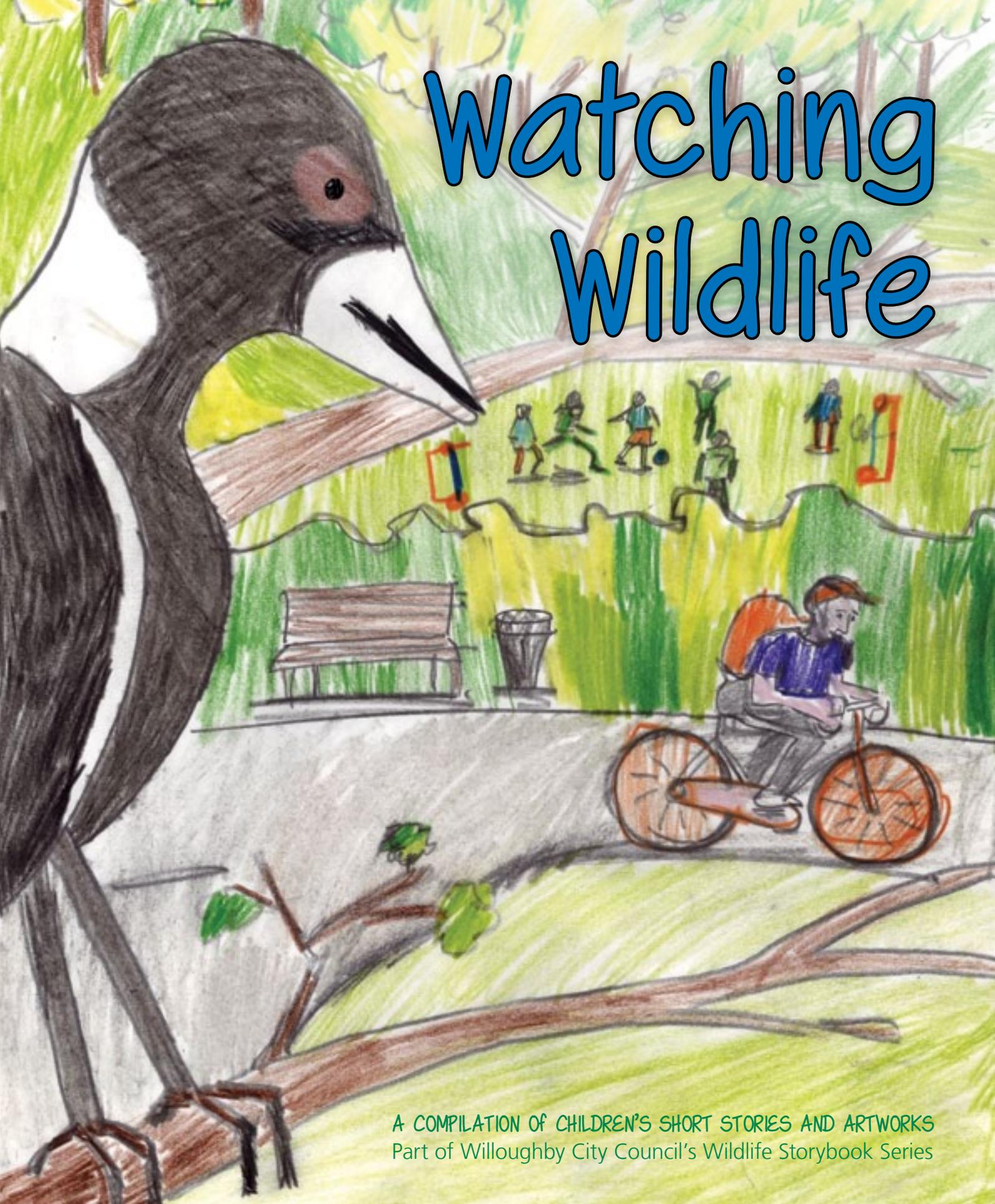


Watching Wildlife



A COMPILATION OF CHILDREN'S SHORT STORIES AND ARTWORKS
Part of Willoughby City Council's Wildlife Storybook Series

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Willoughby City Council's Wildlife Officer, PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057.

Further information about Willoughby's local bushland reserves and their
wildlife is available from Willoughby City Council:

31 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW 2067
02 9777 1000 or www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au

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Read the Full Collection...

2016



2015



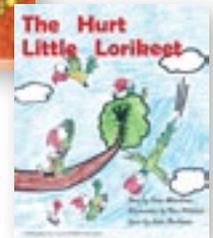
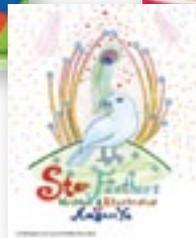
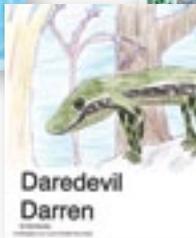
2014



2013



2012



2011



Willoughby's Wildlife Storybook Series

This book of short stories is part of an educational project designed to facilitate 'kids teaching kids' about local wildlife in the Willoughby area. Year 5 students at each primary school in Willoughby were asked to first research then create an artwork and write a creative story about a local species chosen for their school.

An in-class presentation was provided to students to learn about their unique native animal and how it survives locally. The presentation was an important opportunity for all Year 5 students to hear about the local environment and how it is managed by Willoughby City Council.

Children shared their learnings by writing a creative short story or poem and read it to other students and family members. This book features at least two stories and four artworks from each participating school. Also, included is information about each animal and ideas on how we can help ensure it thrives in the Willoughby area.

In order to further spread the conservation message, this book and storybooks from previous years are available at all local and school libraries within Willoughby and other Council libraries in the Greater Sydney region.

This year, students were also encouraged to become more involved and join in citizen science activities. Locally, across Australia and around the world people are helping to collect data for land managers and scientists. Every animal sighting recorded helps make a difference.

You can record wildlife sightings via the Willoughby City Council Wildlife Watch web page to help with local management decisions and Australia wide via ClimateWatch. The animals chosen for this year's storybook are species that ClimateWatch scientists are monitoring and are found in the Willoughby area. Reports, especially any signs of breeding and current climate conditions provide valuable data for scientists in numerous fields.

The storybook project is part of Willoughby City Council's wider Bushland Interpretive Program. The Program offers guided bushwalks and talks for the community and school groups with the aim to connect the local community with the local natural environment, and to develop understanding and participation in the preservation of the environment.

Willoughby City Council hopes each story in the series will inspire more children (and adults) to take a keen interest in their amazing local environment and wildlife.

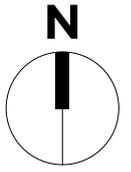
If you would like to learn more about Willoughby's environment, please contact Willoughby City Council on 9777 1000 or visit www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au to view our list of guided bushwalks, events, walking track maps and to report wildlife sightings.

Watching Willoughby's Wildlife

We are lucky to live in suburbs with so much wildlife. Many residents that live in the Willoughby area not only enjoy living alongside wildlife but like to observe animals activity, reporting sightings to Council on the Wildlife Watch web page. Anyone who enjoys watching wildlife can help record wildlife. Several citizen science projects exist that depend on everyday people recording data, the Powerful Owl Project, Hollows as Homes and ClimateWatch are all excellent examples of this.

This map shows some recent locations of animals found in this book, as seen by our local Wildlife Watchers.





White-bellied Sea-Eagle



Crested Pigeon



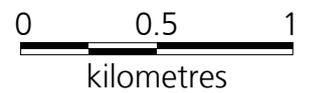
Eastern Yellow Robin



Moon Jelly



Zebra Top Shell



About the Striped Marsh Frog

- This frog has shades of brown with distinctive dark stripes down its back. It also has a dark stripe across its face like a mask.
- It has a very recognisable call so is easily identified. It sounds like a tennis ball being hit, "tok," they can call constantly for up to 10 hours after heavy rain. That's a long game of tennis!
- They are not too fussy so will take the opportunity to live in almost any water source. Garden ponds, creeks, roadside ditches, dams or even your pool, they are a very adaptable species.
- The Striped Marsh Frog will eat almost anything smaller than itself including other frogs.



This once common species of frog has recently been in decline in the Willoughby area most likely due to the long periods of dry weather we are experiencing. Striped Marsh Frogs like a permanent wet area to live in. All frogs are very susceptible to climate change and water quality changes.



Its natural predators are large snakes and birds but also non-native species such as domestic cats and dogs.

It's really important to keep your dog on a lead in Wildlife Protection Areas and to always clean up their poo (dog poo is easily washed into water sources). Also keep your cats indoors, especially at night.

Consider creating a wet area in your garden for frogs and other wildlife.

