



Whaley awesome animals!

SPECIAL SPECIES: FALSE KILLER WHALE

Despite the dramatic name, the false killer whale is not a killer whale at all. It got its name because its skull looks surprisingly similar to that of an orca, but despite being in the same dolphin family, the two animals are distant relatives with very different lifestyles. The false killer whale is a large, sleek animal, one of the biggest in the ocean, and it is one of the most social and intelligent marine mammals on Earth.

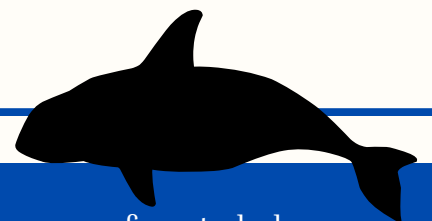
False killer whales are almost entirely black or dark gray, with a slender body and a rounded head. They can grow up to 20 feet long and weigh nearly 3,000 pounds. Unlike orcas, they have no bold white patches, and their behavior is much more sociable toward humans. They are known to approach boats, ride bow waves, and even share food with divers and other dolphins, which is rare in the animal kingdom.

These animals live in warm and tropical oceans around the world, usually far from shore in deep water. They travel in large, tight-knit groups called pods that can contain dozens or even hundreds of individuals. Pod bonds are so strong that false killer whales will stay with an injured companion rather than leave it behind.

One of their most impressive talents is hunting. False killer whales are fast, powerful predators that chase large fish like tuna at high speeds. They have been seen tossing fish into the air and catching them repeatedly before eating, almost as if they are playing with their food.

Sadly, false killer whales sometimes become entangled in fishing gear, and some island populations are considered endangered. Scientists are working hard to better understand these fascinating animals and protect them for the future.

Length: 10-16 feet
Weight: 1,500-3,000 pounds
Food: Fish, squid
Lifespan: 60-65 years
Status: Near threatened
Number left: Unknown





This Month IN SPAAAAACE!

May 1 - Full "Flower" Moon

May 5 & 6 - Eta Aquarid meteor shower. Up to 30 meteors per hour

May 18 - Moon and Venus pairing at dusk. Look to the west just after sunset!

May 31 - Blue "Micromoon" - Not only is it the 2nd full moon of the month (a rare-ish event in itself), it will also be the smallest full moon of the year.

Nature

NATIVE BEES: SMALL, BUT MIGHTY

When most people think of bees, they picture the fuzzy honeybee. But here is a surprising fact: honeybees are not native to North America. They were brought over from Europe hundreds of years ago. Wisconsin's true bee story belongs to its native bees, and it is a fascinating one.

Wisconsin is home to more than 400 species of native bees. They range from the large, familiar bumblebee to tiny sweat bees barely the size of a grain of rice. Unlike honeybees, most native bees are solitary, meaning they don't live in hives. A female bee digs a small burrow in the ground or finds a hollow stem, lays her eggs, packs in some pollen for the babies to eat, and seals it up. That's it. No queen, no colony, just a hard-working mom.

Native bees are actually more efficient pollinators than honeybees for many of Wisconsin's wild plants and crops. Bumblebees, for example, use a special technique called buzz pollination, where they grab onto a flower and vibrate their flight muscles at just the right frequency to shake loose pollen that other bees simply can't reach. Blueberries, tomatoes, and peppers all depend on this trick.

Unfortunately, native bee populations have been declining in recent years due to habitat loss, pesticide use, and disease. Several bumblebee species that were once common in Wisconsin are now rarely seen. The good news is that people can help. Planting native wildflowers, leaving some bare ground in your yard for nesting, and avoiding pesticides during bloom time all make a real difference.

This spring, take a closer look at the flowers in your yard or neighborhood. That buzzing visitor might be one of Wisconsin's 400 remarkable native bees doing its important work.





CALLING ALL BEES!



CLICK THE BEE
TO VISIT
WEBSITE

Citizen Science

BUMBLE BEE WATCH

Bumblebees are in trouble. Several species that were once common across Wisconsin and the rest of North America have declined sharply in recent decades, and scientists are working hard to figure out where surviving populations still exist. That's where you come in.



Bumble Bee Watch is a free citizen science project run by the Xerces Society, a leading insect conservation organization. The idea is simple: when you see a bumblebee, take a photo and submit it at bumblebeewatch.org. Experts will review your photo, help you identify the species, and add your sighting to a growing map of bumblebee populations across the continent.

May is a perfect time to get started, because bumblebee queens are emerging from their winter sleep right now and searching for nest sites and early flowers. Spotting a large, fuzzy bumblebee on a dandelion or flowering tree is a sign that spring is truly here. If you have a smartphone, you already have everything you need to participate.

The data collected through Bumble Bee Watch is used by real scientists to track which species are struggling, which are holding on, and where conservation efforts should be focused. Every photo submitted is a genuine contribution to protecting these important pollinators.

Visit bumblebeewatch.org to get started!





Featured Fossil: Camarasaurus

If you want to talk about big, Camarasaurus is a great place to start. This massive plant-eating dinosaur lived about 150 million years ago during the Late Jurassic period, roaming what is now the western United States in large herds. It is one of the most commonly found large dinosaur fossils in North America, and for good reason. Camarasaurus was everywhere.



