

LEARNING FROM THE LAKE

FROM THE GREAT LAKES AQUARIUM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 2011

The Education Newsletter is a new monthly resource for families, educators, and naturalists alike! Every month, this newsletter will provide activities for families to do at home; phenology for the current month to keep you updated on migration patterns and happenings in nature; interesting facts relevant to the time of year; astronomical events; and family-friendly events happening around the Duluth area.

Watch for Education Newsletters each month! For inquiries on FREE subscriptions, contact Lindsay Brandt via email lbrandt@glaquarium.org or phone (218) 740-2027.

Family Activity—Milk Jug Bird Feeder

February is National Bird-Feeding month! Recycle your old milk jugs to help feed our feathered friends. You may be surprised how many birds you can attract—there are over 100 species of birds in the Midwest! Here is what you will need:

- Empty milk jug, cleaned
- Thin wire, or strong string
- Scissors
- Marker
- Birdseed
- Markers or paint (optional for decoration)



Photo courtesy of: A-Home-For-Wild-Birds.com

Using a marker, draw cutout holes on the two sides of the jug opposite the handle. Cut out the holes. Remove the cap, and tightly wrap a wire or string around the opening of the jug. Replace the cap. Fill with birdseed, and hang in your backyard for birds to enjoy!

Phenology—February 2011 *by Minnesota Weatherguide*

First and Second Week

- Black bear cubs are born in northern Minnesota, usually two or three in number.
- American crows return from their journey to warmer latitudes.
- Flocks of six to 40 turkeys can be seen at the edges of forests.
- Greenhouse plants come out of dormancy.

Third and Fourth Week

- Great horned owls begin nesting and incubating their eggs.
- Mating season begins for gray, red, flying, and fox squirrels.
- Barred owls can be found around bird feeding stations searching for voles, mice, and shrews.
- Bald eagles can be seen hunting for fish where water is open along local rivers.

Did you know?!

The folk legend of Groundhog Day comes from the early settlers of Europe. As the story goes, if an emerging groundhog sees its shadow, it will return to its burrow and winter will ensue for six more weeks.

This belief originated in Europe where beavers, groundhogs, and bears are thought to emerge from hibernation at the same time. Contrary to popular belief, most wild groundhogs awake from their slumber in March...not February.



Get Outside: Ice Fishing

Bundle up, grab a fishing pole and head out on the ice to enjoy one of Minnesota's most popular pastimes. Never been ice fishing before? Be sure you know all the safety guidelines of ice fishing. Visit the DNR website to learn more: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/minnaqua/icefishing/index.html>.

Don't have your own ice fishing equipment? University of Minnesota—Duluth's RSOP program will loan you the materials you need for a low cost! For more information, call 218-726-6134.

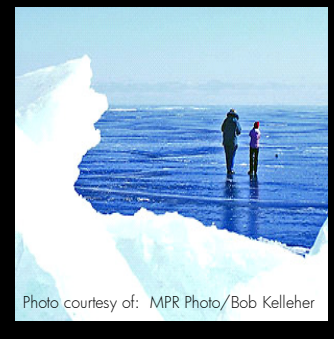


Photo courtesy of: MPR Photo/Bob Kelleher

February Astronomy

Morning Star—Saturn



Saturn, the 6th planet in our solar system is visible in the morning until April, when it will become an evening star. With each day, it will rise earlier and earlier. Being the “Planet of Rings”, see if you are able to spot them through a telescope!

Evening Star—Jupiter



Jupiter, the 5th and largest planet in our solar system (named after the kind of the gods) remains the morning star until March. You may be able to view the “Great Red Spot” - a storm that has existed on the planet for over 400 years!

Astronomy News

- February 1, 12, and 14 will bring the Mars500 project into light. Mars500 is an ongoing project that will simulate a landing on Mars. Six volunteers, representing the crew that will take this journey, will live and work as though they are en route to Mars. For example, there will be a 20 minute communication delay between the crew and “home base”.
- Planets outside of our solar system are being discovered like never before! As a result, Earth and planetary scientists will be meeting to discuss the characteristics and possibilities of these planets.
- In July of 2005, a NASA spacecraft launched a projectile that collided with the Comet 9P forming a crater. The goal of this collision was/is to study the changes a comet experiences throughout its journey in space. Observations were made upon collision of the crater. On February 15, the spacecraft called Stardust will attempt to make additional observations in hopes of finding alterations in the craters appearance.

Local Events

- Feb 2: Groundhog Day
- Feb 5—6: Snow Kite Expo in Duluth
- Feb 6—11: Winter Sampler in Ely, MN
- Feb 11—13: Mush with Dogs, Howl with Wolves in Ely, MN
- Feb 12: Paw de Deux at Lake Superior Zoo
- Feb 12: Warmer by the Lake, Bayfront Festival Park
- Feb 13: Big Jig Ice Fishing Contest and Festival at Pike Lake, MN
- Feb 13—18: Winter Sampler in Ely, MN
- Feb 14: Valentine’s Day
- Feb 18: Moonlight Ski and Snowshoe in Duluth
- Feb 19: Polar Plunge in Duluth
- Feb 21: President’s Day
- Feb 22—24: Snow Safari Winter Camp at Great Lakes Aquarium and Lake Superior Zoo
- Feb 26: Mush for Kids by Positive Energy
- Feb 26—27: Family Fun Fest at the DECC

February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

Ongoing Events at Great Lakes Aquarium

Whirligigs Preschool Program, Spring Session: this is exciting drop-off program is for children ages 3-5. Every Tuesday and Wednesday from March 22—April 27, preschoolers learn more about nature! Topics this spring include; boats and bridges, water, frogs, ladybugs, sprouting seeds, and rainbows. Pre-registration is REQUIRED. Contact Lindsay Brandt or more information: (218) 740-2027 or lbrandt@glaquarium.org

Birthday Party: Plan your next birthday party with us! Experience a memorable, exciting, and fun celebration in a safe, interactive, and kid friendly environment. Watch the otters play, see ducks up close, pet a stingray, and more! For more information or to schedule a party, please contact Mary: 218-740-3474 ext. 1036 or mpensak@glaquarium.com