



# Ma'iingan (Wolf)

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

## WAABANONG SET: MA'IINGAN BOOK OJIBWE LANGUAGE WORD LIST

- **Dagwaagin** – It is fall
- **Ma'iinganag** – Wolves
- **Giiwose** – S/he hunts
- **Oodena** – Town
- **Niiyawen'enh** – My namesake
- **Wiiyawen'enhyan** – His/her namesake
- **Waawaashkeshi** – Deer
- **Bawaajige** – S/he dreams
- **Waasa** – Far away, distant
- **Eya'**– Yes
- **Gaawiin** – No
- **Gichi-Manidoo** – Great Spirit
- **Izhitwaawin** – A certain belief, culture, or religion
- **Inwewin** – A way of speaking, a language, a dialect
- **Inawemaagan** – A relative

## Ma'iingan and the Ojibwe

Ma'iingan is one of the most highly regarded animals to the Ojibwe people. Ma'iingan plays an important role in Ojibwe aadizookaanag (traditional stories). The wolf is noted for being a brother and partner to man. Elder Niib Aubid of the Sandy Lake/Rice Lake Band, stated that the wolf could understand Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe language). This is how the Ojibwe were once able to communicate with the wolves long ago and some Ojibwe people still hold this belief. To reiterate the connection, Niib also points to the

prophecy, that whatever happens to the Ma'iingan will happen to the Ojibwe people, which it is a reminder of why it is important to honor the teachings of respecting ma'iingan.

Additionally, Ojibwe teachings directly prohibit the hunting of wolves. Since 2012, many tribes have prohibited wolf hunting on their reservations and some even claiming their land as wolf sanctuaries.

Niib shared that the wolf was given everything needed to live a good life, just like the

Ojibwe. By watching ma'iingan, the Ojibwe learned how to be good hunters (such as a being patient hunter) and how to take care for their family unit. The wolf also teach us the importance of protecting the Ojibwe language and way of life.



**Gray Wolf**

## Tribal Wolf Management

By Peter David, GLIFWC Wildlife Biologist

The increased involvement by the Ojibwe in the off-reservation stewardship of wolves has frequently juxtaposed conflicting cultural perspectives, and created challenges for biologists attempting to bridge these differences.

The Ojibwe's world view toward ma'iingan can be so markedly different from that held by many state, federal, and private interests that it is sometimes difficult

to find even a common language with which to discuss stewardship issues. For example, concepts like "minimal viable populations" or discussion of population caps or sport hunting take is distasteful and jarring to the Ojibwe, who understand the wolf to be their brother.

And it is notable that while many see the exercise of treaty rights as

primarily harvest-driven, there may be no area with a greater divergence in stewardship perspectives between the states and the tribes than in the arena of this species, which the tribes wish to keep protected – much like many in the non-tribal community feel about bald eagles." (Updated 9/2020)

# How is the wolf important to the environment?

There have been many studies demonstrate wolves are a keystone species in the environment. The wolves presence helps maintain the health and balance of different ecosystems. Wolves help maintain different animal populations and keep them at healthy numbers. In places like Isle Royale and Yellowstone National Parks, the presence of wolves has helped vegetation once overconsumed

come back more abundant. The predator and prey relationship is more balanced and the carcasses left from the wolves leave food for other creatures and scavengers. When the wolf is overhunted, these ecosystems suffer. The animal and plant ratios fall out of balance and they tend to start damaging their own ecosystem. This is why it is vital to maintain the wolf population.



## Extra Resources

Informative, cultural information regarding ma'iingan and the Ojibwe. <https://northernwilds.com/culture-prophecy-bind-ojibwe-people-wolves/#:~:text=Ojibwe%20language%20speakers%20know%20the,social%20groups%20and%20hunting%20afield.>

A project with relevant cultural, and scientific information about Wolves. Cultural information specific to Wisconsin Ojibwe tribes. <https://lux.lawrence.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=luhp>

Link with great information about why wolves matter and why they are important to our ecosystem.

<https://www.livingwithwolves.org/about-wolves/why-wolves-matter/>

## Endangered Species Act and ma'iingan

Excerpts from *USFWS proposes to delist ma'iingan*  
By Peter David, GLIFWC Wildlife Biologist  
GLIFWC Mazina'igan Niibin 2019

On March 15th 2019, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published a proposal to delist Gray Wolves in the Lower 48 states - where they had not been previously delisted - from all protections under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The most recent proposal would leave wolves without ESA protections in many areas where suitable habitat still exists, but recovery has yet to take place, including the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

If the delisting proposal is implemented, it would also lead to a return in the sport hunting and trapping seasons that occurred in the Midwest states from 2012-2014, following a previous delisting effort that was eventually overturned in the

courts.

Reducing the wolf population could have impacts on the exercise of treaty rights. Ma'iingan helps protect the populations of some important medical plants, and likely helps reduce the impacts of Chronic Wasting Disease in deer in the Ceded Territory.

Want to learn more about the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Gray Wolf? Check out these sites:

- ESA Home: <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/?ref=topbar>
- Gray Wolf Delisting FAQs: <https://www.fws.gov/home/wolfrecovery/pdf/Gray-Wolf-Proposed-Delisting-FAQs.pdf>



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