

D'harawal

DREAMING STORIES

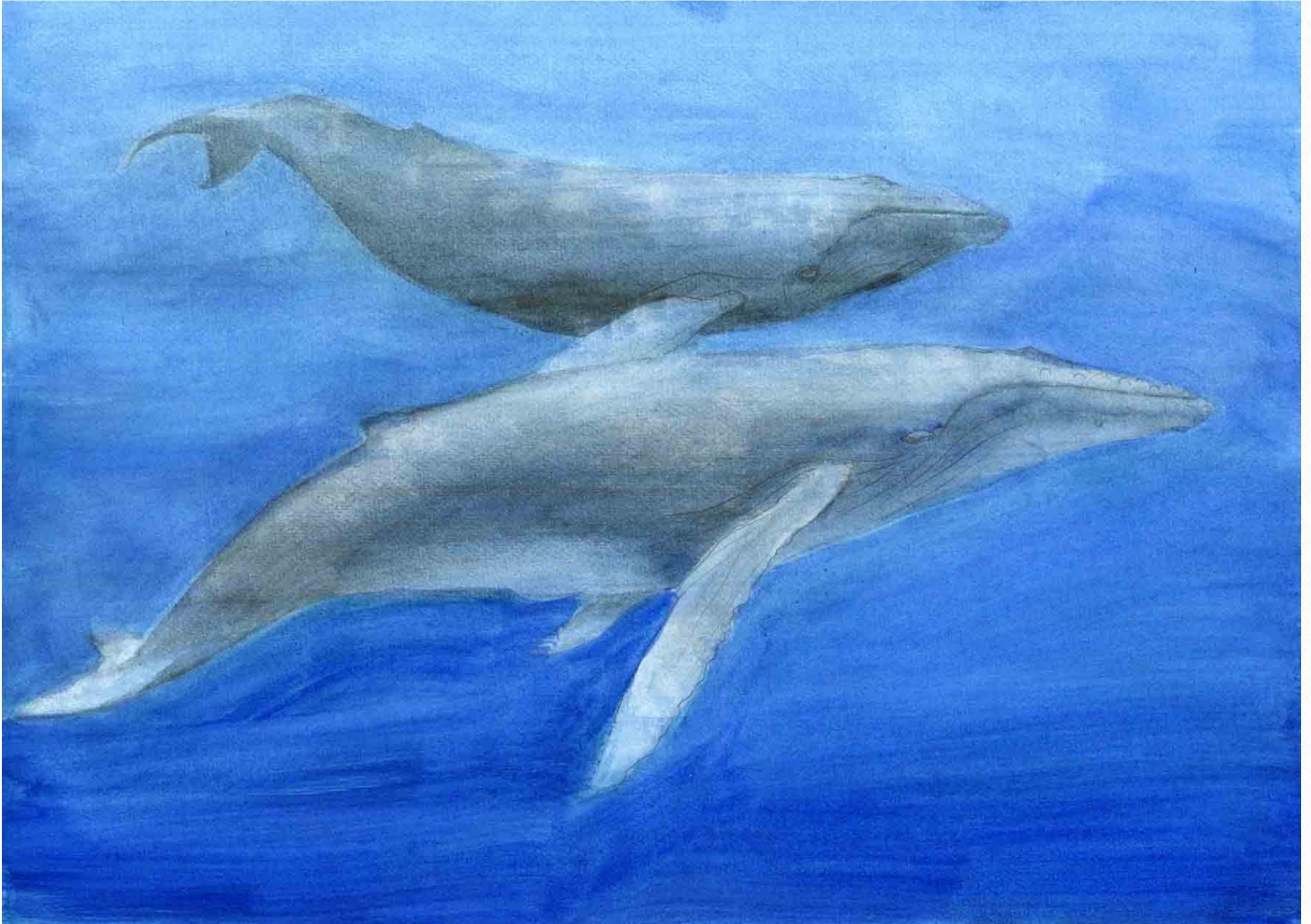
Frances Bodkin

Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews

Illustrated by Lorraine Robertson

Guwarra

The Whale and the Pelican



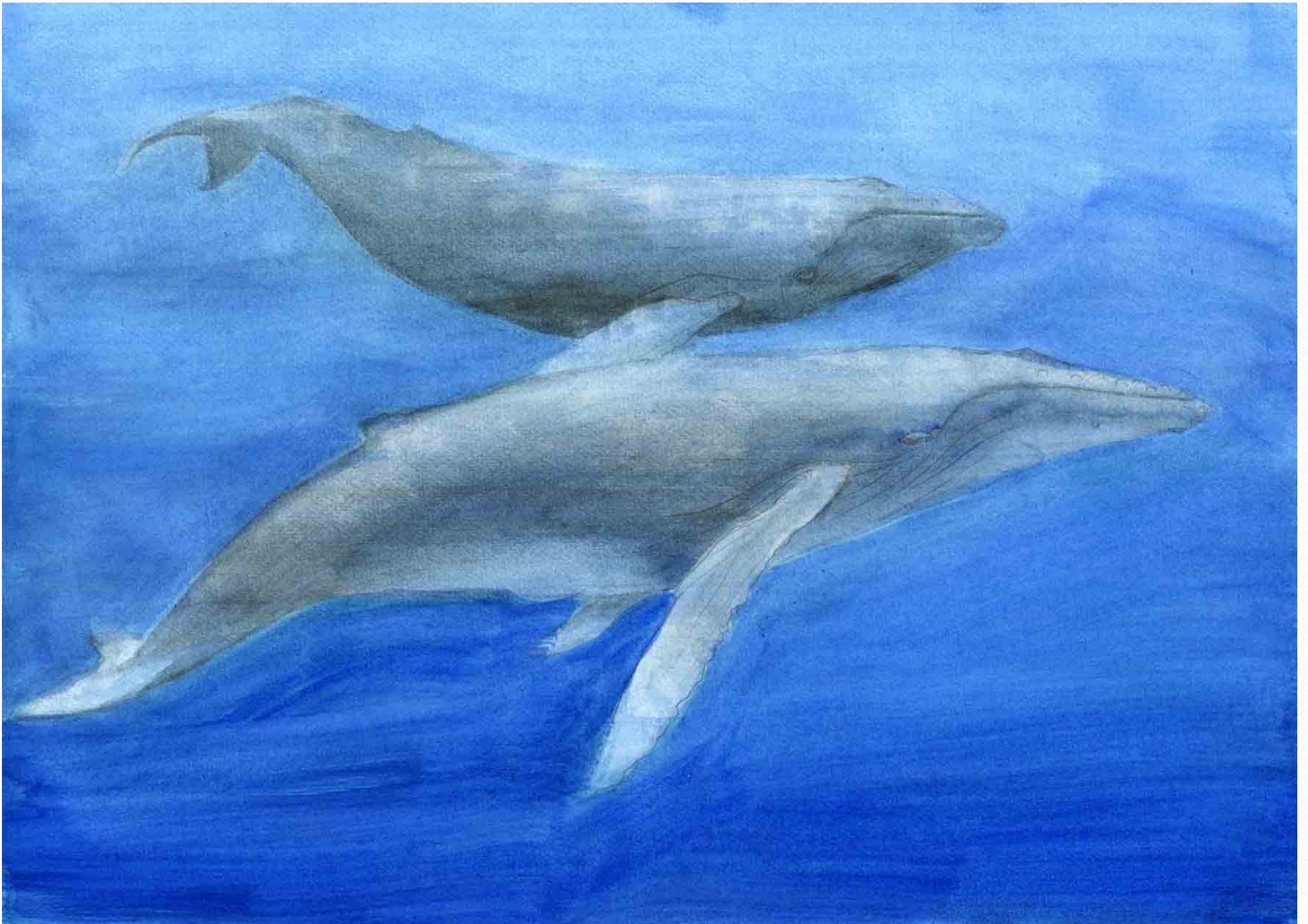
Guwarra and Goolay'yari

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Foreword

Throughout the past two hundred years, society has come to regard the Koori Dreaming stories as something akin to the fairy stories they were told as children.

However, for thousands upon thousands of years, the stories in this book were used as a teaching tool to impart to the youngest members of the clans the laws which governed the cultural behaviour of clan members. The successive attempts to destroy the Koori culture and assimilate The People into the Euro-centric population were unsuccessful, and the Dreaming Stories were able to continue in their disguise as charming legends where animals became the heroes and the heroines.

