

# Ashi-niswi giizisoog (Thirteen Moons)

## Namebini-giizis

*The new Namebini begins Feb. 21. This is the Sucker Fish Moon. Other names for this moon are Migizi-giizis, Eagle Moon; Makoonsag-gaa-nitaawaadi-giizis, When the Bear Cubs are Born Moon.*

## Namebini Giizis

By Leroy Defoe

When I was young, I used to live with my “Gram.” Gram wasn’t just my grandmother, she was my great-grandmother. She was my favorite person in the whole world. We used to sit around the old kitchen table and talk, all the while keeping the old wood stove burning on those cold winter months. I could ask my Gram just about any kind of a question. After I asked her my question, she would look at me,

smile and quietly start telling me the answer.

One evening in February, I asked her, “Gram, why is February called the Sucker Moon?”

Gram gave me that look as she always did and thought for a few seconds. After she wiped her watery eyes, she said, “I was always told that February is called the Sucker Moon, because the water in those lakes is rapidly being used up by all the fish that live in there. During the Sucker Moon, the air in the water has become so poor that

the fish are almost dying for the lack of oxygen. It is during this time, that the Indians will cut holes in the ice, usually above a fresh water spring, and leave it open for the fish. The fish will swim over to the ice hole to breathe the good fresh air. The Indians will hide and wait by that open hole in the ice and spear the bigger fish, usually suckers, swimming by the ice hole. During this time the Indians will take all the fish that they need, because fresh fish tastes delicious, and leave the

rest for the other people, and the future.”

Last year, around the first of February, I got to thinking about my Gram and our conversation regarding the Sucker Moon. I got in my car, drove out to the lake and walked over to the fish hole. What I saw shocked me so much that I almost cried. There was a big hole in the ice all right, but someone beat me to it, and had scooped out hundreds of the smaller fish lying all around that ice hole to die. I was sick to my stomach that

someone would do that sort of thing. To scoop hundreds of fish out of a lake and throw them aside to die on the ice is not the Indian way of doing things.

I wish that everyone would take a minute to stop and think about how irresponsible doing something like that is. It is better to respect our natural resources and use what we have available for food, medicine, or building.

## Fond du Lac hunting seasons recap

By Mike Schrage, *Wildlife Biologist, Fond du Lac Resource Management Division*

In 2011 Fond du Lac moose hunters took 17 moose, 7 fewer than the previous year. In addition, FDL Conservation Officers took three moose for program purposes. State-licensed hunters took 53 moose, while 1854 Treaty Authority hunters took another ten.

Again this year FDL hunters were asked to participate in the moose health assessment project. Nine successful hunting parties turned in completed health kits (moose brains, blood, hair, tooth, liver and data sheet) and were entered in a drawing. Congratulations to Ed, Daniel and Wendy Jaakola who each collected a

\$75 gift certificate to Gander Mountain. The nine parties are also entered in the Minn. DNR drawing for moose hunters returning a completed health kit.

The Fond du Lac deer harvest was also lower in 2011 with preliminary totals of 93 deer from the reservation down 36 percent and 154 from the Ceded Territories down 39 percent. Harvest by state-licensed hunters on the reservation also declined from 268 deer to 184 in 2011. In unit 181, state harvest declined from 4,538 deer to 3,649 deer in 2011.

Last year marked the first FDL season for sand hill crane hunting in the 1854 Ceded Territory. FDL is the first state or tribal agency to have a sand hill crane season east of the Mississippi River since

the early 1900s. Twenty Band Members requested crane tags and two cranes were harvested. FDL turkey hunters collected four turkeys during the spring and fall seasons. No Band Members registered a bear in 2011.

Trapping seasons continue for most species until the end of March. Typically FDL trappers register fewer than 100 bobcat, fisher, marten, and otter from the Reservation and Ceded Territories. The Wall Street Journal reported rising prices for furs with prices for muskrat going as high as \$10/pelt. Local DNR offices reported a lot of bobcats were registered by state-licensed trappers. Cat numbers have been rising in recent years and low snow has made access easy for trappers.

## New FDL Garden Program Coordinator

Danielle Diver grew up in Ohio, where she learned about gardening by helping her parents and grandmother with their gardens. She earned a degree in entomology from Ohio State University.

Her love for plants started when she rescued several plants from a dumpster and she checked out some books from the library to learn how to care for them. She has since worked as a garden center associate, landscaper, horticulturist, plant protection technician, and farm apprentice. She has worked on organic farms in 5 states and Costa Rica.

Danielle and her husband Aaron moved to the Reservation last spring. She is passionate about growing food organically and

supporting local food systems.

The new Garden Program Coordinator, will help design, establish, and maintain a demonstration garden. The garden will be used as a teaching tool to showcase Ojibwe cropping systems as well as contemporary organic growing methods. Danielle will conduct and host seasonally relevant garden workshops and weekly informal lessons in the demonstration garden. She has created a weblog for the Ojibwe Garden Program at [www.ojibwegardenprogram.wordpress.com](http://www.ojibwegardenprogram.wordpress.com). Interested members may ask for gardening advice or suggest a lesson topic. All workshops and lessons are free and open to the public.



### Upcoming Events:

Sign up to the 13 Moons listserv for the latest information on workshops and events by emailing [thirteenmoons@fdlrez.com](mailto:thirteenmoons@fdlrez.com) Don't forget to check us out on Facebook! 13 Moons Ashi niswi giizisoog

*This page addresses culture, ecology, and natural resource management. Thirteen Moons is the Fond du Lac Tribal College Extension Program and is a collaboration of Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Fond du Lac Resource Management, and University of Minnesota Extension.*