Artwork by Esther Lim



Artarmon Public School

Artwork by Ashley Ma

Life as a Striped Marsh Frog

By Pari Arkadi

Lennie is a Striped Marsh frog,
His cousins live in a log,
Everything he got,
He would make them all wet,
Because he lives in a pond.
And he was very, very fond of swimming.
Now, one nice day,
He heard insect spray (to kill mosquitoes),
It sprayed from a rubber hose,
The unpleasant smell, his eyelids closed.
He could tell,
It made him sick,
And the water had an oil slick,
But how he would be able to live his life,
Or will he just have trouble and strife?
Which will end his life?

If we act now, we still have time,
Or the clock will chime and mark full time.
Use things that the environment finds kind,
Or we will yell YIKES!
It won't take very long,
When everything is gone,
The frogs will stop croaking,
I am not joking.
This will affect,
The web of life,
Out of balance,
Nothing will survive.
It is up to us to save the future,
Think how your actions,
Will impact on nature.



No Stripes Marsh Frog

By Rhea Iplani (artwork by Raya Fattahi-Moein)

The wind blew the crowded nest of Striped Marsh tadpoles as they peacefully swam together. Unfortunately, one of the tadpoles swam way too far! When the tadpole grew up into a healthy stripy frog, he decided to go and find its family.

The first person the Striped Marsh Frog hopped to was the great powerful wizard beetle. He knew every spell you could think of. The Striped Marsh Frog politely asked the Wizard Beetle if he knew where his family was. The beetle agreed to give the frog a map of where his family lives. "On one condition, if you offer your stripes, I am happy to make the trade" said the beetle in a deep voice. The frog gasped in distress. However, in the end he was happy to give up his stripes to go to its family.

Days and nights passed. The harsh wind blew the trees creating a rustling noise. The Striped Marsh Frog was doubtful where to go. Suddenly, "drop, drop, drop" Water? He was pulled towards the sound because of his curiosity. And then, "Oh mum! Is that you?" "It certainly is" cried its mum. "Stripes or not, home is where I belong". They all celebrated with a yummy snack of squashed insect pancakes!



About the White-bellied Sea-eagle

- The White-bellied Sea-eagle is the second largest of our birds of prey in Australia, with a wingspan of up to two metres. The Wedge-tailed Eagle is slightly larger.
- They have a beautiful white belly. They have contrasting dark grey wing feathers and also a short, rounded, white-tipped tail.
- The White-bellied Sea-Eagle is seen near large rivers, fresh and salty lakes, estuaries, coastal seas and islands.
- Their diet consists of mainly fish, sea snakes and turtles but they can also prey on mammals and other birds.
- They are excellent hunters with amazing eyesight. Their sight is four to eight times better than humans.



The White-Bellied Sea Eagle can often be seen perched high on a tree limb or headland crevice which gives them a view over the water. They are also skillful in using the thermal updrafts to soar effortlessly as they search for food.

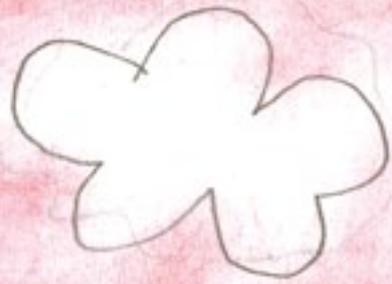


They are quite often seen in pairs as they will mate with a partner for decades. They build a high nest of sticks and initially the female will stay with the chicks while the male will hunt for food. The young eagle will stay with mum and dad for about six months learning how to fly and hunt.

We are lucky enough to have at least two locations in Willoughby where they have been found nesting. If you're around Middle Harbour look for them soaring over the water.

If you ever have a problem with rats, make sure you use a trap and not poison. Raptors like eagles and owls can die from eating poisoned animals.

Artwork by Jake Fisher



Castle Cove Public School



Artwork by Alexandra Dikranian

Fail, Fail, Success

By Grace Clayton

Crash! Branch after branch Ellie came crashing down; metre by metre she fell, until she landed on the large, long, spiky, brown branch. She had always feared this branch. Ellie stayed there for a while, not just a minute or two but was stuck for an entire week! Finally, she managed to get herself back up to the nest.

Ellie wasn't sure why she couldn't fly. She tried every single day making sure she ate the right food to give her enough energy. But nothing worked! She had always struggled to fly from the moment she hatched. Ellie dreamed about soaring high up into the air with all the other White-bellied Sea-eagles. She wanted to be able to spot a little bunny from 3.2 kilometres in the air, dive down, catch it, and fly away with the bunny squirming in her claws.

Even after continuously trying for two weeks, she still couldn't fly. "What am I meant to do with these large two metre wings?" Ellie would constantly mumble to herself.

After a while Ellie began to get frustrated with her friend for offering to help her fly. Suddenly, she realised that she needed Sandy now more than ever to help her make her dreams come true. She squawked and squawked for Sandy's help. Sandy and Ellie stood on the edge of the tree, "breathe, focus and be confident." Sandy said. To Ellie's amazement, she spread out her wings, and after wobbling for a while, she was off and started flying high up into the sky. Ellie was amazed that after trying for so long she managed to master the skill so quickly. Thanks to Sandy's help, Ellie is now a competent flyer.



Artwork by Grace Clayton

White-bellied Sea-Eagles

By Bea Farley

Sea-Eagles, Sea-Eagles, there's many in the world,
Brown, white, black, maybe even swirled.

But there is one you may not find,
Because it lives near or behind.

A great cliff so tall and high,
The perfect place to soar and fly.

This Sea-Eagles, try to guess,
Here's a clue, it has no crest.

It has white in its name,
But this great bird plays no game.

The male is smaller than wife,
But that doesn't mean he'll spare your life.

Sea-Eagles have massive wings,
1.9 metres they're great big things.
Even though their wings are big,
Their short tails are like a twig.

You can find them near your house,
Or maybe even chasing a mouse.
You can find them across the globe,
But where it's cold, I don't think so.

Their cousins are black and white,
But they are not the same height.
One of them has a long orange beak,
While the sea eagle is oh so sleek.

It's often found near creeks and bays,
But hidden, it almost always stays.
You can find them near mangroves,
But if you want to see them, come down to Castle Cove.



About the White-striped Bat

- Also known as the White-striped free-tail bat, it is a microbat measuring up to 9cm long. It is the largest microbat in the Willoughby area.
- It has chocolate brown fur and distinctive white stripes down the side of its body, (and sometimes across their chest too). It has a wrinkled face, large ears and a long free-tail (not attached to wings like many other bats).
- They feed at night for insects such as moths, mosquitos, beetles, midges and flying termites. Fantastic to keep the mozzie numbers down around your home!
- Their habitat includes woodlands, forest, shrublands, grasslands and urban areas. They like to roost in hollows, under loose bark or in roofs where it's dark and protected.
- The White-striped Bat is one of the few microbats whose call is audible to the human ear. It sounds like a clicking noise.

The White-striped Bat, like all microbats, use echolocation to hunt for food. They fly over the treetops making small sounds through their mouth. The sounds bounce off objects, like insects, and come back to the bat. The bats listen to the sounds that come back and are able to tell exactly where things are.



Microbats need to roost in dark protected areas. O.H. Reid Reserve in Chatswood West is perfect for them because of the tall forest and open water bodies. Unfortunately they are threatened not only by natural predators such as owls and snakes, but also by removal of old trees causing loss of habitat.

Artwork by Emily Hong



Chatswood Public School

Artwork by Tyra Watt

Wings of the Night

By Yuying Chen

Squeak! Squeak!
Through the dusk,
Hiding, roosting under bark,
A small wonder shall take flight.