Historians and anthropologists have studied the Koori culture since they first arrived on this continent, and have come to the conclusion that the D'harawal culture is dead. Of, course, this has been done without reference to the descendants of that culture, and without even asking the proper questions. The D'harawal culture is not dead, it is a strong, living, vital culture of the Sydney and South Coast regions that just had to go underground for a while to be able to survive. Now that the right questions have been asked, we have the key to unlock a vast wealth of knowledge of this part of the country in which we live.

It is difficult to explain to a society based on commerce fuelled by the profit motive, that D'harawal culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership was respected, those stories were not told or passed on by those to whom they had been given, but the knowledge in them was used by the receiver whilst ever they walked in the Land of the D'harawals, This Land.

It is hoped that our present society is now mature enough to be able to accept the Koori Dreaming stories as they were, as they are, and as they were always destined to be; tools to teach the Children of The People about living with Earth, the Mother, in peace and harmony.

Each story contains several layers of knowledge, the first of which are the secrets. Which can only be passed on or discussed with persons of the same level of knowledge or higher than the story teller. These secrets are never told within a legend, but are remembered separately from the legend itself. These are very important components of any legend, and it is the knowledge of the secrets which determines the level of the person's worthiness to ownership of that story.

The next layer of knowledge within the stories was the law, or laws, to be obeyed. The laws of the stories were told and often repeated after the telling of each story, after which the laws were discussed and their application in life demonstrated in a variety of ways.

The third layer of knowledge contained in each story was the lessons which could be learned from the story and the lessons were taught to all members of the group as well as visitors. These lessons introduced Peoples to the means to live in harmony with each other, and the land and its resources.

In this series of D'harawal Law Legends, there are many lessons to be learned. The D'harawals believed that children learned better and more quickly when they were encouraged to work through a problem, rather than be told the answer. By sharing the stories of our ancestors with you, it is hoped that not only will you recognise and learn the lessons and laws of the Peoples of This Land, but you will also come to understand and respect the culture of The People and our feelings and relationship with the land.

The stories do not in themselves act as an instruction manual - rather they point the way and encourage The People to think, to learn and to live. It is hoped that by sharing our stories, you too may be able to think, to learn and to live in This Land.

With understanding and respect for each other we can learn to more easily share This Land and live together in peace and harmony.

Frances Bodkin

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A very long time ago, in the very beginning of the Dreaming, after the Spirit Woman had returned to her home and left the two sisters, Waratah and Wiritjiribin to care for This Land, the two sisters became very lonely. They prayed constantly to the Miwa Gawaian, asking for companions to ease their loneliness.

The Spirit Woman heard their prayers, and also the prayers from the Peoples of Another Land, where a great war was taking place. Using her special powers, she saw that the war could only result in the destruction of that Land.

But she could also see, that with a little help, the People living in that Land could fill the prayers of the Two Sisters.

Guwarra, a warrior of the Whale clan, and Goolay'yari, a man of the Pelican clan, were very concerned.

They knew that their enemies were too strong, and would destroy them all unless they could escape from Their Land. Guwarra had been captured by the enemy, but had escaped and stolen one of their great canoes.

He returned to his home only to find it destroyed and only Goolay'yari left. When Guwarra asked Goolay'yari where his People had gone, the Pelican had said that they were all hiding.

He took Goolay'yari and showed him the massive cavern where the giant canoe was hidden, and told him to gather the women and children and hide them in the great canoe whilst he readied the it for a very long journey. Goolay'yari asked if they should bring food, and Guwarra replied that they would be sleeping through the long journey and would have no need of food.

Finally, the great canoe was ready for the journey, and Goolay'yari came to Guwarra and said that the women and children were safely hidden away.

For a long time, Guwarra guided the canoe through storms of rocks, and storms of ice, and of fire, but still he continued without rest.

Finally, when his beard had grown long, Guwarra saw This Land, and guided the canoe onto the sandy beach. Exhausted, Guwarra turned to Goolay'yari, and told him to get the women and children off the canoe whilst he slept, and he laid down on the warm sand and fell asleep.

