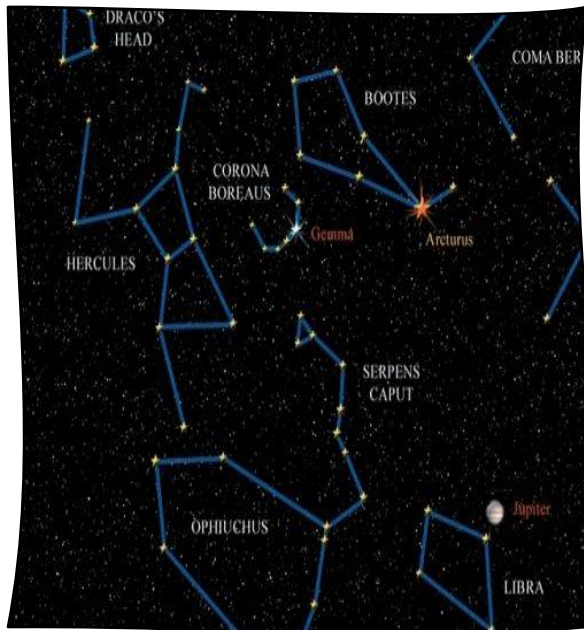
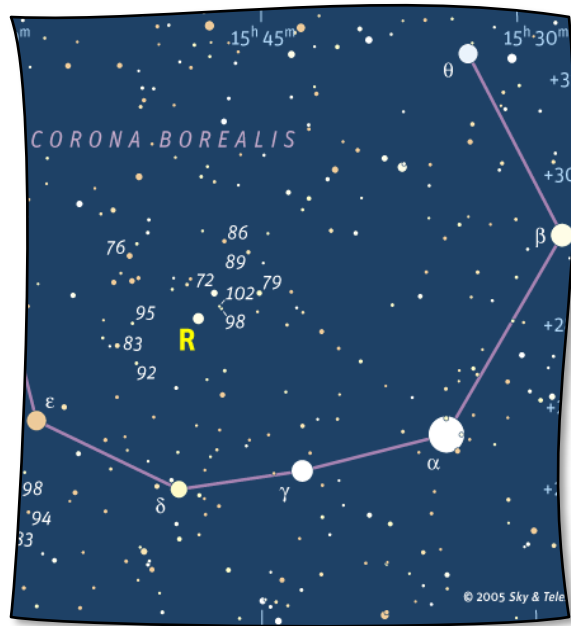
Wilfred Buck shares the story of the [Matootisan](#) from a Cree perspective in this short story:

[Wilfred Buck - The Story of Matootisan](#)



HOW CAN I FIND MATOOTISAN?

- It is not always easy to spot, as it is one of the smaller constellations, but is “an almost perfect semi-circle of stars” (Byrd) and once spotted, you know you’ve got it! It is located in the third quadrant of the northern hemisphere and can be seen at latitudes between +90° and -50°.
- Using the Great Bear (Big Dipper) as a starting point, “follow the curve of the handle to trace an arc to a pale orange star anchoring the bottom of a kite shape” (Manning). To the left of this kite, is the Northern Crown, the Sweat Lodge, *Matootisan*.

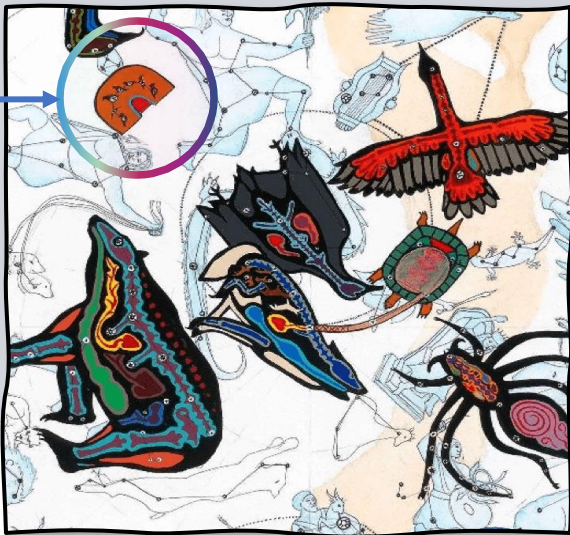


Fun Fact!