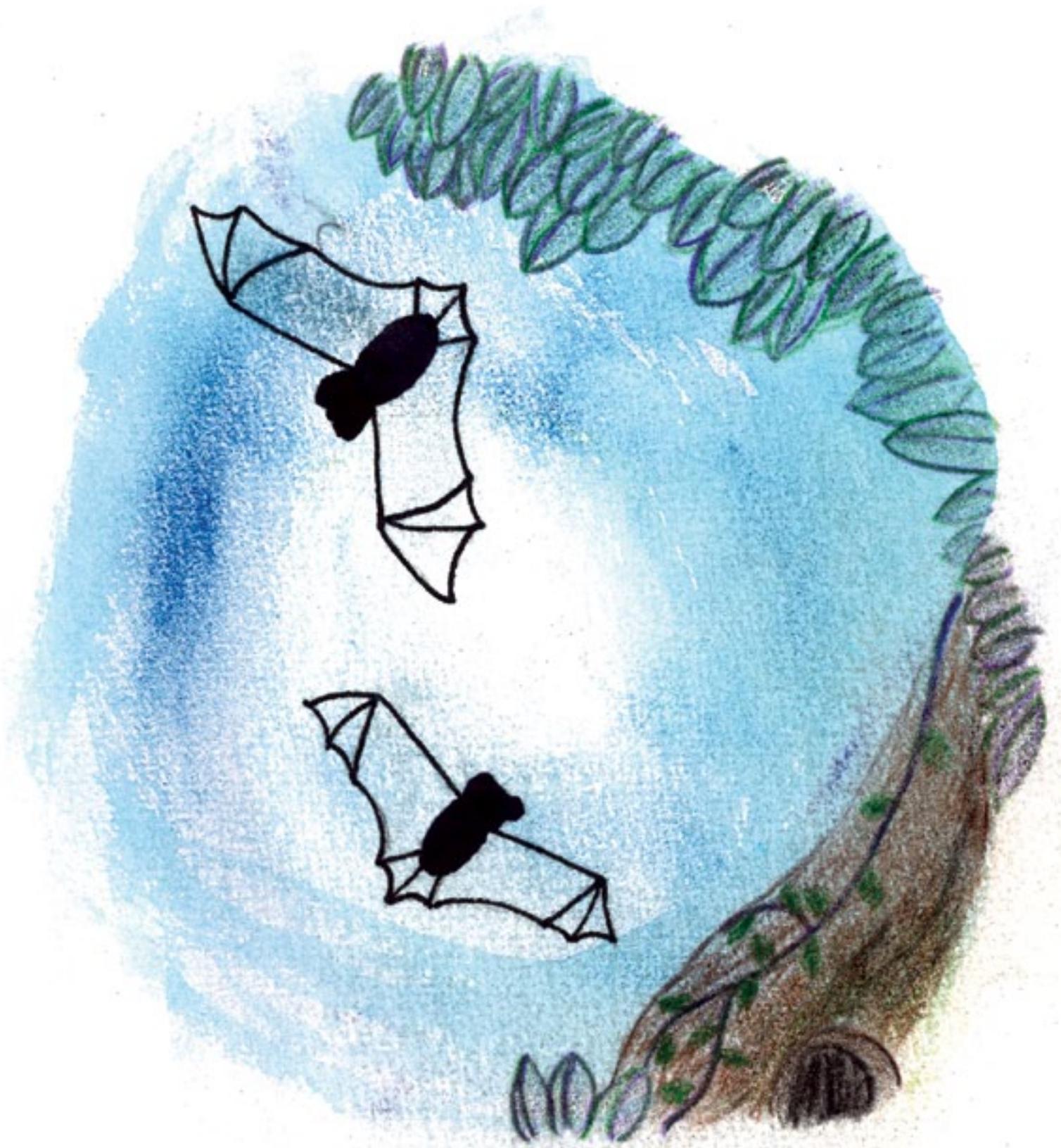
In, out, up, down,
Among their shaded emerald glen,
Black shadows glide and twirl,
Creepy crawlies beware.

Squeak! Squeak!
You hear it again,
Dragon's wings zip by,
Black shadows prowl the sky.

In, out, up, down,
They're on the prowl again,
No bug, mosquito or moth,
Among treetops dare stray.

Squeak! Squeak!
Along a path of pure moonlight,
Down the silvery veil of light,
Under a moon's watchful eye.

Suddenly, crimson skies,
These children of the night take flight,
Under bark and in trees,
They take their places as wings of the night.





My First Solo Hunt

By Hwa-Young Cho

I blinked my eyes open to darkness. Around me, I could hear a rustling sound as the other White-striped Bats stretched their big wings in preparation for flying. Normally I would know their names, but they arrived only a sunrise ago, joining us in a maternity roost. Tonight was the night. My mother finally permitted me to go out hunting with the other bats in my group, for the very first time!

As the first bat took off, I squeaked in excitement. When it was my turn to fly off, mother gave me a few last tips on hunting and navigating in the dark. “Remember to make your echoes really strong when searching for insects!” She called as I flapped unsteadily into the early evening sky. My white stripes on my chocolate brown belly fur glowed in the moonlight as I disappeared into the tree canopy.

Everything was huge! Diving into the dense, dark forest, I felt a worm of doubt deep inside me. What if I didn’t catch anything? Mother would be so disappointed! Feeling more determined, I began sending out an echolocation call. Ignoring the soundwaves bouncing off the tree branches, I caught the echo of what I suspected was a moth. I quickly reached down and caught the moth in my mouth, which I had flicked upward with my tail. What a lucky catch! Triumphant, I flew home to my small tree hollow.

I tumbled into my tree hollow, squeaking, “Mother! I caught a moth!” My mother’s large brown wings wrapped around me tightly. “I knew you could do it!” Mother whispered in my ear. It was that moment of triumph when I felt like a champion.





About the Willie Wagtail

- The Willie Wagtail is a small black and white bird, however it is the largest of the Australian fantail group to which it belongs.
- It is distinctive because of its black throat and white eyebrow and whisker markings and the constant sideways wagging of its large tail.
- They are fearless birds and you can get quite close before they fly away.
- They like to eat insects such as moths and butterflies and can feed by foraging on an open lawn or in the air. They are extremely agile flyers and fast insect hunters.
- Willie Wagtails are seen in most open habitats such as open forest, woodlands, fields and golf courses. They are often found near watercourses and are a common site at Mowbray Athletics Field in Lane Cove North.



The Willie Wagtail is an iconic Australian bird with its well-known song and wagging tail. We are very lucky to have seen increasing numbers in Willoughby lately.



During breeding season in spring and summer a pair will aggressively defend their territory. Both the male and the female will build a neat cup shaped nest made of woven grasses, covered in spider's web with a soft lining of hair or fur.

The female usually lays a clutch of 3-4 eggs which are often threatened by rats, cats and other birds despite the Willie Wagtail's aggressive defence. The babies will leave the nest after only 11-17 days which can make them vulnerable to predators such as foxes and dogs. You can help the Willie Wagtail by keeping your dogs and cats contained.

