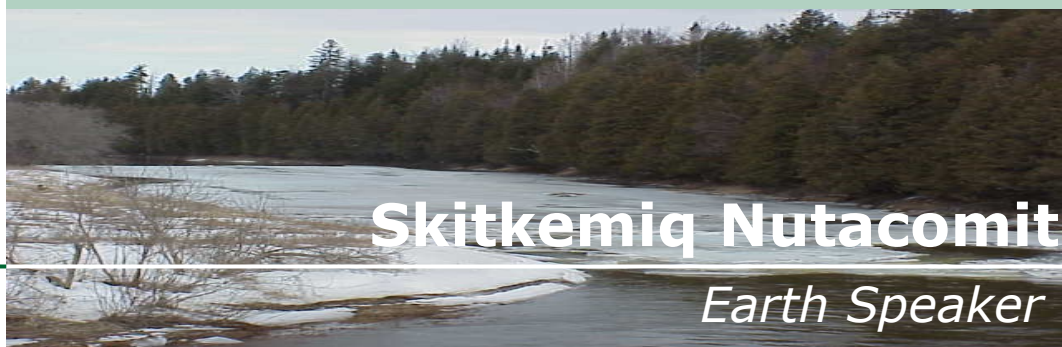




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# Skitkemiq Nutacomit

## Earth Speaker



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### It's Spring??

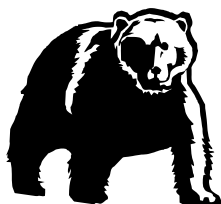
It may not look it, but it is officially Spring. The birds are singing, the sun is a little warmer. Soon it'll be time for Fishing and Fiddleheads !!

Thanks to Heidi Kelley, HBMI's Enrollment Clerk for the great Fiddlehead photo shown here and the pink lady slipper orchid on



Photo by Heidi Kelley

### THE GREAT BEAR AND THE SEVEN HUNTERS



*The following myth was related by the Algonquian and Iroquois tribes; this is the Micmac version. In their story, the bear is represented only by the four stars in the bowl of the dipper. The three stars that we imagine to be the handle of the dipper or the tail of the bear are, in this myth, the first three of seven hunters pursuing the bear. The hunters are Robin (because the star is reddish in color), Chickadee (because it is small), Moose Bird, Pigeon, Blue Jay (because that star is blue), and two owls. The moose bird is the Canada jay.)*

*The tiny star beside Chickadee is the pot he is carrying; when the bear is killed, he will cook the meat in it. Just above the hunters, a group of smaller stars forms the bear's den. The myth explains the position of the stars in the constellation in the different seasons. Apparently the constella-*

*tions Bootes and Corona Borealis are included in the story.*

Late in the spring, every year, the Bear wakes from her long sleep, leaves her den, and descends to the ground in search of food. Sharp-eyed Chickadee sees her instantly. Being too small to pursue her by himself, he calls the other hunters to assist him. Seven begin the chase, after placing Chickadee and his pot between two of the larger birds so that he will not lose his way. All pursue the Bear eagerly, being hungry for meat after the long winter.

Throughout the summer the Bear flees across the northern horizon, still pursued by the hunters. In the autumn, those in the rear lose the trail and drop out, one by one. First to disappear from the chase are the two owls, because they are heavier and clumsier than the other birds. But you must not laugh when you learn that the smaller owl, the Acadian owl, has failed to get some of the Bear meat. You must not imitate his rasping cry. If you do, he will descend

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- Tony Tomah - ext 221
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- Sue Young - ext 202

from the sky when you are asleep; with his birch-bark torch, he will set fire to whatever clothing you are wearing.

After the owls, Blue Jay and Pigeon lose their way and drop out of the chase. Only Robin, Chickadee, and Moose Bird are left. They continue their pursuit and at last, about the middle of autumn, they overtake the Bear.

Brought to bay, the Bear rears up on her hind feet and prepares to defend herself. But Robin pierces her with his arrow, and she falls over on her back. Being very thin in the autumn, Robin is eager to eat some of the Bear's fat as soon as possible. In his haste, he leaps upon her and becomes covered with blood. Flying to the closest maple tree, in the land of the sky, he tries to shake off the blood. He succeeds in getting all of it off except a spot on his breast. "That spot," says Chickadee, "you will carry as long as your name is Robin."

But the blood that he does shake off spatters far and wide over the forests of the earth below. And so, every autumn, we see the blood-red tints of the foliage. Reddest of all are the maple leaves, for trees on earth follow the appearance of the trees in the sky and the maples up there received the most blood. The sky, you know, is just the same as the earth, except that it is up there and is older.

Some time after Robin kills the Bear, Chickadee arrives on the scene. Together they cut up the body, build a fire, and place some of the meat in



## Maliseet Vocabulary

**WOLOKISKOT** it is a good day

**NESSIPOKEHSOK** clover

**SIQON** It is Spring

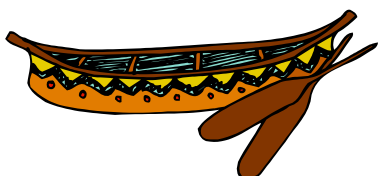
**KOMIWON** It is raining

**WAWON** a nest

**OQITON** a canoe

**'TAHAKON** a paddle

**PSKIHQ** a blade of grass



Chickadee's pot to cook. Just as they are about to eat, Moose Bird arrives. He almost lost the trail, but when he found it again he did not hurry. He knew that it would take his companions some time to slay the Bear and cook the meat, and he did not mind missing the work if he would arrive in time for his full share of the food. Indeed, he was so impressed by this policy the first time that he has never again hunted for himself. He prefers to follow after hunters and share their spoils. Today, whenever a bear or a moose or other animal is killed in the woods of the Micmac land, you will see the Moose Bird appear to demand his share. That is why the other birds named him "He-who-comes-in-at-the-last-moment." Probably you know some human beings who should have that name also.