Matootisan's brightest star is a white sun, that is bigger and brighter than our own sun. It is located approximately 75 light-years away.

HOW CAN I CHRONICLE MATOOTISAN SIGHTINGS?

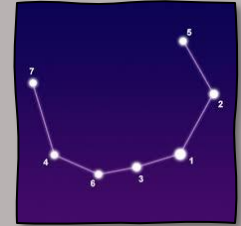
- Check out this Star Map – it contains First Nations names, and [Matootisan](#) is titled here under “Sweat Lodge.”
- Here’s a [Stargazing Chart](#) to map out your findings. Some of you might have already used this to chart your constellations.



A LITTLE MORE INFO...



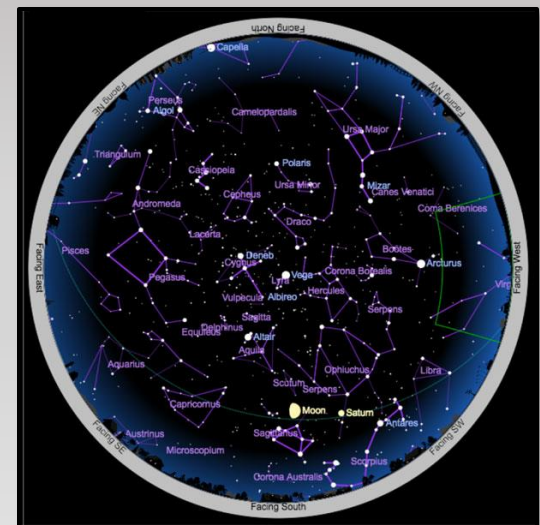
"...a very interesting little ring of stars" - Frank Dempsey



Frank Dempsey, an Ojibway astronomer, outlines his talk on constellations from an Indigenous perspective. See the article from 2014 here: [The Dark Skies From Plevna](#)

Activity for All!

Stargazing is one way to really give thanks to the universe. Here is a link to an [Interactive Sky Chart](#) and allows you to custom map the date, time and location of your viewing.



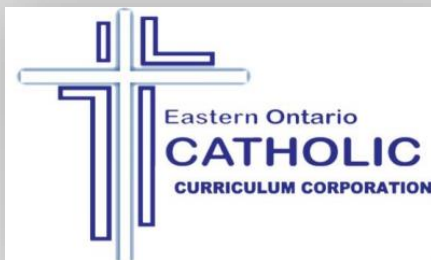


SOME CROSS-CURRICULAR RESOURCE OPTIONS

- A fun Art-Meets-Science activity for K-2 students. Follow some reminders on this site: [Galaxy Art](#) and have students create their own interpretation of Matootisan and neighboring constellations.
- Another great idea for our younger students is: [constellation crafts](#) where stars can be linked together into constellations of choice.



**Keep in mind that some recommended sites use colonized language, and it is encouraged to use the language reviewed in the [Skyworld](#) documents. A list of terms can be found on Slide 11 ☺
Thank you for supporting the decolonization of our classrooms!*

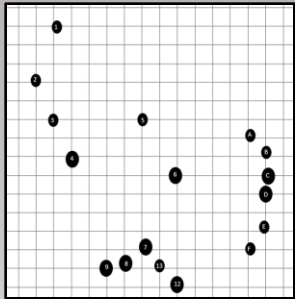


Here is a fantastic resource from EOCCC. Check out page 14 for [Symbolic Literacy](#) activity that is suitable for high school students. This connects art and literacy and explores the values and traditions of Indigenous art forms.