Artwork by Douglas Cassidy

Mowbray Public School

Artwork by Jake Cutbush



Super Willie Saves the Day Once Again

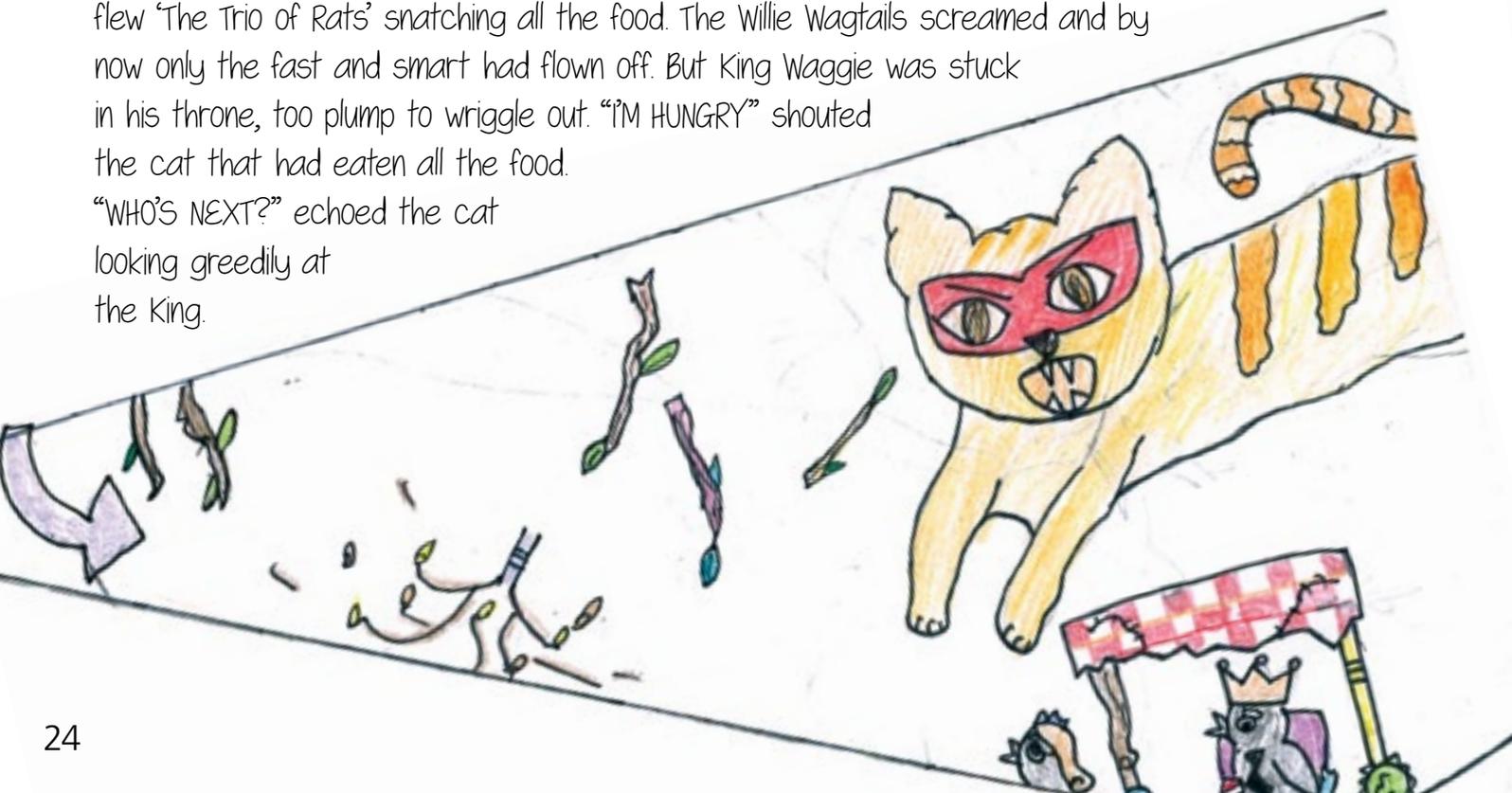
By Myllia Lafforgue

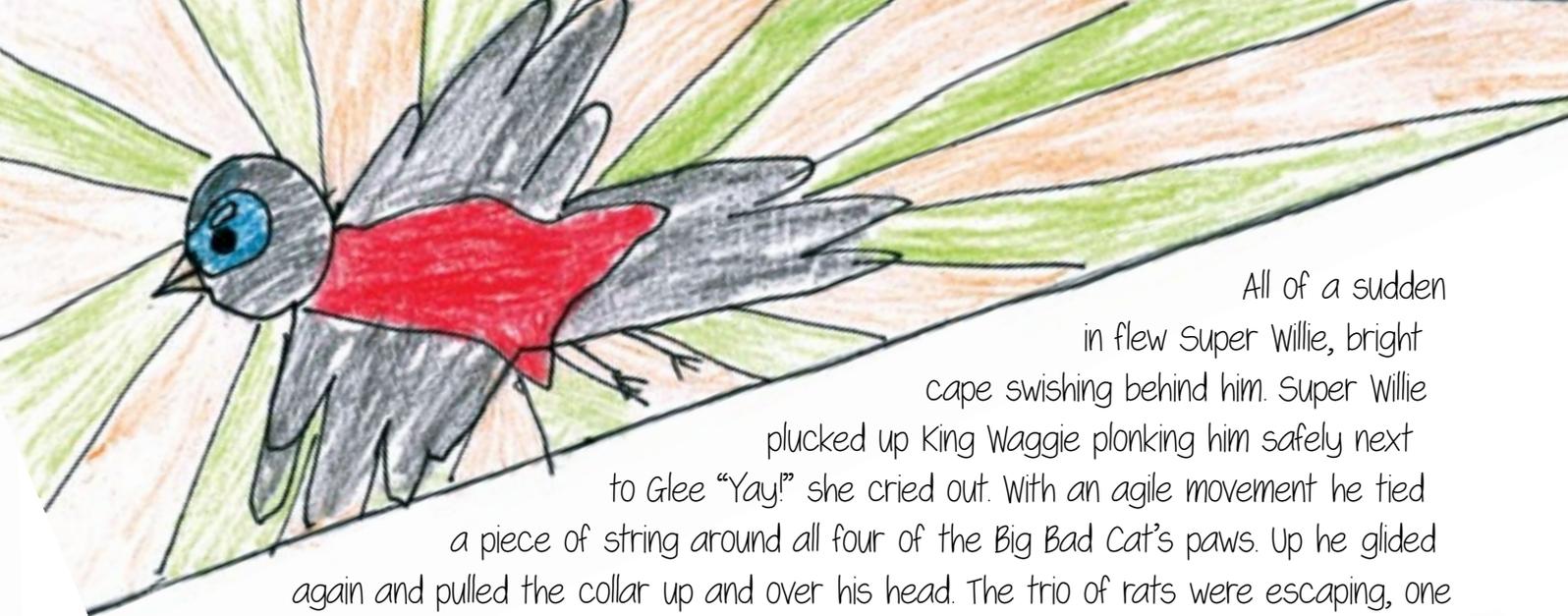
Sitting proudly on his throne was King Waggie with his precious daughter Glee next to him. In front of him was his kingdom of Willie Wagtails enjoying the feast and music on the King's birthday. The colours of gowns and suits swished and swayed in time to the music. King Waggie admired his grand castle. Its big chandelier sparkled and gleamed as it hung from the roof so beautifully.



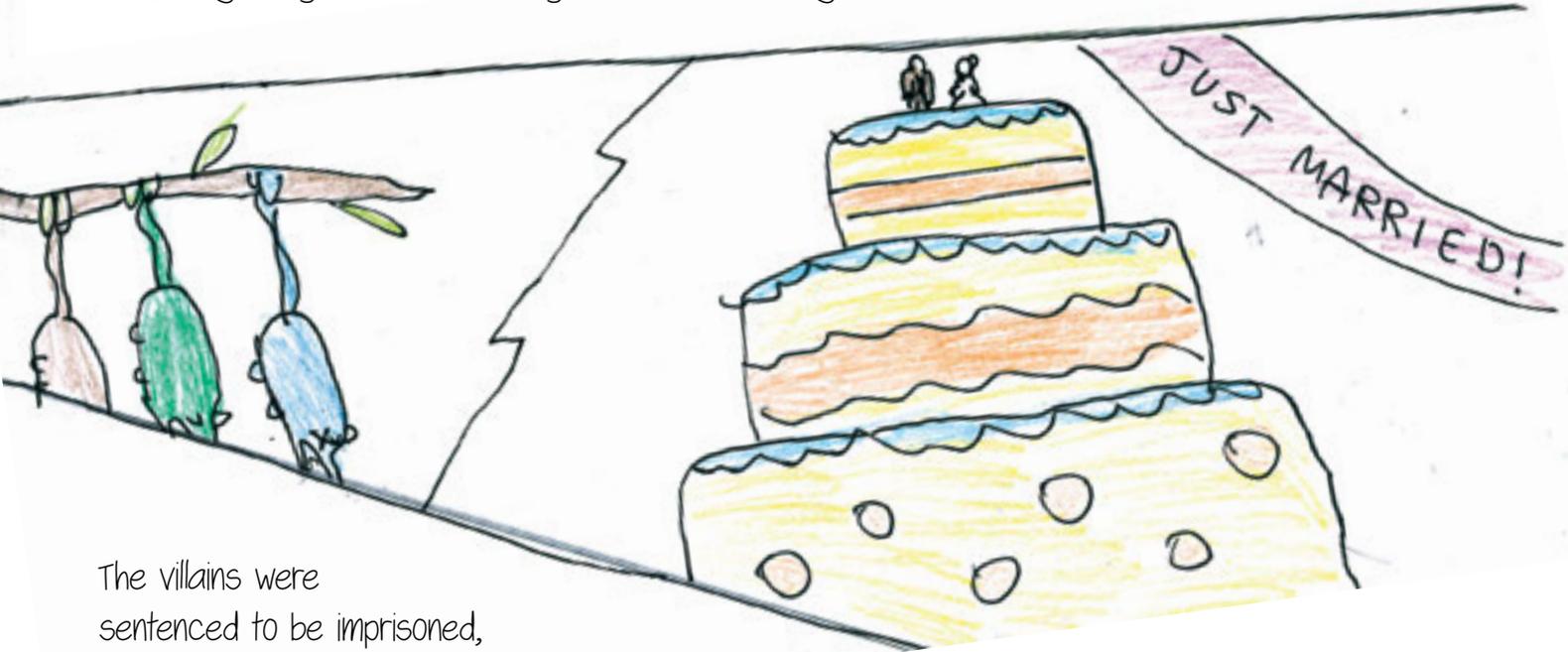
“BANG” went the roof of the threaded twigs and out poked the ‘Big Bad Cat’ snarling. Then in flew ‘The Trio of Rats’ snatching all the food. The Willie Wagtails screamed and by now only the fast and smart had flown off. But King Waggie was stuck in his throne, too plump to wriggle out. “I’M HUNGRY” shouted the cat that had eaten all the food.

“WHO’S NEXT?” echoed the cat looking greedily at the King.