Robin and Chickadee, being generous, share their food with Moose Bird willingly. Before they eat, Chickadee stirs the meat in the pot, while the other two dance about the fire. Such was the custom in the good old days, when Micmacs were brothers to all; then they felt it their duty to share their food together and to thank each other and the Universal Spirit for their present happiness.

Throughout the winter, the skeleton of the Bear lies on its back in the sky. But her life-spirit has entered another Bear that lies upon her back in the den, invisible, sleeping the long sleep of winter. When spring comes round again, this Bear will again leave her den and will be pursued by the hunters. She too will be slain but will send her life spirit to the den, from which she will come forth again when the sun once more awakens the sleeping earth.

And so every year the hunters pursue and capture the Bear. Night after night, we tell this story beside our campfires, as we watch the Great Bear in the sky.



## Sky Watch

There is a lot of solar activity going on these days and it is producing prime conditions for the Aurora Borealis better known as the Northern Lights.

When the skies are clear look to the north and perhaps you'll get to glimpse a spectacular display of colors and light.

For more information go to [www.spaceweather.com](http://www.spaceweather.com)

## Word Search

I C E O U T S W P I A  
 E F B N O S E K L M N  
 R D P U D D L E S D D  
 F M O R W T N S B M L  
 Y V U Q F A Y M E E X  
 F I D D L E H E A D S  
 I S U J O E W L R U S  
 S M C O W G D T N X G  
 H L K I E P R S D X H  
 O A S N R A F C C C I

Bear	Fish	Mud
Dew	Flower	Puddles
Ducks	Ice out	Smelts
Fiddleheads	Medux	Sun

## This & That

- Natural Resource personnel, Dave Joseph, David Lombard, Scott Krzanik & Tony Tomah attended Emergency Chemical Response Training in Lowell, MA
- Dave Joseph, David Lombard, Scott Krzanik & Sharri Venno attended NMDC's "Watersheds & Watershed Management" meeting in St. Agatha, where Scott did a presentation on HBMI's Water Resource Program.
- Natural Resource personnel took part in a River Summit at Indian Island in January. The summit was co-sponsored by the tribes in Maine
- Scott Krzanik is putting together a presentation on the Water Resources Program for the EPA Tribal Training Conference to be held in Rockland April 15 - 18.
- Time is running out for applications for the Summer Technician positions in this department. The deadline is April 4, 2001.
- Fishing season opens April 1, 2001



## Fiddlehead & Cattail Salad

### Ingredients:

- 3 cups Fiddleheads
- 1 Cup Leeks
- 1 Cup young cattail shoots
- 2 cups lettuce
- 2 cups sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup oil
- Wild Garlic



Wash and drain young fiddleheads  
 Chops leeks  
 Peel first layer of cattail to get to tender shoots  
 Wash, chop and drain cattail shoots and roots  
 Cut up lettuce  
 Mix greens in large bowl  
 Add sunflower seeds  
 Season to taste with oil and garlic

### A fond farewell,

Christel Haley  
 Water Resources Technician left us in January 2001.

Please join us in wishing  
 her the best.

## Remember

Every Day is Earth Day!

# Welcome Visitors



This winter, employees at the HBMI Administration building have been treated to numerous bald eagle sightings in the parking lot.

A young adult, who was just beginning to get its white feathers came to

visit, while an adult with its white head and tail made a number of visits.

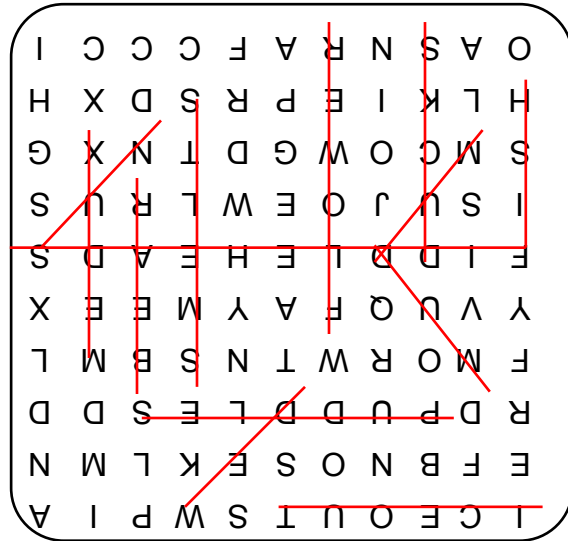
As Spring nears, we will begin seeing a number of birds returning to the area. Many of you have already spotted a couple of robins.

Keep your eyes open and soon you will see ducks flying overhead and appearing in the many field puddles, as well as in the river. Some of the ducks you can expect to see are Mallards, Blacks, Blue and Green Winged Teals, American Widgeons, and Wood Ducks. They will be joined by Canada Geese, Great blue herons, kingfishers, kestrels (sparrow hawks), and Northern Harriers (marsh hawks).

The plants will also be welcoming spring. You can expect to see Purple Trillium (stinkin' Benjamin or Wake Robins), Bloodroot, Buttercups, Canada Anemones, Trout lilies (Dog toothed violets), Blue and White violets, and Lady slipper orchids, not to mention the fiddleheads!



*Sbony ladyslipper orchid*  
Photo by Heidi Kelley



## Word Search

### HBMI Natural Resources Department

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