Camarasaurus belonged to a group called sauropods, the long-necked, four-legged giants that are some of the largest land animals ever to walk the Earth. An adult Camarasaurus could reach 60 feet in length and weigh up to 20 tons. Despite its enormous size, scientists believe it was likely a relatively gentle browser, using its strong teeth to munch on tough plants like ferns and cycads that other dinosaurs avoided.

The name Camarasaurus means "chambered lizard," and it refers to the large hollow spaces, or chambers, found inside its vertebrae. These air pockets made the backbone lighter without sacrificing strength, a clever design that helped support the animal's incredible weight. Many modern birds use a similar trick in their bones.

That remarkable skull you see pictured here shows one of Camarasaurus's most distinctive features: a short, boxy head packed with large, spoon-shaped teeth, perfect for stripping and grinding tough vegetation. It is very different from the small, delicate skulls of other sauropods like Diplodocus.



Fossils of Camarasaurus have been found in places like Dinosaur National Monument in Utah and Colorado, where entire articulated skeletons have been preserved in beautiful detail, giving scientists a remarkably complete picture of this ancient giant.

THIS MONTH'S SCHEDULE:

- 5/2 - Union Grove High School (Public Event)
- 5/5 - School event
- 5/7 - School event
- 5/12 - School event
- 5/19 - School event
- 5/28 - School event

10,400.

Fun fact: That's the number of people (mostly kids) who have met Clara the whale in 2026 between January and April.



BOOK AN EVENT

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



Clara's Corner

WIN A DINOSAUR TOOTH!

Hi friends! I'm Clara, and I have a BIG surprise for you this month!



You may already know that I am wild about ocean animals, but did you know I also love dinosaurs and prehistoric creatures? I mean, have you SEEN a Spinosaurus? That thing makes even me a little nervous, and I am 56 feet long!

This month I am giving away something incredible: a REAL authentic Spinosaurus tooth! This is not a replica or a copy. It is an actual fossil from an actual Spinosaurus that lived over 90 million years ago. How cool is that?



Here is how to win: grab your crayons, colored pencils, or markers and draw and color your **favorite ocean animal**. It could be me, a dolphin, a shark, a crab, a narwhal, whatever you love most! Then ask a parent or teacher to post your artwork on social media (Facebook or Instagram) with the hashtag **#clarathewhale**. I will be watching, and one lucky K-5 artist will win the tooth!

Good luck, friends. I cannot wait to see what you create!

Clara

Your Favorite 56-Foot Gray Whale

LAST MONTH I VISITED
BURLINGTON, WISCONSIN, AND
830 PEOPLE CAME TO SEE ME!
THAT WAS A LOT OF NEW
FRIENDS.

FACT OF THE MONTH:

False killer whales share food with their friends. Scientists think they do it to strengthen friendships. How sweet is that?

UNTIL NEXT TIME,
KEEP YOUR FINS MOVING!



BOOKING NOW!

If you're a school looking to book a program for the 2026-27 school year, now is the time to start having those conversations. We have already been booking next year's programs for a few months, and things are going to fill up quickly. Want Clara at your school? Call or email us today!

AND NOW FOR A REALLY BAD JOKE...

What do you call a fish
with no eyes?

A "fsh."



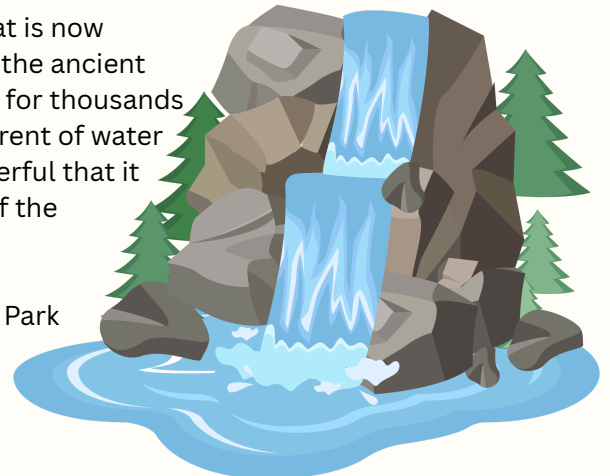
Interstate State Park – Where a Flood Changed Everything

About 10,000 years ago, something extraordinary happened in what is now northwestern Wisconsin. A massive glacial lake called Lake Duluth, the ancient ancestor of Lake Superior, had been building up behind walls of ice for thousands of years. When the ice finally gave way, an almost unimaginable torrent of water came roaring down the St. Croix River valley. The flood was so powerful that it carved a 300-foot canyon through solid basalt rock, which is one of the hardest rocks on Earth.

Today, you can stand at the edge of that canyon at Interstate State Park near St. Croix Falls and look down into the gorge the flood created. But the canyon isn't even the most dramatic evidence of what happened. That honor goes to the potholes.

As the floodwaters blasted through the basalt, spinning eddies formed along the edges. Sand, gravel, and boulders caught in those eddies were swirled around with such tremendous force that they drilled straight down into the rock like giant drill bits. The result was more than 200 circular potholes carved into the basalt, some of them enormous. The deepest explored pothole in the world is right here, measuring 60 feet deep and 10 feet wide.

Interstate State Park is also home to the western end of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, a 1,200-mile footpath that stretches all the way across Wisconsin. Whether you come for the geology, the hiking, or just the stunning river views, it is one of the most geologically remarkable places in the entire state.



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