Now, Goolay'yari had lied to Guwarra. He had not collected together the women and children and hidden them on board the giant Canoe. In fact, he had not even left the canoe, but had hidden nearby until Guwarra was ready to leave. Nor did he want to return to his home, he liked This Land, and he wanted to stay here. He was not afraid here.

Whilst Guwarra slept, Goolay'yari carried a great rock into the canoe, and used it to damage it, then he wandered off to explore This land.

Meanwhile, the two sisters, watching the arrival of the great canoe, came down to the beach and saw Guwarra asleep in the sand.

They saw, too, the tracks of another being. Waratah and Wiritjiribin studied this strange person, so like them yet so different. They gathered food and medicine for him, and placed it beside his sleeping body, then they waited patiently for him to awaken.

When Guwarra finally woke up, he saw these two women sitting nearby, he saw also, the food they had laid out for him. Thanking them he ate some of the food. "I am Guwarra", he said.

The two women were not sure what he said, but smiled at him, and giggled. Wiritjiribin pointed to Waratah. "Waratah." She said.

And Waratah pointed to Wiritjiribin. "Wiritjiribin." She said.

They both pointed to Guwarra. "I am Guwarra." They said, together.

Guwarra laughed and the two women laughed with him, and together they sat down and tried to talk to each other.

But very soon he became worried, as he looked around the giant canoe, he saw that it had been damaged. And he could not find any sign of the women and children having been on

board. He followed the tracks of Goolay'yari, as he walked across the sands, but lost them when they went into the trees. Guwarra returned to where the women sat, and asked them if they had seen Goolay'yari.

They pointed to the tracks and shook their heads.

When he had learned the language of the women, and they had learned enough of the language of Guwarra, to enable them to understand each other, he explained to the women about the war in his homeland, and how he had asked Goolay'yari to hide the women and children in the great canoe.

He told them that he must return to collect the women and children, but he would come back as soon as he could.

The women stayed with Guwarra whilst he repaired the great canoe, and although they were sad to see him go, he had promised them that he would return with the women and children of his clan.

They were overjoyed that at last the Spirit Woman had answered their prayers, and they would have other people with whom to share This Land.

When the time was right, Guwarra guided the great canoe in the direction of his homeland.

Meanwhile, Goolay'yari wandered over This Land, marvelling at the beauty of it. He no longer worried about Guwarra, or about the women and children. He was happy to be safe.

But pretty soon he became very lonely, and returned to the beach only to find that the great canoe had gone.

He realised that Guwarra must have returned to his homeland to collect the women and children. Goolay'yari was distraught with guilt. He knew that if his friend Guwarra was to die, it would be his fault. He grew feathers, and a large beak in which he could store food, to enable him to travel the seas to seek his old friend.

Guwarra, the Whale, never forgot his promise to the two sisters, and oftentimes he returns with the women and children to the sands of This Land, seeking the company of the two women who helped him so long ago.

And sometimes, when a woman stands on the special headland and sings, the whale clans will answer her call, and come to visit
This Land.

Information about the wildlife in the story:

Guwarra Gah-wuh-rah

Humpback Whale

Scientific name: *Megaptera novaeangliae*

The Humpback Whale is a large baleen whale that migrates annually along the east and west coasts of Australia.

Identification: The Humpback Whale has distinctive knobby protuberances on the head and long flippers making this one of the most easily recognised of the large baleen whales. Its name is derived from the hump under the dorsal fin, which is particularly noticeable when the whale arches its back to dive. This is one of the most studied of the great whales as individuals can be recognised by characteristic black and white patterns especially on the underside of the tail.

Size range: 15 - 18m, weight of 40 tonnes

Distribution: Humpback Whales have a worldwide distribution involving two broad population groups that do not appear to mix - one in the Northern Hemisphere and one in the Southern Hemisphere. Humpback Whales are found in the waters off coastal Australia.

Habitat: The Humpback Whale generally inhabits the open ocean, except during the annual migration between cold water feeding areas and the warmer calving grounds. During this time they will often appear quite close to the coast and on the journey south (in the Southern Hemisphere) will congregate for short periods in sheltered bays on route.

