

## Weasel in the Hen House

Told by Bob Red Hawk  
Transcribed and translated into Lenape by Margret Lenfest  
Edited by Louise St. Amour

When the European first started coming up our river, they first meet us and they asked us, "How many People in your tribe?" and we never knew how to answer that because to us the trees, the stones, and the deer are part of our tribe. We could not count the number of birds in the sky. And that misunderstanding has continued since the first contact of Europeans and our people, and they ask us "How is it that you people are superstitious - so superstitious that you talk to trees and you consider the deer a dumb animal your brother." We said "Let's ask you a question. Where do you go for water to drink?" And they said "We go to the river." And we said "Where does the deer go when he is thirsty? He goes to the river. When you are hungry where do you go?" And the European said "We go to the forest." And we said "Where does the deer go for his food? He goes to the forest. Does not the deer have young like itself and it raises them to be deer." And the Europeans said "Ok we will give you the deer, but the weasel is a blood thirsty animal. It kills wantonly. Do you consider the weasel to be your brother? And our people said "In nature the weasel might come into a field and might come upon a covey of quail and if he is a good weasel he might catch one. The weasel is a drinker of blood, but when he goes into a hen house, where all these fowl are confined and can't get away, he loses his mind and he kills wantonly. But that's because he's not in nature where Creator made him to be. He's in an unnatural place." And our people took that conversation and used that for years to explain to people how bad things happen when you don't live in balance with the Creator. And so we say we are all weasels in the hen house today.

<b>Nek</b>	<b>shewanahkok</b>	<b>enta</b>	<b>lomewe</b>	<b>paneyo</b>	<b>nalahi,</b>	<b>nkiskkunanak</b>
<i>the</i>	<i>white men</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>long ago</i>	<i>they come(sub)</i>	<i>up river</i>	<i>they meet us (excl)</i>
<b>ok</b>	<b>notuxtunanak</b>		<b>"Kexihitit</b>	<b>hech ahpuwak</b>	<b>kithakeyemenanak?"</b>	
<i>and</i>	<i>they ask us</i>		<i>how many</i>	<i>ques. they exist</i>	<i>your tribespeople</i>	
<b>Ok</b>	<b>tala</b>	<b>noxkumawenanak.</b>	<b>Nek</b>	<b>hitkuk,</b>		
<i>and</i>	<i>cannot</i>	<i>we answer them (excl)</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>trees</i>		
<b>nel</b>	<b>ahsena,</b>	<b>nek</b>	<b>ahtuhok,</b>	<b>wemi</b>	<b>nlankumkunanak.</b>	
<i>the</i>	<i>rocks</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>deer</i>	<i>all</i>	<i>they are related to us</i>	
<b>Ta hech</b>	<b>ntokimawenanak</b>	<b>nek</b>	<b>chulensak</b>	<b>mushhakunk?</b>		
<i>how do</i>	<i>we count them (excl)</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>birds</i>	<i>in the sky</i>		
<b>Ok</b>	<b>ne</b>	<b>chansitameweokan</b>	<b>ninochi</b>	<b>tetai</b>	<b>nek</b>	<b>Lenape</b>
<i>And</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>misunderstanding</i>	<i>it has always been</i>	<i>between</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>Lenape</i>
<b>ok</b>	<b>nek</b>	<b>shewanahkok</b>	<b>iapchi</b>	<b>nètami</b>	<b>nuwahawenanak.</b>	
<i>and</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>white men</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>we know them</i>	
<b>Ok</b>	<b>notuxtunanak,</b>					
<i>and</i>	<i>they ask us</i>					
<b>"Keku wench</b>	<b>kipemetunhalaok</b>	<b>hitkuk ok aesesak?"</b>	<b>Ntelawenanak,</b>	<b>"Nlankumkunanak."</b>		
<i>why</i>	<i>you all talk to them</i>	<i>trees and animals</i>	<i>we tell them</i>	<i>they are related to us</i>		
<b>Nteluwehena</b>	<b>"Ktuxtalhumena.</b>	<b>Tani hech</b>	<b>nathepiahemo?"</b>			
<i>we said</i>	<i>we question you all</i>	<i>where ques.</i>	<i>you people fetch water</i>			
<b>Ok</b>	<b>luweyok</b>	<b>"Ntahena</b>	<b>sipung."</b>			
<i>and</i>	<i>they said</i>	<i>we go</i>	<i>to the river</i>			
<b>Ok</b>	<b>nteluwehena</b>	<b>"Tani hech</b>	<b>e na</b>	<b>ahtu</b>	<b>enta</b>	<b>kahtusemit?"</b>
<i>and</i>	<i>we said</i>	<i>where ques. he goes</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>deer</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>he is thirsty-conj.</i>
<b>"E</b>	<b>sipung."</b>	<b>"Enta</b>	<b>katupwiekw</b>	<b>tani</b>	<b>hech</b>	<b>ktahemo?"</b>

*he goes to the river when you all are hungry-conj. where ques. you all go*

**Ok nek shewanahkok luweyok “Ntahena tekenink.”**

*and the white men they said we go to the woods*

**Ok nteluwehena “Tani hech na ahtu moxkamen mehemichink?”**

*and we said where ques. the deer he finds it food*

**"E tekening." "Na ahtu wulahalaok mamalisàk.**

*He goes to the woods the deer he has them fawns*

**Ok wetamamalisu. Ok nek shēwanahkòk luweyok**

*and he takes care of/raises fawns and the white men they said*

**“Yuh, konaet na ahtu ahpu elankumank,**

*ok maybe the deer exists our relative*

**shek na sànkwe kahtatàm hmukw.**

*but the weasel he wants it blood*

**Wenihelaok ok takuu litehe.**

*he kills them and not he thinks*

**Kulamhitameneyo hech nek sankweyok ahpuwak elankuntiank?**

*you all believe it ques. the weasels they are relatives*

**Ok nek Lenape luweyok, “na sànkwe pe xinkhòkihakànk**

*and the Lenape they said the weasel he comes into a big field*

**ok konaet maxkaok xeli pupukwshàk**

*and maybe he finds them (anim) many quails*

**ok welinakwsu ok tunao pupukwesh.**

*and he does good work and he catches him a quail*

**Na sankwe mwenen hmukw.**

*The weasel he drinks it blood*

**Shek enta at tipasikaonink, tani wemi tipasak ahpuwak**

*but when he goes-conj into a chicken coop where all chickens they exist*

**mènaxkhasikink na sankwe kpechehosu.**

*in fenced in place the weasel he acts crazy.*

**Ok nteluwehena kishkwik awenik ahpuwak sankweyok tat tipasikaonink.**

*and we say today people exist weasels like in the chicken coop*