

Celebrate Groundhog Day

by Carie Nixon

February 2 is Groundhog Day, a day in which tradition, probably originating from the Pennsylvania Dutch people, says that a groundhog will come out of his burrow and see if winter is nearly over. If the groundhog sees his shadow, he returns to his burrow, predicting six more weeks of winter. If it is a cloudy day and he does not see his shadow, then winter is nearly over. While actual weather records show that there is always six more weeks of winter, and that the Groundhog Day predictions are actually wrong more often than they are right, it is still fun to celebrate the day. Also, while there will be six more weeks of winter after February 2, sometimes the weather does start to moderate after this date, with somewhat warmer temperatures and fewer major snowstorms.

To get your own Groundhog Day prediction, you do not need to wake up a groundhog (not a good idea). You can make your own facsimile groundhog from paper.

1. Download and print the groundhog pattern. Use the colored version or the color your own version. If you use the non-colored version, color it before going on to #2.
2. Cut out the groundhog. Be sure to cut along solid black lines, including the lines around the ears, below the front legs, and above the hind feet. Do not cut along dotted lines.
3. If the dotted line is light colored, fold up towards the colored side of the paper. This is the groundhog's tail.
4. Fold down along the black lines, towards the unprinted side of the paper. This includes the shoulders, neck, and flaps that form the groundhog's head.
5. Roll the body of the groundhog into a cylinder, slightly overlapping the belly area. Add a piece of clear tape to hold it together.



6. Form the groundhog's head by pulling a side of the head under the front of the face, and taping the tab to the bottom side of the face front. Repeat this for the other side of the face. Pull the ears up slightly.



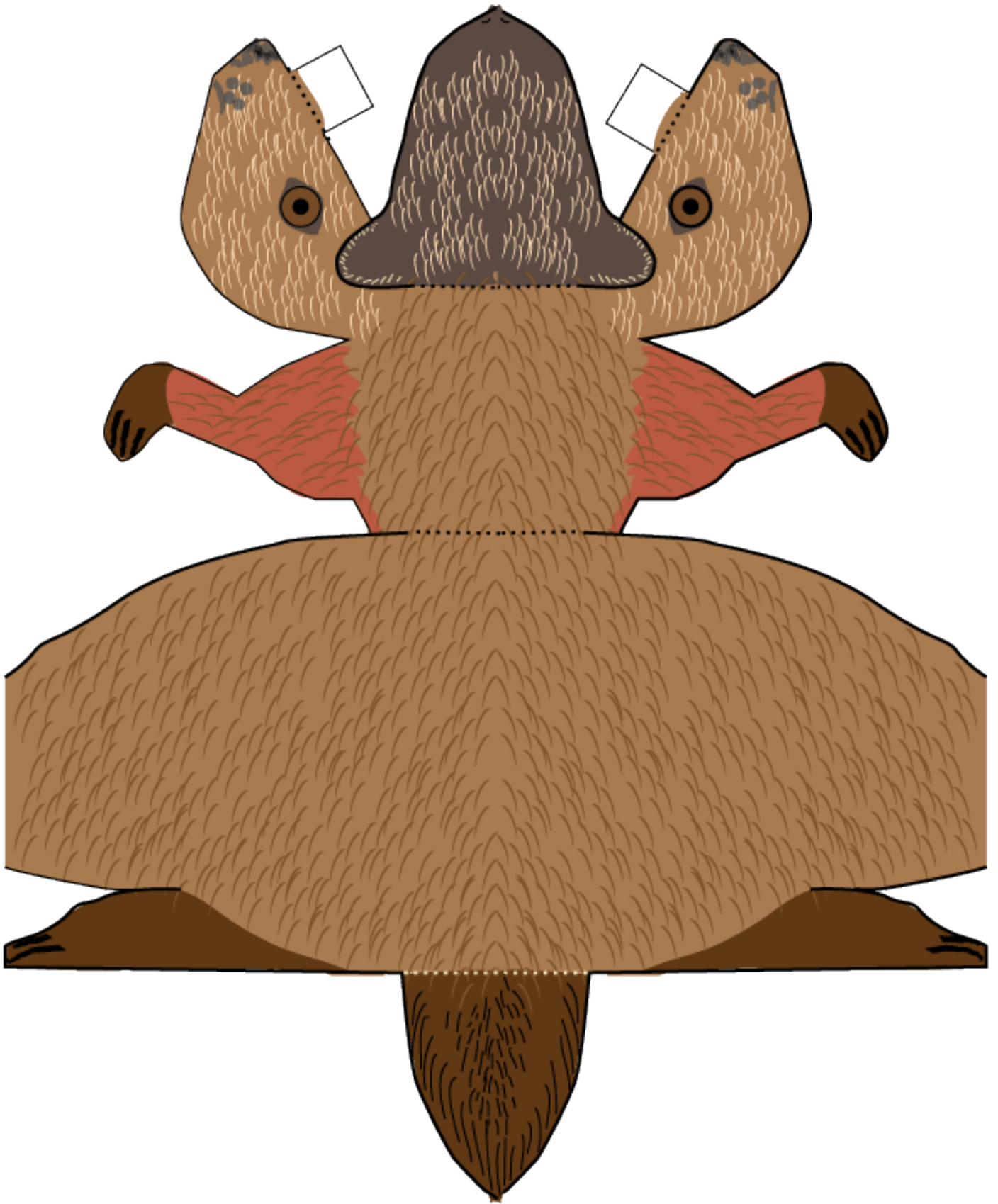
7. Pose the groundhog by pushing free corner in the shoulder area to the inside of the body cylinder, and tilt the upper body forward slightly. You now have a groundhog!



Predict the End of Winter

On the morning of February 2, Groundhog's Day, take your groundhog outside and set him on a flat surface, such as a sidewalk or picnic table. If your groundhog casts a shadow on the surface (if it is sunny), then you are predicting 6 more weeks of winter. If there is no obvious shadow (the sky is cloudy), you are predicting an early spring.





Color Your Own Groundhog