Seasonality: The Humpback Whale spends summer in the Antarctic, feeding on krill, before travelling north during winter to breed. The best time to see these whales off the coast of Sydney is in June, July and August.

Feeding and Diet: Humpback Whales main prey, krill and small schooling fish such as mackerel, are caught by repeated open-mouth lunges into the prey school. The resultant mouthful of water is then expelled through the baleen plates, trapping the prey items, which are then swallowed. This method of feeding can often involve a number of whales in what appears to be a cooperative feeding strategy.

Feeding Habit: filter-feeder

Life cycle: Humpbacks do not reach sexual maturity until they are at least seven years old. A single calf is born after a gestation period of approximately 12 months and will generally stay with the female for a further year.

Mating and reproduction: The breeding season is characterised by the winter migration to warm tropical waters and the long complex sounds or songs produced by the males during the journey. The reason for these calls is not known but it could be a combination of sexual and territorial display.

Because whales provided valuable meat and oil products, whaling stations were established along the coast and the Humpback Whale was hunted almost to extinction. The numbers of Humpback Whales crashed during the peak of the whaling industry especially in the 1960s and 1970s. The Humpback Whale has been protected in the southern hemisphere since 1963 and a worldwide moratorium on whaling was declared in 1986. All marine mammals in Australia are protected and the Humpback Whale population is making a slow recovery, however they are still considered vulnerable.

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/humpback-whale#sthash.Fb6K8ug4.dpuf>

Goolay'yari Goo-lay-yah-ree

Australian Pelican

Scientific name: *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

Identification: There are seven species of pelicans in the world, all of which are similar in shape and, with one exception, are primarily white in colour. Males are larger than females. The most characteristic feature of pelicans is the elongated bill with its massive throat pouch. The Australian Pelican's bill is 40 cm - 50 cm long and is larger in males than females.

Size range: 1.6 - 1.8 m long, 2.3 - 2.5 m wingspan

Distribution: The Australian Pelican is found throughout Australia, Papua New Guinea and western Indonesia, with occasional reports in New Zealand and various western Pacific islands.

Habitat: Pelicans are widespread on freshwater, estuarine and marine wetlands and waterways including lakes, swamps, rivers, coastal islands and shores.

Seasonality: Pelicans are highly mobile, searching out suitable areas of water and an adequate supply of food. Pelicans are not capable of sustained flapping flight, but can remain in the air for 24 hours, covering hundreds of kilometres. They are excellent soarers and can use thermals to rise to considerable altitudes. Flight at

1,000m is common, and heights of 3 000 m have been recorded. By moving from one thermal to the next, pelicans can travel long distances with a minimum of effort, reaching air speeds of up to 56 km/hour.

Feeding and Diet: Pelicans mainly eat fish, but they are opportunistic feeders and eat a variety of aquatic animals including crustaceans, tadpoles and turtles. They readily accept 'handouts' from humans, and a number of unusual items have been recorded in their diet. During periods of starvation, pelicans have been reported capturing and eating seagulls and ducklings. The gulls are held under water and drowned before being eaten head first. Pelicans will also rob other birds of their prey.

The bill and pouch of pelicans play an important role in feeding. The bill is sensitive and this helps locate fish in murky water. It also has a hook at the end of the upper mandible, probably for gripping slippery food items. When food is caught, the pelican manipulates it in its bill until the prey typically has its head pointing down the pelican's throat. Then with a jerk of the head the pelican swallows the prey. The bill is delicately built. The lower jaw consists of two thin and weakly articulated bones from which the pouch hangs. When fully extended, the bill can hold up to 13 litres. The pouch does not function as a place to hold food for any length of time. Instead it serves as a short-term collecting organ. Pelicans plunge their bills into the water, using their pouches as nets. Once something is caught, a pelican draws its pouch to its breast. This empties the water and allows the bird to manoeuvre the prey into a swallowing position. The pouch can also serve as a net to catch food thrown by humans, and there are sightings of pelicans drinking by opening their bill to collect rainwater.