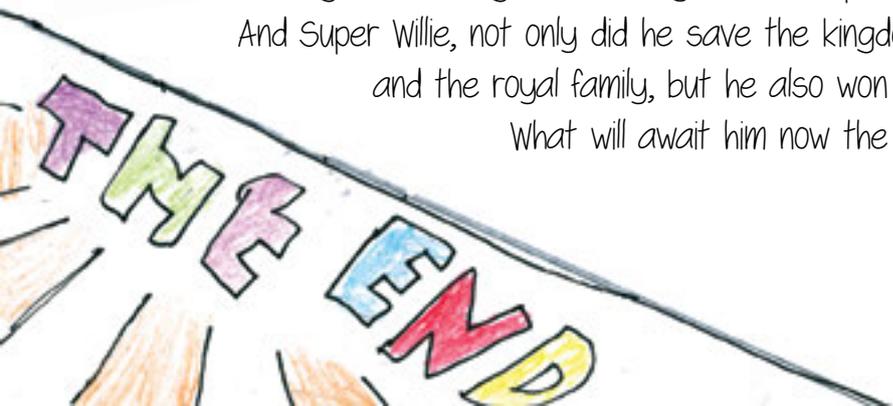
All of a sudden in flew Super Willie, bright cape swishing behind him. Super Willie plucked up King Waggie plonking him safely next to Glee "Yay!" she cried out. With an agile movement he tied a piece of string around all four of the Big Bad Cat's paws. Up he glided again and pulled the collar up and over his head. The trio of rats were escaping, one more step and not only were the eggs they stole gone but also justice. 'Whoosh' went Super Willie with one last move cornering them. He snatched the trio of rats by the tails and tied them onto a loose twig. They were taken away and never seen again.



The villains were sentenced to be imprisoned, and now lived in the sewer where the metal was much stronger than twigs. Would they ever escape?

And Super Willie, not only did he save the kingdom, the eggs and the royal family, but he also won the heart of the princess.

What will await him now the villains have gone?



Little Bird

By Lily Rengger

Willie Wagtail – oh so brave,
A tail waving bird,
Known to fly around Willoughby,
And wave on his journey.

Willie Wagtail – flew and flew,
A fearless little bird,
He perched on the head of a jumpy kangaroo.
And waved until one thirty.

Willie Wagtail – flew and flew,
A carefree little bird,
He perched on a shoulder of a customer in Chatswood Mall,
And waved until two thirty.

Willie Wagtail – flew and flew,
A bold little bird,
He perched on the back of a yappy dog,
And waved until three thirty.

Willie Wagtail — flew and flew,
A friendly little bird,
He stood next to a singing kookaburra,
And waved until four thirty.

Willie Wagtail — flew and flew,
A clever little bird,
He stood next to an echidna,
And waved until five thirty.

Willie Wagtail — flew and flew,
A homesick little bird,
He perched on a wandering wallaby,
And waved until six thirty.

Willie Wagtail — flew and flew,
A chirpy little bird,
He felt so happy, he sang to a koala,
And waved until seven thirty.

Then he went to sleep...



About the Moon Jelly

Hi I am a Moon Jelly. People call me a blobber fish or a plain old jellyfish. But I ain't any jellyfish, I am a Moon Jelly!

I am basically see-through apart from my four aqua rings on the top of my body. I have cilia on my body that is quite sticky. So that means that if any little animals just happen to run into me, my cilia will catch it and will bring it down to my mouth.

I have many predators including the Sun Fish, Sea Turtle and sadly larger jellyfish. I was once a tiny little jellyfish that doesn't even look like a jellyfish.

I like to snack on small planktons like molluscs, crustaceans, fish eggs and other small jellies. I can grow up to be 15 inches (38cm in diameter).

My scientific name is *Aurelia aurita*. I am also a carnivore!

I live in a large group of Moon Jelly in the sea. Sadly, there are so many sea creatures that eat us, so whenever we see another group of moon jellies we join up together.



My tentacles are poisonous for small marine animals but people are not affected by the toxin since it does not penetrate the skin. You never know, I might bump into you!

Words and artwork by Katie Barker

A child's drawing of an underwater scene. The background is a textured blue representing water. In the upper right, a large hand with orange-tipped fingers reaches towards a white jellyfish with a pink flower on its bell. Below, a purple jellyfish with a yellow flower and a grey, crumpled plastic bag are visible. The scene is filled with small black-outlined bubbles and a tiny pink worm-like creature at the bottom right.

Northbridge Public School

Artwork by Phoebe Rees

A Moon Jelly's Tale

By Lily Richardson

Part 1

I started off as little cilia, but then grew to the size of a fist.

Then suddenly I realised I was a Jellyfish!

A Moon Jelly to be precise,

a carnivore of the sea.

I eat plankton and their organisms.

It tastes too good to me.

The mind blowing molluscs,

The scrumptious crustaceans,

Some exemplary eggs,

They're delicious creations.

But what I really don't like is, I also taste great!

Mr Sea Turtle and Ms Sunfish want me on their plate.

So I swim and I swim as fast as I can,

Escaping is really my only good plan.

But when they can't see my clear, pretty shadow,

They swim away hungry and go with the flow.

That's enough chit chat it's time to get dressed,

For the party tonight there's no time to rest!

Part 2

I splash right through the bright coral door,
When my glimmering body hits the dance floor.
The glistening moonlight makes me light up and shine.
I see my friends having such a swell time.

The fish and the clams are humming a tune,
And all by the light of a silvery moon.
But it suddenly stopped with a really loud splash
The ocean went silent and rather gobsmacked.

There it was, a shark as large as the room.
He smirked and grinned with a grin full of doom.
And then he turned to me.

"What do you want?" I screamed and I cried.
"To come in and dance!" he politely replied.

"If that's all, you're very welcome of course!"
"And at any time" added Mrs Sea Horse.
He smiled and he sang, into the light,
And we soon carried on with the rest of the night.

Then a school of fish also asked to come in,
Followed by a crab, a slug and a giant dolphin.
A clam, a turtle, an eel and a whale,
This is what I call one Moon Jelly Tale.

Angelica's New Friend

By Isobel O'Brien

Angelica ran along the water's edge, brushing her hand through the golden sand. Angelica was looking for shells. It was a sunny summer's day, a perfect time for shell hunting. Angelica sat down on the moist smooth sand. Digging frantically, then her hands hit something large and squashy and wet as it washed into the bay.

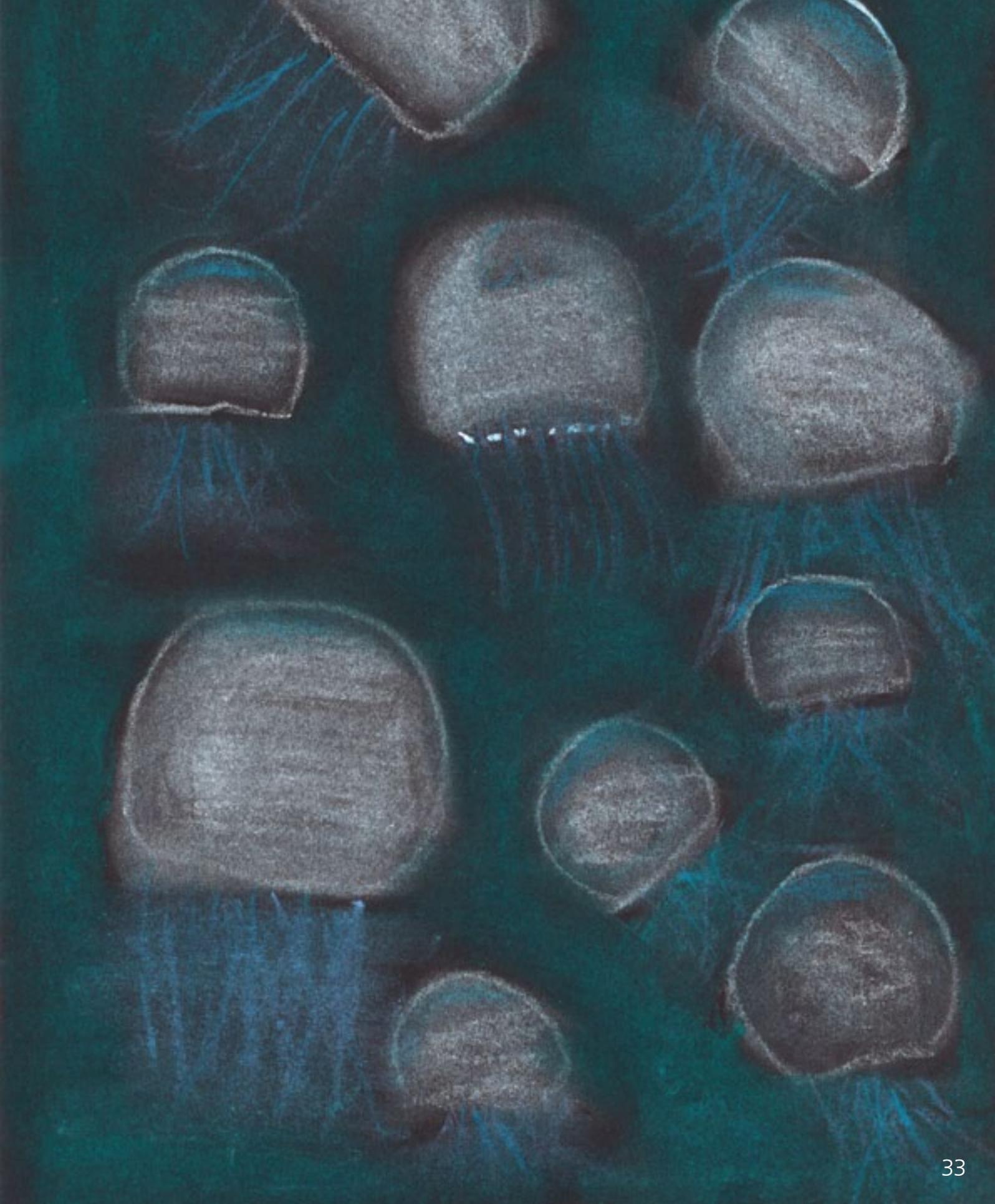
Angelica was immediately amazed by the peculiar sea creature. "Hello, I am agent Moon" the jelly said. "I have travelled, many days and nights to get to you Agent Jelly". Angelica smiled, her friends at school called her Jelly, but Agent Jelly sounded wicked! Agent Moon continued "I am from America, I had to pass Antarctica to get here and it was minus six degrees. Freezing! Anyway then I passed to Hawaii and it was thirty two degrees there. I almost melted."