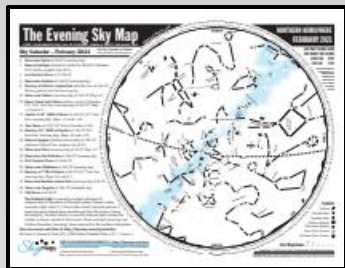
EXTRA INFO & RESOURCE REMINDERS



There are a few apps that can be handy for all sorts of stargazing. Students can use these on their own, or this can be used in a classroom setting. This [article](#) outlines two great options depending on level of interest and ability. (Repost from last month – these apps are just too good!)

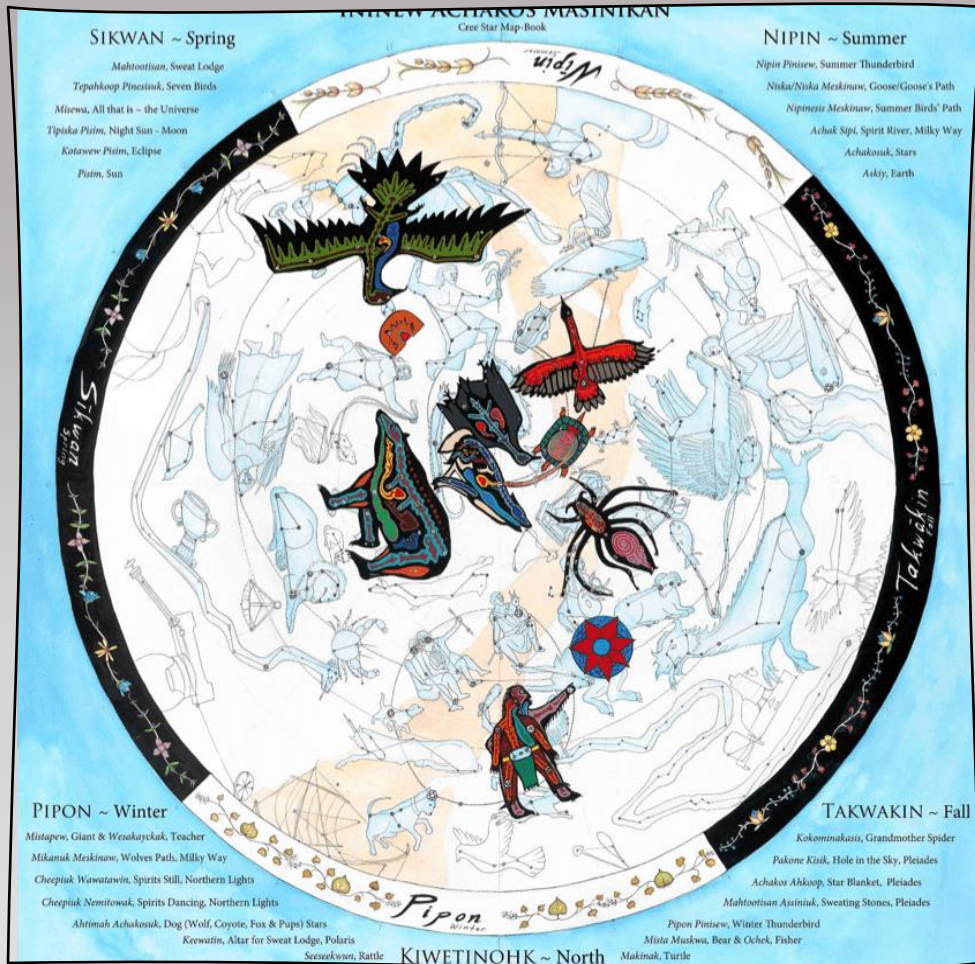
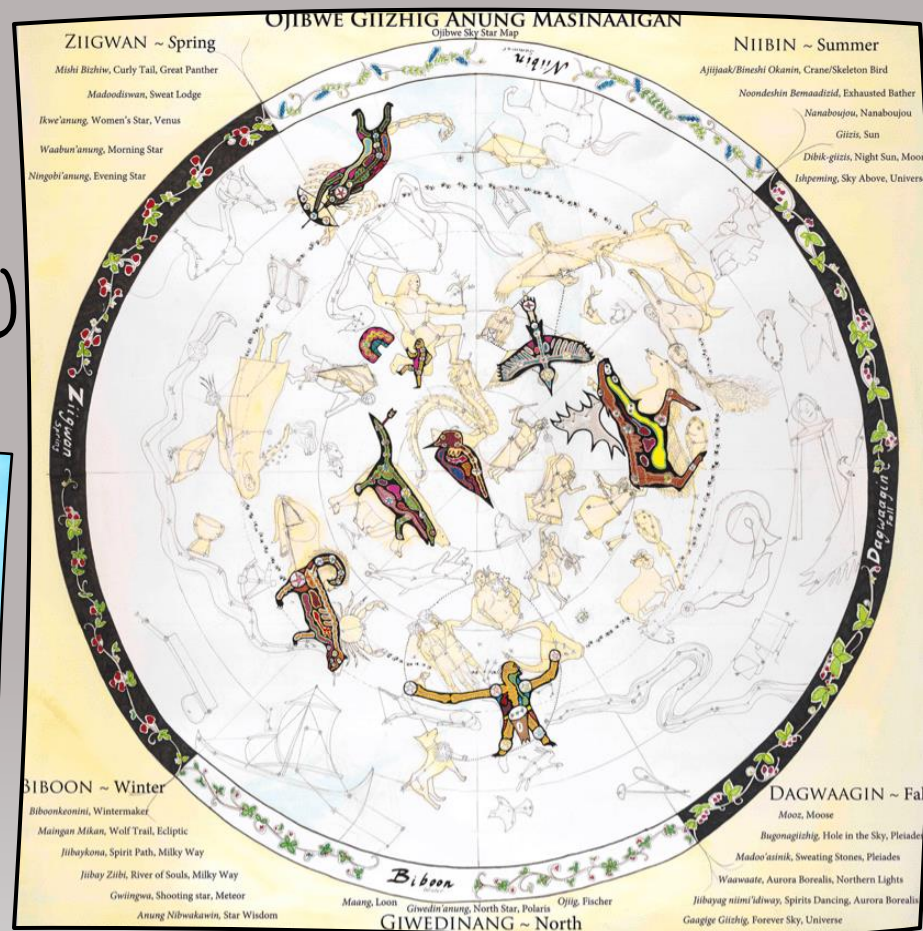


- This K-6 resource was created from our CDSBEO Math Department for last month's [Wesakechak: Map the Stars!](#) Here, various levelled tasks use the apparent distance to the constellation to provide a fun activity that connects to the Spatial Sense strand. Use as is or adapt to fit any constellation!



Here is a link to a [Sky Map](#), which is a 2-page PDF that is a wonderful resource for any experienced or new star gazer. It is updated monthly to reflect the night sky changes.

Check out these Star Maps! (Cree & Ojibwe Perspectives)





VOCABULARY REMINDER

Throughout the *Skyworld: We Come From the Stars* journey, we have examined many different terms. Here they are as a vocabulary list, for your information and reference!

Achakosuk (Cree) = The Stars

Fisher = Big Dipper

Makinak (Cree) = The Turtle = Cepheus

Matootisan (Cree) = The Sweat Lodge = Corona Borealis

Mista Muskwa (Cree) or Great Bear = Ursa Major

Kiwitin (Cree) = Going Home Star / **Nuuttuittuq** (Inuktitut) = “The One That Never Moves” = Polaris = The North Star

Quviasukvik (Inuktitut) = Happy Day (First Day of the Year)

Wesakechak (Cree) = The Giant = Orion

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