The Australian Pelican may feed alone, but more often feeds as a cooperative group. Sometimes these groups are quite large. One group numbered over 1,900 birds. A flock of pelicans works together, driving fish into a concentrated mass using their bills and sometimes by beating their wings. The fish are herded into shallow water or surrounded in ever decreasing circles. During periods of starvation, pelicans have been reported capturing and eating seagulls and ducklings. The gulls are held under water and drowned before being eaten headfirst. Pelicans will also rob other birds of their prey.

Mating and reproduction: Breeding depends on environmental conditions, particularly rainfall. Pelicans are colonial breeders with up to 40 000 individuals grouping on islands or secluded shores. Breeding begins with courtship. The female leads potential mates (two to eight or more) around the colony. As the males follow her in these walks, they threaten each other while swinging their open bills from side to side trying to attract the female's attention. The males may also pick up small objects, like sticks or dry fish, which they toss in the air and catch again, repeating the sequence several times.

Both sexes perform 'pouch-rippling' in which they clap their bills shut several times a second and the pouch ripples like a flag in a strong breeze. As the courtship parade progresses, the males drop out one by one. Finally, after pursuits on land, water or in the air, only a single male is left. The female leads him to a potential nest site.

During the courtship period, the bill and pouch of the birds change colour dramatically. The forward half of the pouch becomes bright salmon pink, while the skin of the pouch in the throat region turns chrome yellow.

Parts of the top and base of the bill change to cobalt blue, and a black diagonal strip appears from the base to the tip. This colour change is of short duration, the intensity usually subsiding by the time incubation starts.

The nest consists of a scrape in the ground prepared by the female. She digs the scrape with her bill and feet, and lines it with any scraps of vegetation or feathers within reach of the nest. Within three days egg-laying begins and eggs are laid two to three days apart. Both parents share incubation and the eggs are incubated on their feet.

The first-hatched chick is substantially larger than its siblings. It receives most of the food and may even attack and kill its nest mates. A newly hatched pelican has a large bill, bulging eyes, and skin that looks like small-grained bubble plastic. The skin around the face is mottled with varying degrees of black and the colour of the eyes varies from white to dark brown. This individual variation helps the parents to recognise their chick from hundreds of others.

The chicks leave their nests to form creches of up to 100 birds. They remain in creches for about two months, by the end of which they have learnt to fly and are fairly independent. Wild birds may live between ten and possibly 25 years or more.

Breeding season: At any time of year

Clutch size: 1 to 3

Incubation: 35 days

Time in nest: 28 days

<http://australianmuseum.net.au/australian-pelican#sthash.VMW4PkDr.dpuf>

Wiritjiribin

Superb Lyrebird

Scientific Name: *Menura novaehollandiae*

The Superb Lyrebird looks like a large brown pheasant with rufous wings and black bill, legs and feet. The adult male has an ornate tail which he fans out during a mating display. The tails of females and young males are long, but lack the spectacular plumage. Females are smaller than males.

One other lyrebird found in Australia is Albert's Lyrebird, *M. alberti*, which is restricted to an area around the Border Ranges, on the Queensland-New South Wales border. This bird is redder in colour and the male's tail is less elaborate.

The Superb Lyrebird is found in the south-eastern Australian mainland and southern Tasmania.

It is a ground-dwelling species in moist forests, feeding on insects, spiders, worms and, occasionally, seeds. It finds food by scratching with its feet through the leaf-litter. Birds tend to forage alone, but females and young males may be seen feeding together.

They roost in trees at night and rarely move away from a home-range of about 10 km in diameter. The male secures a territory, attracting potential mates by singing and dancing on one of several mounds within it, while throwing the tail forward over the body and shaking it in display. He will mate with several females but the female alone builds the nest, incubates the eggs and cares for the young.

The Superb Lyrebird's song consists of expert mimicry - both natural and mechanical sounds imitated and joined together in a rousing medley. Sounds can include anything heard in the bird's immediate surroundings, such as chainsaws, car engines, dog barks and local native birds as well as other calls: a loud alarm shriek and a series of whistles and cackling notes that are used as territorial calls.