Angelica thought for a moment as it took her a while to process all the thoughts in her head. "So Agent Jelly, are you ready". Angelica nodded, "Yes!" Agent moon handed her a device that allowed her to breathe underwater and Angelica gave the moon jelly her favourite purple shell. "Let's go" Angelica whispered as they dived into the ocean.

Angelica felt adrenalin rushing through her veins. As they swam through the Pacific Ocean Angelica saw many amazing things. A friendly shark called Freddy, a giant clam shell called Charlotte and a dolphin called Diana. Angelica was totally amazed.

When they arrived in the American waters Agent Moon talked to his boss while Angelica waited, holding her breath. Agent Moon came out, "Agent Jelly, you have graduated from Cilia Club, welcome to Jelly Agency". Angelica grinned. "Do I go back now?" she tentatively asked. Yes, you do and I shall escort you back".

As they passed Freddy, Charlotte and Diana, Angelica said goodbye. She swam up to the surface and started to search for shells.



About the St Andrew's Cross Spider

- St Andrew's Cross Spider is one of 836 species of spider in Australia. They are common and easy to see for us because they are doing well in urban areas. Their natural habitat ranges from rainforest to open forest.
- They have lovely stripy patterns on their abdomen of black, white and yellow.
- They feed on insects such as flies, moths, butterflies and bees which become entangled in the web. The spider will secure them in a wrapping of tight silk before taking a bite.
- They often sit with their legs in pairs making them look like they only have four legs.
- The female is much larger than the male so he must mate carefully for fear of being eaten by her!
- Predators include birds, lizards and frogs and they are always in danger of humans walking through their web. Eeek!

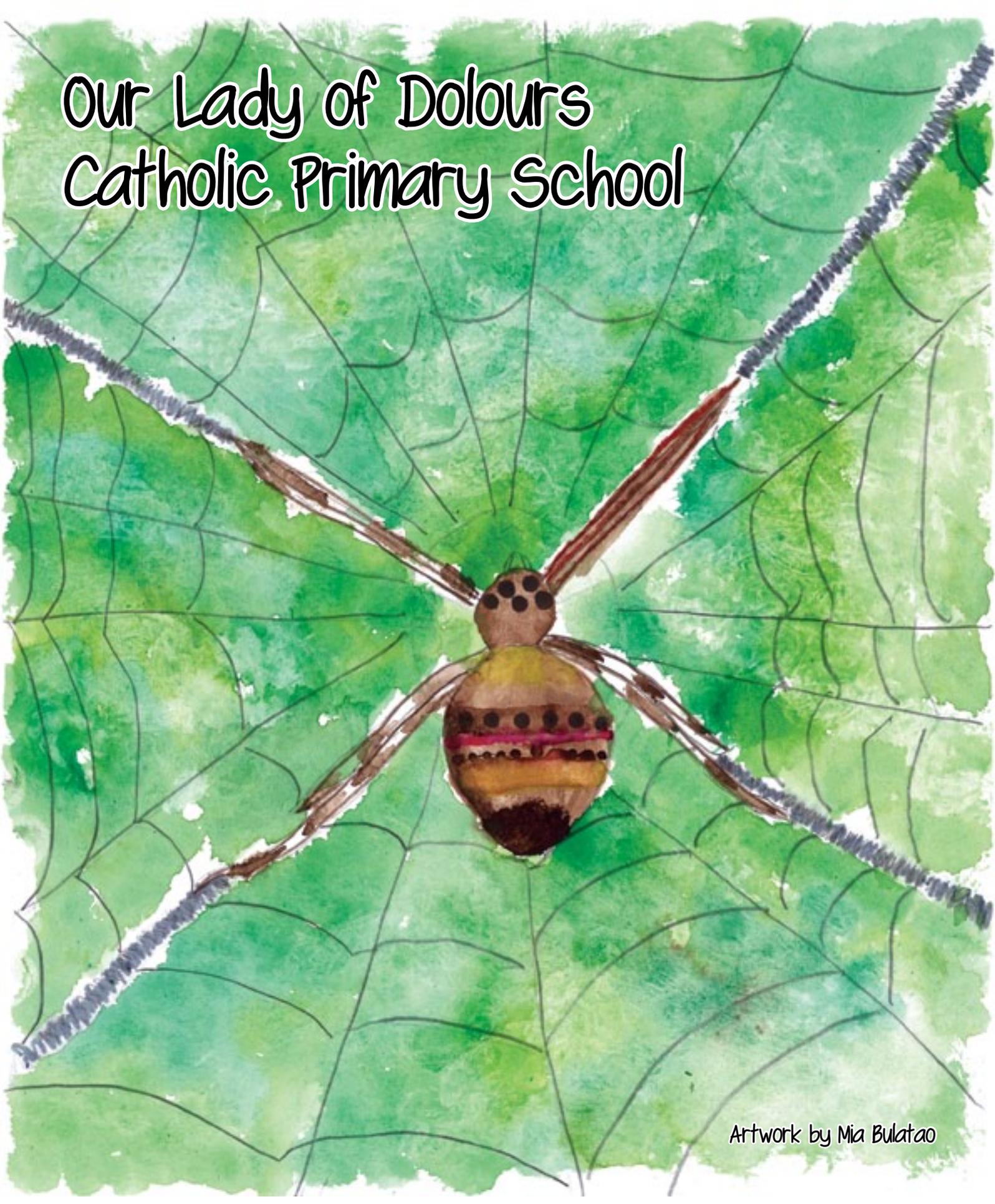


The St Andrews Cross Spider's web is an orb shape with distinctive thicker white cross design in the middle, called a stabilimentum. Why they do this is a bit of a mystery but there are numerous theories. One is that it is to attract insects into the trap of the web at night. The ribbon-like silk thread reflects ultra violet light strongly and this is attractive to insects.

If you find a St Andrew's Cross Spider make sure you don't destroy the web, watch how she grows and develops over the warmer months. They truly are fascinating spiders and they will do you a favour and catch a few insects for you.

Artwork by Ethan Tse

Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary School



Artwork by Mia Bulatao

Mary and Jerry's Fun Time

By Jake Lee

"Hi, my name is Mary.
Would you like to marry me?"

"Hi, my name is Jerry.
Of course, I'm free!"

"Come over to my web tonight.
It has zigzag ribbons of bluish white
with a silvery cross in the middle of it
Plenty of room for you to sit."

"Ok." said Jerry, "I will come over soon.
So we can sit and watch the beautiful moon."

"Oh!" said Mary, "I'm impressed with you!
But I'm thinking what will we do?"

"Let's hunt." said Jerry,
"that's a good thing to do."

"A fly? A moth? A bee? Or a butterfly or two?"

"That sounds good to me!"

"I will wrap it in silk so the prey can't flee!"

"Mary what a spectacular St Andrew's Cross
Spider you are.

Your silvery carapace is a wonderful star.
Your colourfully striped abdomen is fantastic too!"

