

# Mikinaak (Snapping Turtle)

*Maajii-Ojibwemowag (They Begin to Speak Ojibwe) – ANA Language Project  
Teacher/Caregiver Supplemental Document*



## The Ojibwe and Mikinaako-minis

It is said that long ago there was a huge flood that covered the aki (earth) in nibi (water).

Waynaboozhoo, a survivor of the great flood, found a floating log to sit on.

Eventually some other animals that survived the flood came to join

Waynaboozhoo and took turns resting on the log. After floating for a long time without seeing any land, Waynaboozhoo came up with a plan to swim to the bottom of the nibi to grab a piece of aki bring to the surface to serve as the new land. The animals watched Waynaboozhoo jump into the water and waited awhile, but eventually

Waynaboozhoo came back up weak and out of breath, with no aki. It was too deep, he said. Other animals tried to swim to the bottom to grab aki as well, such as Maang (loon), Zhingibis (hell diver), Zhangweshi (mink), and Nigig (otter), but no one could reach the bottom.

Finally, little Wazhashk (muskrat) volunteered and dove in. Many animals thought he couldn't do it as Wazhashk was so tiny. After waiting for a long time, Wazhashk's body floated up to the top. Unfortunately, little Wazhashk drowned, and everyone mourned the loss of their friend.

Then, Waynaboozhoo noticed Wazhashk had something clutched in his little hand—aki! All the animals cheered and were thankful for Wazhashk's sacrifice.

Seeing the small clump of aki, Mikinaak said,

“Use my back to bear the weight of the new Earth.”

And so Waynaboozhoo put the piece of aki on Mikinaak's back, where all of a sudden the wind began blowing from all four directions and the piece of aki on Mikinaak's back began to grow larger and larger, until a huge island was formed—Mikinaako-minis (Turtle Island). The Ojibwe still call Mikinaako-minis home today.

### Ningabii'anong Set: Mikinaak Book Ojibwe Language Word List

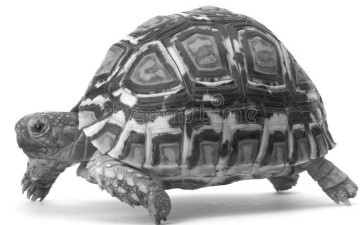
- **Gikinoow'amagewin-** a teaching
- **Oozhishenyag-** grandchildren
- **Mikinaako-minis-** Turtle Island
- **Oshkaabewis-** a ceremonial attendant or messenger
- **Neshkaadizi-** s/he is angry/mad
- **Gii-kiigoonyike-** s/he is fishing
- **Migiskanaak-** a fishing pole
- **Giigoonyag-** fish (plural)
- **Zaaga'iganiing-** a lake
- **Bagizo-** s/he goes swimming
- **Bakade-** s/he is hungry
- **Owaabandan-** s/he sees it
- **Wiisini-** s/he eats

## What do Mikinaakwag eat?

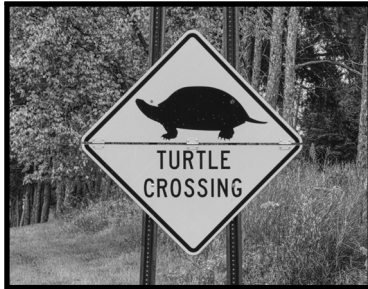
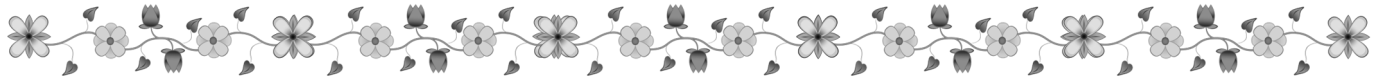
**Mikinaakwag are omnivores and have a wide habitat range, from Nova Scotia to the Gulf of Mexico, which means they also have a wide diet range. Some things mikinaakwag eat in the wild are:**

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| -Aquatic plants (algae, moss, duckweed)    | -Fish (mino, eels) |
| -Birds (mallards, ducklings, goslings)     | -Frogs             |
| -Invertebrates (insects, crayfish, snails) | -Small mammals     |

**Mikinaakwag will eat anything in their path if they want to, even carrion!**



# What to Do if You Find a Mikinaak in the Road



## Mikinaak Fun Facts:

-Mikinaakwag need a permanent source of nibi to live, but they can go without it for two weeks which gives them enough time to travel between different bodies of nibi.

-In the colder, northern habitat range, Mikinaak hibernate under the ice. They don't breathe at all while hibernating, which can be up to 6 months in some regions.

-Mikinaakwag get their oxygen under ice through extrapulmonary Respiration. They push their head out of the mud and allow gas exchange to take place through the membranes of their mouth and throat.

## Extra Resources:

More Mikinaak Facts:

<http://www.tortoisetrust.org/articles/snappers.htm>

POV Mikinaak Swim Footage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xQ6YlaYYHI>



- Pull over safely and switch on hazard lights.
- Make sure traffic is clear or stopping for you before you walk onto the road
- If the mikinaak is on his/her back, flip him/her over.
- If the mikinaak is injured, please contact your local or closest wildlife rehabilitation center.
- If the mikinaak seems uninjured, move him/her to the side of the road they were walking towards.
- Hold bigger mikinaakwag by the two back edges of the shell and push or drag him/her to the intended side of the road. A towel or floor mat will make it easier to push or drag the mikinaak, but don't worry, they have tough skin that can handle mild scrapes, but their skin won't protect them against heavy fast-moving vehicles.
- Turn the mikinaak back in the right direction if you decided to drag him/her across the road
- For smaller mikinaakwag, hold by both sides of the shell behind the front legs. Lift the mikinaak, keeping him/her low to the ground. If you lose your grip, the impact from the fall will be minimal.
- Wash your hands as soon as possible after handling mikinaak

## Ningabii'anong Set: Mikinaak Book Ojibwe Language Word List continued

- **Segizi (zegizi)**- s/he is scared, afraid
- **Gego**- don't
- **Gaawiin**- no
- **Odedeyan**- father
- **Aaniin wenji-ishkendaman?**- why are you upset?
- **Geyaabi**- still, yet
- **Ningozis**- my son
- **ingo-diba'igaans**-one minute
- **aapiji**- very, quite
- **biindaakoojige**- s/he makes an offering of tobacco
- **onizhishin**- it is nice, pretty
- **asemaa**- tobacco
- **Ojibwe-wiinzowin**- Ojibwe name, spiritual name
- **Bazigonjise**- s/he stands up suddenly, leaps to feet
- **Dibaajimowin**- a story
- **Bekaa**- hold on!; slow down!; wait!
- **Weshki-bimaadiziyaan**- young?
- **Gikinoo-amaadiigamig**- school
- **Gichi-gikinoo-amaagewini**-a school superintendent (male)
- **gichi-wiidookaagewini**- an important helper, assistant
- **minjimendan**- keep it in h/ mind, remember it
- **Miinawa**- and, again, also



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