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

Waratah

Scientific Name: *Telopea speciosissima*

(plant family: Proteaceae)

Floral Emblem of New South Wales

Telopea speciosissima, was proclaimed the official floral emblem of New South Wales on 24 October 1962. Robert Brown (1773-1858) named the genus *Telopea* in 1810 from specimens collected in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Sir James Smith (1759-1828), a noted botanist and founder of the Linnaean Society in England, wrote in 1793:

'The most magnificent plant which the prolific soil of New Holland affords is, by common consent, both of Europeans and Natives, the Waratah. It is moreover a favourite with the latter, upon account of a rich honeyed juice which they sip from its flowers'.

The generic name *Telopea* is derived from the Greek '*telopos*', meaning 'seen from afar', and refers to the great distance from which the crimson flowers are discernible. The specific name *speciosissima* is the superlative of the Latin adjective '*speciosus*', meaning 'beautiful' or 'handsome'. 'Waratah', the Aboriginal name for the species, was adopted by early settlers at Port Jackson.

Telopea is an eastern Australian genus of four species. Two are confined to New South Wales, one to Tasmania and one extends from eastern Victoria into New South Wales. *Telopea* belongs to the family, Proteaceae, which is predominantly Australian and southern African in distribution and includes genera such as *Grevillea*, *Banksia*, *Macadamia* and *Hakea*. *Protea cynaroides*, King Protea, is the official floral emblem of the Republic of South Africa.

The Waratah is a stout, erect shrub which may grow to 4 metres. The dark green leathery leaves, 13-25 cm in length, are arranged alternately and tend to be coarsely toothed. The flowers are grouped in rounded heads 7 to 10 cm in diameter surrounded by crimson bracts, about 5 to 7 cm long. It flowers from September to November and nectar-seeking birds act as pollinators. Large winged seeds are released when the brown leathery pods split along one side.

The species is fairly widespread on the central coast and adjoining mountains of New South Wales, occurring from the Gibraltar Range, north of Sydney, to Conjola in the south. It grows mainly in the shrub understorey in open forest developed on sandstone and adjoining volcanic formations, from sea level to above 1000 metres in the Blue Mountains. Soils within its range tend to be sandy and low in plant nutrients. Rainfall is moderately high. Waratah plants resist destruction by bushfires, a natural element of their habitat, by regenerating from the rootstock. Flowering recommences two years after a moderate fire.

The Waratah is a spectacular garden subject in suitable soil and climate; it flowers prolifically and tends to be long-lived. Failures can usually be attributed to the effects of unsuitable soil conditions, aspect or climate. Seeds should be sown in a coarse sandy medium and soon after germination the seedlings should be transplanted into individual pots of similar soil. Fresh seeds germinate readily but the seedlings are prone to the fungal disease, 'damping off', which may be reduced by exposing the seedlings to full light, except for the shading necessary after transplanting. Propagation by cuttings is also possible. In the garden, plants should be grown in lightly shaded to sunny positions in deep, well drained soil. They need to be well watered until fully established but waterlogging must be avoided.

The Waratah responds well to pruning which encourages flowering the following year, and overcomes the natural tendency of the shrub to assume a straggly shape. Some pruning is achieved by cutting flowers for decoration. It is a spectacular cut flower and lasts well in water.

Flowers are usually crimson, but a rare creamy white form, *Teloepa* 'Wirrimbirra White', has been cultivated successfully as a horticultural curiosity. Manipulated hybrids of *T. speciosissima* have been produced combining the grandeur of its flowers with the greater frost tolerance of other *Teloepa* species. Hybrids between *T. speciosissima* and the Braidwood Waratah, *T. mongaensis*, have smaller flowers but are usually more floriferous with a compact shape and attractive foliage. One of these hybrids is the registered cultivar, *Teloepa* 'Braidwood Brilliant', a spectacular garden plant developed at the Australian National Botanic Gardens.

The Waratah occurs naturally in at least ten national parks in the geological formation, known as the Sydney Basin. Brisbane Water, Dharug and Macquarie Pass National Parks are among the areas where this species is conserved. Waratahs are cultivated north of Sydney and in the Dandenong Ranges, Victoria. They are grown in Israel, New Zealand and Hawaii for the cut flower trade. It was introduced to England in 1789 but cannot survive English winters out of doors except in the south-west coastal regions, and it rarely flowers in glass-houses. It is also cultivated in California.

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/emblems/nsw.emblem.html>