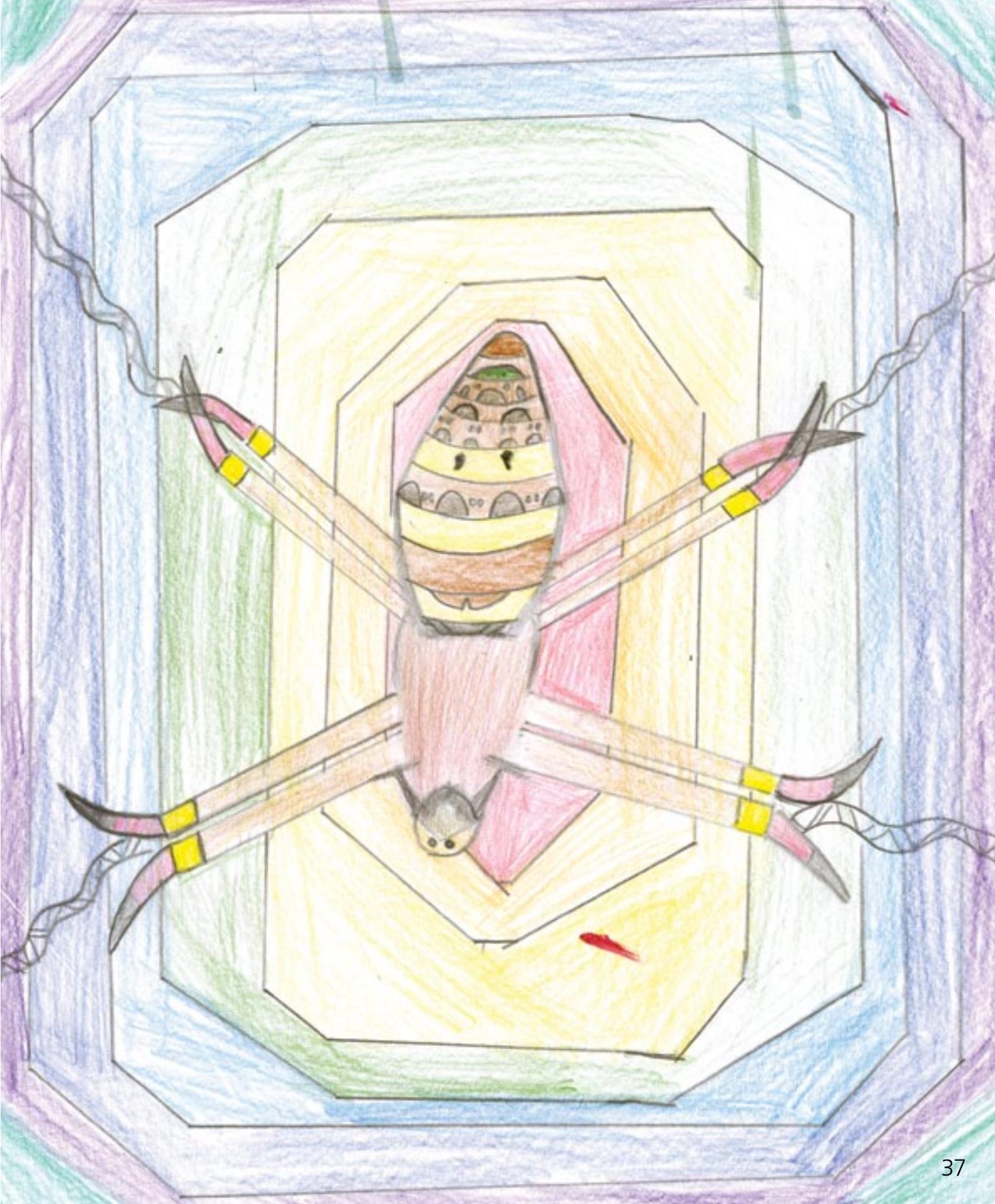
"What a lovely compliment, thank you."

"Jerry, your legs are muscly and long.
I can't see anything that's wrong
They're creamy brown pairs
Covered with little short hairs!"

"Mary, you are so clever.
How you hang upside down
Under your web, so you won't be found
You are much bigger than me.
Hanging like a cross between the trees."

Jerry thought nervously about her size.
He knew the females eat their guys.
"Promise me that you won't eat me too."

Finally, Jerry and Mary married.
Then, Mary eats... Jerry.



Diary of a spider

By Sophie Mavrangelos

Friday 25 August 2017

Mother and father have been going overboard, dressing me up for a special occasion happening tomorrow. When I told my brother Sam about this, he looked at me darkly and said, "better watch out, troubles are coming." But I didn't pay him any attention. Ever since I was a newborn he would always pull pranks on me and my 698 other siblings.

Saturday 26 August 2017

I can't believe I'm saying this but I agree with what Sam said. That's a first, we never agree, but something horrible has happened. No, not horrible. Worse than horrible. Remember that 'special occasion' mother was getting ready for? Turns out I'm old enough to mate. I'm doomed. 40 of my brothers went out to mate. They never came back. I don't even go near my sisters in case they'll eat me, let alone a stranger. Sam blissfully watches me suffer, taking pleasure in every moment. He later told me that we have a hard life and I agreed. What am I going to do?

Sunday 27 August 2017

It was the worst day ever. Mother had to force me off the family web. I was shaking uncontrollably and on the verge of tears. Reluctantly, I stepped inside a female's web. She was trouble right from the start. The moment I walked in she lunged at me, her sharp teeth glinting. I didn't need convincing. I shot out of her web but she was right on my tail. I turned every corner, trying to lose her. An hour later she was still chasing me. I'm not really in peak physical condition so I was getting tired. She must be really hungry I thought. Long story short, a bird got rid of her and nearly got rid of me...

Yours,

Chocolate Webby



About the Zebra Top Shell



- The Zebra Top Shell is a type of sea snail and it belongs to a larger group called molluscs.
- Other molluscs that you may know are oysters, mussels, clams and snails. In Willoughby, Oyster Limpets, Midden Snails and Sydney Rock Oysters are a common site.
- The Zebra Top Shell has a distinctive black and white stripy shell, which is why they have their name. The shell is conical in shape and the pattern can vary from thick to thin stripes.
- It is a marine creature that is native to Australia. They live on the rocks of coastal areas and you will see them congregating in the intertidal zone.
- They eat algae off the rocks by scraping it off with their raspy tongue or 'radula'. They are herbivores which means they are vegetarian.

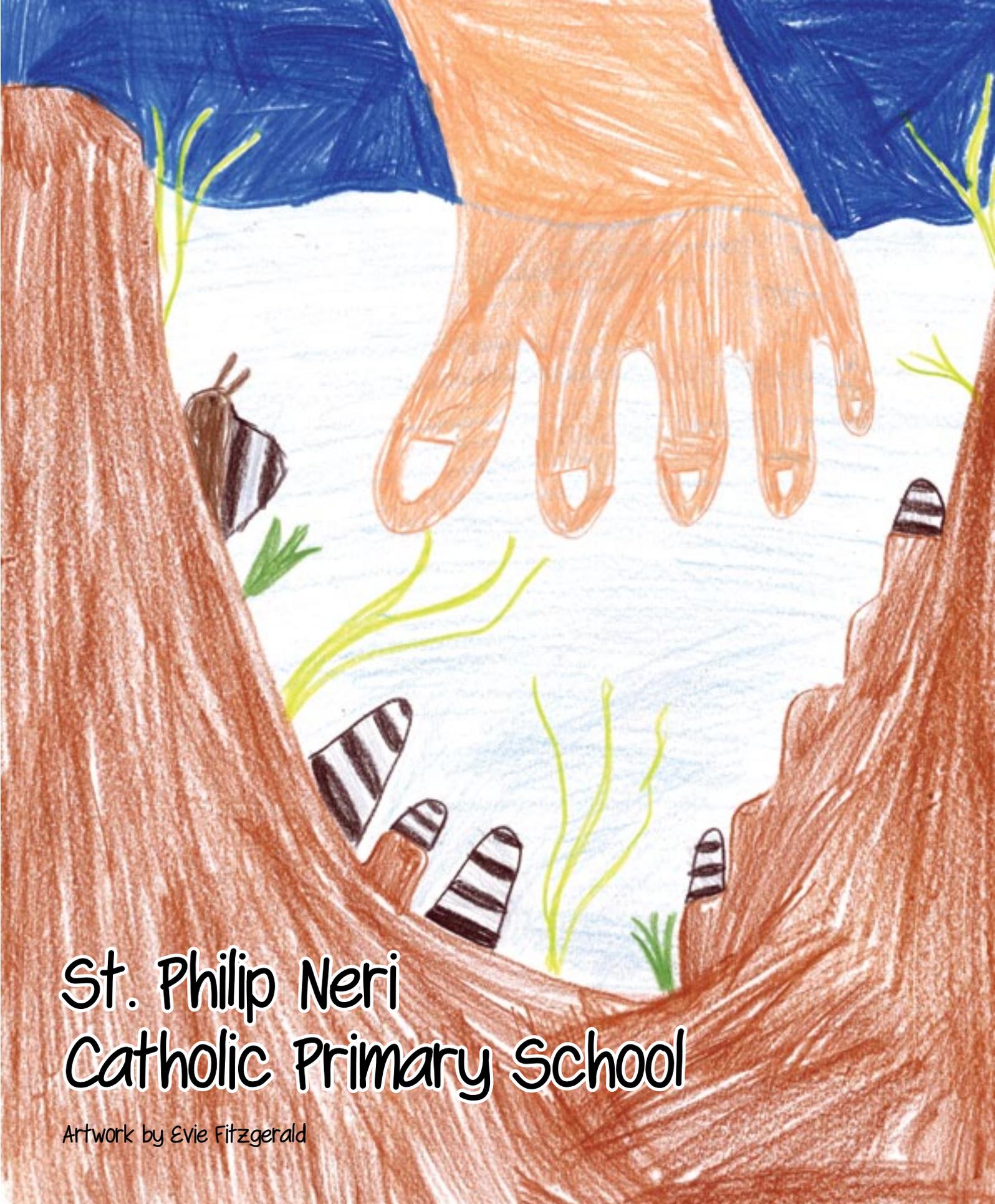
The Zebra Top Shell is very important to the marine environment as they keep the amount of algae in balance with the rest of the ecosystem. What they eat is reflected in the patterns of their shell. At certain times of the year the algae contains a substance that it excretes into its shell. That causes the shell to have black stripes.

