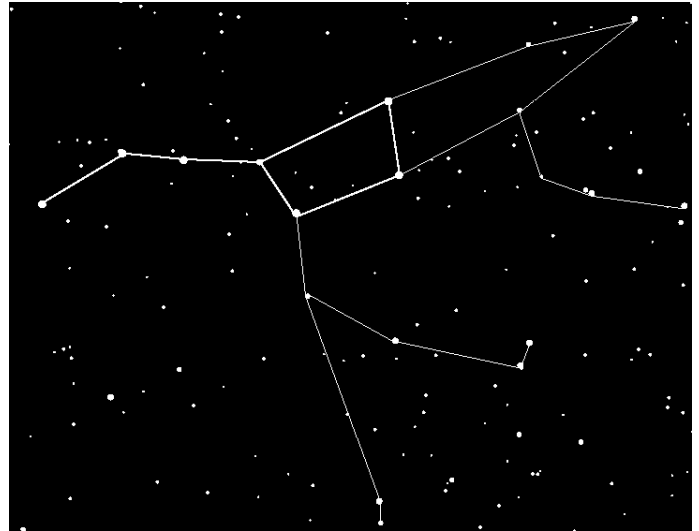


## 2020-2021 Indigenous Theme: Skyworld Teachings

October skies are clear and the crispness that comes with autumn is the perfect time to begin stargazing! The CDSBEO Indigenous Theme this year is focused on Skyworld Teachings, and this month we are highlighting the “Big Dipper” (an asterism in the constellation Ursa Major/ “The Great Bear”), or part of the constellation: “Ojiig'anung Fisher Star.” We want to highlight the stories of the stars from the perspective of the people on whose land we gather. These learning experiences will support classroom work in a cross-curricular ways.



Ursa Major. Accessed September 30, 2020.  
[http://www.physics.csbsju.edu/astro/constellations/ursa\\_major\\_1.html](http://www.physics.csbsju.edu/astro/constellations/ursa_major_1.html)

### Important Background Information!

In order to continue to grow in our knowledge regarding Indigenous content, it is imperative that we recognize original and appropriate language. Going forward in this document, the “Big Dipper” will be referred to as the “Fisher Star” and the “Ursa Major” constellation will be referred to as the “Great Bear.” By using the language of the original people of this land, we are all promoting a decolonized approach to learning.

### Minds On:

Please share the [Fisher Constellation Origin Story](#) which will highlight the Anishinaabe perspective of the creation of this pattern of stars. Then, share the Haudenosaunee perspective in the [Great Bear Constellation Story](#). These stories also connect to the reason why this constellation looks a little different depending on the time of year.

*\*The CDSBEO spans the unceded, traditional Algonquin territory of the Anishinaabe people as well as the Mohawk territory of the Haudenosaunee people.*

### Challenge:

This month, our CDSBEO students are challenged with stepping outside under a starry sky. They should try to locate the most known constellation known as The Fisher

Star/The Great Bear/The Big Dipper/Ursa Major and many other names depending on which culture is telling the story. Students are encouraged to record their observations:

- What time did they go outside?
- What was the weather like?
- Was the sky clear?
- Was it easy to spot?
- Could they see the whole constellation? (The Great Bear?)
- Did they see any other familiar constellations or star patterns?

Expand the challenge by asking students to go and record their observations several times throughout the month. Here is a chart that younger students can use to record their observations: [Stargazing Chart](#)

### FUN FACT!

The stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper farthest to the right point to Nuuttuittuq (“the one that never moves” in Inuktitut) or the North Star/Polaris. The Fisher Star has been a great navigational tool for centuries!

(The following link is a great resource to learn about the navigational aspects of the sky. It includes a star search tool as well as a sky map: [Under the Stars](#))

### Discussion:

- Could you find the Fisher Star?
- Could you see that it was a part of a larger constellation?
- Could you see the Fisher in the pattern of the constellation?
- Could you see the Bear in the pattern of the constellation?
- What other thoughts or wonderings did you have when looking at this star pattern?
- How does “The Fisher Constellation Origin Story” connect to your understanding of what you have always known as the “Big Dipper?” What about the “Great Bear Origin Story?”
- Which story do you prefer? The Anishinaabe or the Haudenosaunee story? Why?



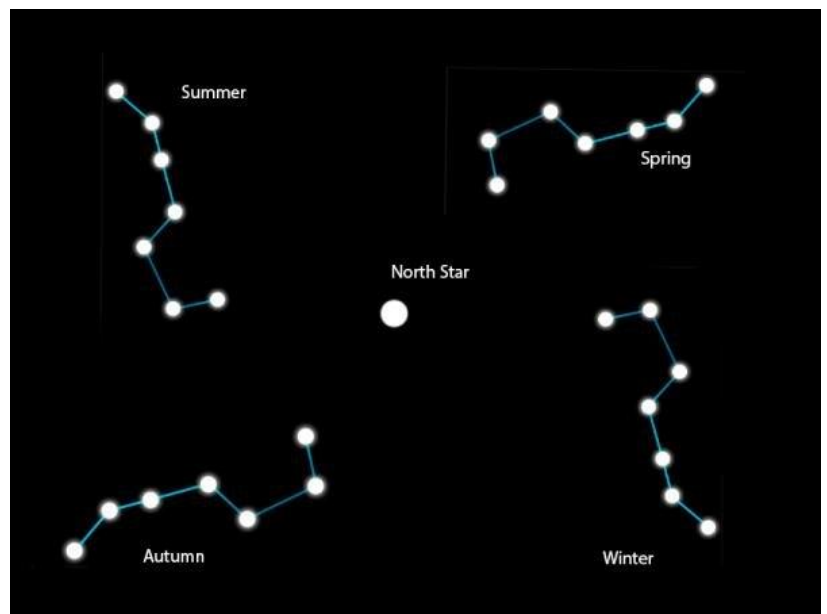
### Activity:

Show students a map of the constellations in the night sky with an emphasis on the Fisher Star's location, its inclusion in the Great Bear, and its proximity to the North Star. This map is an option: [October 2020 Sky Map](#)

- Discuss how the Fisher and the Great Bear looks different depending on the season of the year. What could that indicate?
- Follow this link: [Seven Stars](#) for the Indigenous perspective on the stars that create this asterism. Alternatively, students could research one or more of these stars and present their findings.

### Cross-Curricular Extension Possibilities:

- **Literacy:** Use the origin stories as examples of creative writing. Students can use the Fisher Star (or choose another cluster of stars) and create a short origin story. Connections should be made to appearance and location, and whether seasonal change impacts perspective. Alternatively, students could compare the two origin stories.
- **Art:** Create a multi-media impression of the Fisher and/or Great Bear, keeping in mind shape and distance. Alternatively, younger students could illustrate the various aspects of the Fisher or Bear Origin Story.
- **Math:** Using an observational chart, students could graph various experiences of viewing the Fisher/Great Bear (date, time, conditions, etc.) or learn to graph the coordinates themselves.



Ursa Major: The Legend of the Great Bear. Accessed September 28, 2020. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstar-name-registry.com%2Fblog%2Fitem%2Fmythology-ursa->

Stay tuned for our the CDSBEO Indigenous Team's monthly challenges  
and enjoy a few evenings under the stars! 