



Whaley awesome animals!



SPECIAL SPECIES: HUMPBACK WHALE

Humpback whales are some of the most famous whales in the ocean, and one big reason why is their incredible songs. These giant whales don't just swim through the sea, they fill it with music.

Most of the singing is done by male humpback whales. Scientists believe they sing long, complex songs to get the attention of female whales and to communicate across the vast ocean. A single song can last for many minutes and may be repeated over and over for hours at a time.

Humpback songs are made up of deep moans, whistles, clicks, and rising whoops. Because sound travels farther underwater than in air, a whale's song can be heard thousands of miles away. Even more amazing, whales living in the same region often sing the same song, almost like they're sharing a musical tradition.

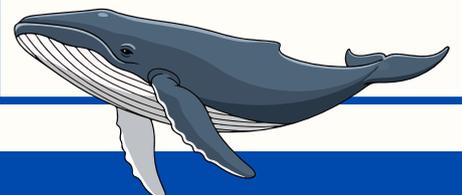
Over time, the songs slowly change. New sounds may be added, while others disappear. This means humpback whale songs are always evolving just like music people enjoy today.

In the open ocean, where it can be hard to see, sound is very important. Singing helps whales stay connected, recognize one another, and share information across long distances.

Humpback whales are also known for their long flippers, powerful tail slaps, and dramatic leaps out of the water. But it's their beautiful songs that make them truly special.

As February brings thoughts of friendship and connection, humpback whales remind us that sometimes the best way to be noticed is simply to share your voice.

Length: 45-50 feet
Weight: 25-40 tons
Food: Krill and fish
Lifespan: 45-50 years
Status: Least Concern
Number left: 80,000





This Month IN SPACE!

All Month - Planetary Alignment: 6 planets (Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune) will trace a line across the night sky. Though Mercury and the last two planets require a telescope, the others can be enjoyed without any special equipment.

February 1 - Full Moon (known as "Snow Moon" or "Hunger Moon")

Viewable with a telescope: Andromeda Galaxy

Nature

AZTLAN: AN ANCIENT WISCONSIN TOWN

Aztalan State Park is a very special place in Wisconsin. It helps us learn about people who lived here long, long before modern towns and cities existed. The park is located on the Crawfish River near the village of Aztalan, just east of Lake Mills in south-central Wisconsin.

Aztalan was once a busy Native American town more than 1,000 years ago. Between about A.D. 1050 and 1200, people who were part of the Mississippian culture, possibly connected to the large city of Cahokia near today's St. Louis, lived here alongside local Woodland people. They built a strong community with tall wooden walls, flat-topped earthen mounds, and a central open area where people gathered.

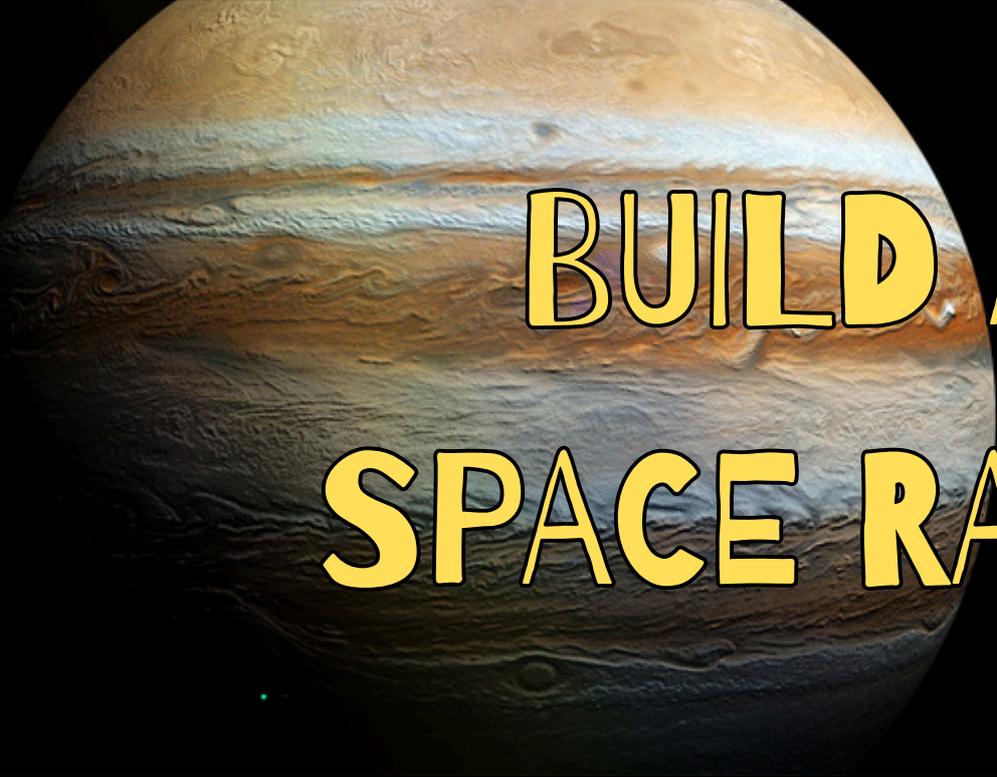
Today, you can visit Aztalan State Park and walk among reconstructed mounds and part of the stockade wall in the same spots where these ancient structures once stood. Signs along the trails help tell the story of how people farmed, hunted, and traded with groups across the continent.

The name "Aztalan" came from early settlers who mistakenly thought the site was linked to the Aztecs of Mexico, but archaeologists now know it was built by local Native people with roots in the Mississippi Valley.

Aztalan State Park became a Wisconsin state park in 1952 and was later named a National Historic Landmark because of its importance for understanding ancient life in North America.

Visiting Aztalan helps us imagine what life was like here centuries ago and inspires curiosity about the people who shaped Wisconsin's earliest history.





BUILD A SPACE RADIO

Citizen Science

RADIO JOVE

LINK HERE!
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Now this one is cool!!!

Have you ever wondered how scientists listen to parts of space we can't see with our eyes? NASA's Radio JOVE project lets students, teachers, and families build or use simple radio telescopes to tune in to real radio waves coming from space!

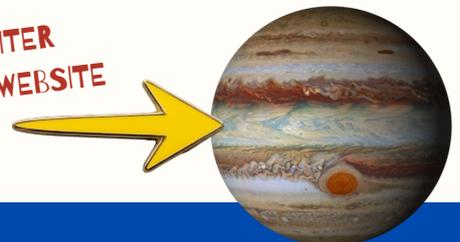


Unlike the light we see, planets, the Sun, and even our own Milky Way galaxy send out radio signals, which are invisible waves that carry information about what's happening far beyond Earth. With Radio JOVE, you can detect these signals right from your backyard or school!

Participants learn about radio astronomy by assembling their own radio telescope kit or connecting with online telescopes. Then they collect and study real data, just like professional scientists. You can even share your observations with others around the world and join special projects about solar activity or other space events.

Radio JOVE makes exploring the hidden sounds of space fun, hands-on, and something you can help with!

**CLICK ON JUPITER
TO GO TO THEIR WEBSITE**





Featured Fossil:

Green River Formation

Have you ever wanted to travel back in time, perhaps millions of years, to see what life was like on Earth? The Green River Formation in Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah is a place where you can do just that... almost! This famous rock formation is packed with fossils from around 50 million years ago, a time when the area was covered by large lakes.



The Green River Formation is made mostly of fine-grained limestone, which preserved delicate details of ancient creatures. Most famous are the fish fossils, including herring and perch, which are often found complete with fins, scales, and even eye sockets! Because the rock layers split into thin sheets, fossil hunters can sometimes find their own fish fossils if they visit the area with proper guidance and permits.

But fish aren't the only treasures here. Fossils of turtles, crocodiles, plants, insects, and even early mammals have been discovered, giving scientists a window into what life was like in a warm, lake-filled landscape millions of years ago. Each fossil tells a story about ancient ecosystems, predator-prey relationships, and how animals and plants adapted to their environment.

Visiting the Green River Formation today is like stepping into a giant natural history book. Whether you're a scientist, a family on vacation, or a young explorer, the chance to see and even hold a piece of ancient history makes this place one of the most exciting fossil sites in North America.



Here are a few places that let you hunt for your own Green River fossils:

[Fossil Safari](#) - Kemmerer, Wyoming

[American Fossil](#) - Kemmerer, Wyoming

THIS MONTH'S SCHEDULE:

Feb 3 - School event
Feb 4 - School event
Feb 5 - School event
Feb 6 - School event
Feb 10 - School event
Feb 13 - School event
Feb 17 - School event
Feb 19 - School event
Feb 24 - School event
Feb 27 - School event

We are visiting 31 different Wisconsin communities, schools, and libraries between January and the end of May!



BOOK AN EVENT

Want to inspire kids with a life-size whale? Contact Dave today with questions, size requirements, schedules, etc.

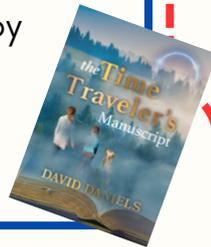


AN OLD JOURNAL WITH A SECRET...

Dave Daniels, the owner of Forest Whales, has written a children's book!

Natalie and Levi are two kids who have acquired a journal written by a brilliant man with an incredible secret. Desperate to find out more, the two find themselves hunting for something they didn't think was possible. But there's more to it, because the journal is also being sought by others, one of whom might be far more dangerous than they imagined.

Want a copy? Get one at [Orange Hat Publishing!](#)



And now for a really bad joke...

Where do whales go on vacation?

fin-land



The River that Built a State

The Wisconsin River is one of the most important rivers in the state, and one of the longest. It begins way up north near the border of Michigan, flowing out of Lac Vieux Desert, and travels about 430 miles south and west. Eventually, it joins the Mississippi River near the town of Prairie du Chien.



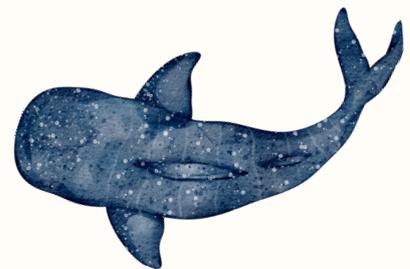
Long ago, the Wisconsin River was a major travel route for Native American tribes, explorers, and fur traders. Canoes could move easily along the river, making it a natural highway through the wilderness. Later, the river helped power Wisconsin's logging industry, floating massive logs downstream to sawmills.

One unique thing about the Wisconsin River is how wild and sandy parts of it still are. Large sandbars appear in summer, and the river changes shape often. In some areas, in and around Wisconsin Dells, steep sandstone cliffs rise above the water, while in other areas, the river widens and slows.

Today, the Wisconsin River teaches us how geography, history, and nature are all connected—and how one river helped shape an entire state.

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Each month, we will have a featured whale and fossil, plus we will include fun activities, ideas, astronomy news, videos and even the occasional contest where we give away free prizes like fossils, or an official Forest Whales school/library program!!!