You can look for the Zebra Top Shell on the rocky shoreline areas of Willoughby such as Sailors Bay, Sugarloaf Bay and Long Bay. You can often see their wiggling lines on the rocks where they have eaten away the algae. At low tide they will keep themselves moist by hiding in their shell and keeping the 'door' to their shell shut.

Exploring coastal rocky shores is great fun but make sure you don't move molluscs too much as they may dry out and die. Also try and do our coastal wildlife a favour and remove any rubbish you find, especially plastic and fishing line.

Artwork by Harper Cleary





St. Philip Neri Catholic Primary School

Artwork by Evie Fitzgerald

Neave and Mr Crabs Algae

By Heidi Hodgens

“What a fabulous morning it is, exclaimed Neave the Zebra Top Shell as she peers out of her rock pool. “I think it’s a day for some algae” she spoke quietly. “I can make it a surprise for Mr Zebra Top Shell who was reading the newspaper”. So Neave slid out of the dark rock pool and climbed onto a field of algae, but before she knew it, there in front of her was an extra large crab.

“This is my territory” he spoke with a growl. “And my algae!” he boomed in a thundering voice. “Oops sorry” Neave wailed as she backed off his territory to find some more to eat.

Neave was devastated as this was the only patch of algae that she could find and she really wanted to surprise Mr Zebra Top Shell. “Now what should I do?” cried Neave. Suddenly a bright idea popped into her head. “I can wait until the crab is asleep and then sneak off to collect the algae. He has so much he won’t notice if I took a little bit”.

So that’s what Neave did. Neave waited for the crab to have his morning nap and quickly slid over and took just enough algae for herself and Mr Zebra Top Shell to have a lovely dinner.



As she left, a wave splashed Mr Crab and woke him from his sleep. "Please don't take my algae he cried. It's for my daughter's birthday party. I have been collecting it for days so we have enough." Neave felt very guilty. "I know a solution" I will give you the algae but please invite Mr Zebra Top Shell and I to your daughter's party. Then we will all be happy!"

So that's what happened. Mr Crab accepted the solution and they all had a terrific time at the birthday party eating algae all day long.



Oceania and the Top-Shell

By Sophie Lewis

The Ocean sees all. The Ocean sees the dolphins playing in the waves. She sees sharks hunting unwary fish. She sees human divers who think they know the water. Everything comes back to the Ocean. She saw a small Zebra Top-Shell mollusc getting blown off the rock in the intertidal rock pool which he sat on all day.

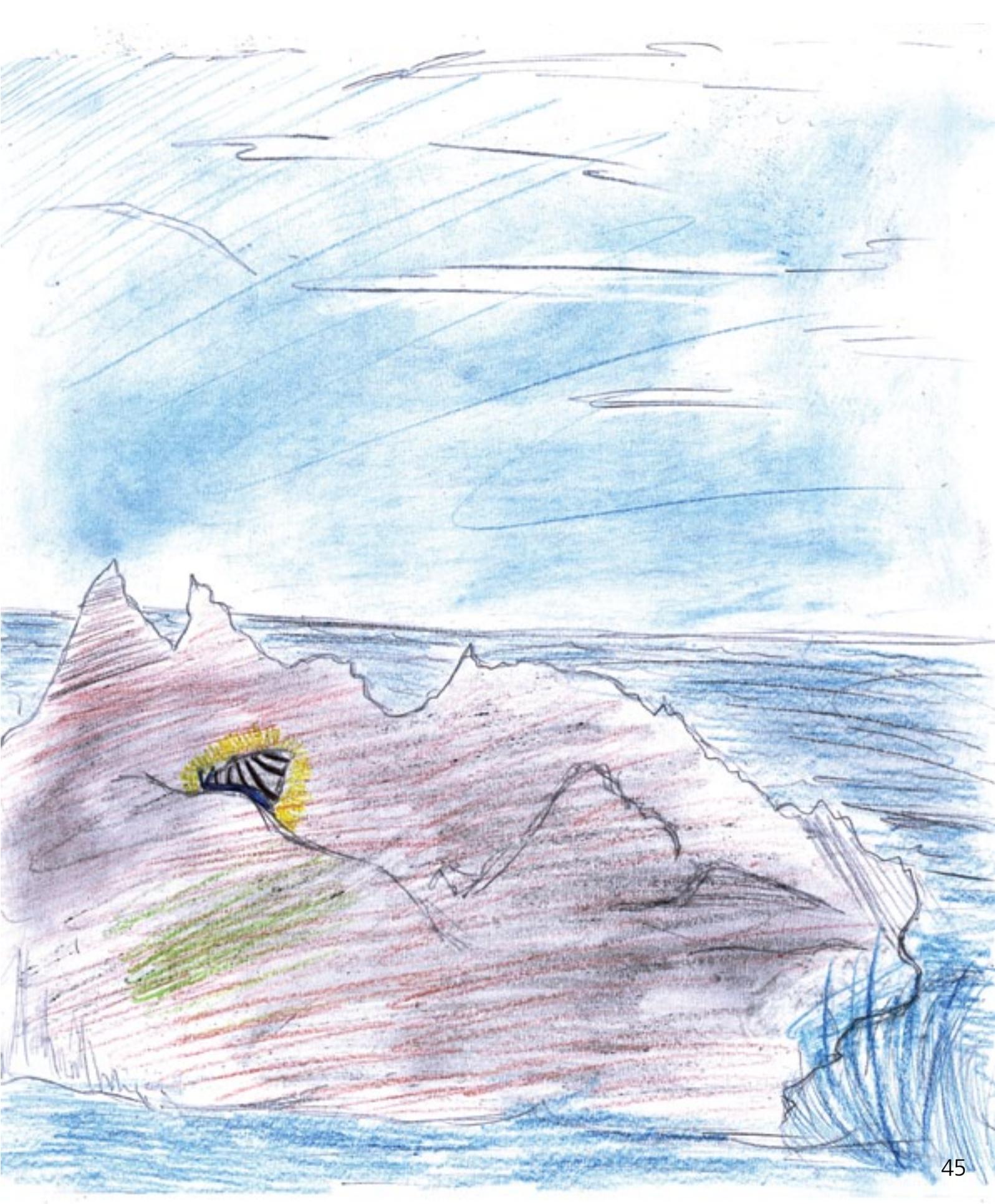
He was being tossed wildly as the Ocean formed her currents. "Help me," Zebra gurgled, "I can't lose this rock pool!" She surveyed with distaste. "No!" He said, his voice was insignificant in the roar of the Ocean. He tried to latch onto a rock ledge, but he couldn't. He was tossed out into the sea. Zebra was sinking.

The Ocean watched as he tried to swim against her currents. He kept on sinking. THUMP. Clouds of sand rose up as it hit the bottom. She snorted. The bottom must only be a mere two metres. But to Zebra, it was like the end of the world.

Zebra looked around. It was dark down here and gloomy. Oh well he thought, I may as well get going. He started crawling slowly through the sand. He couldn't see. So he tucked his head into his shell and rested under a piece of kelp.

"What have we here?" hissed a voice. Zebra woke and stared up. He couldn't see anything. There! A scurry of movement. "Hello?" he called. "Who are you?" the sand shifted under him, and it was then he realised he was sitting on a huge crab. "AIEE!" He went into his shell. The Ocean smiled.

The crab hurried after Zebra. Help me, he thought. The Ocean pitied him and sent her largest wave to knock the crab away, smashing it against a big rock. She formed a rip next to the Zebra Top-Shell, and he was carried through the water with immense speed. He tried to grab onto a rock, but she swept him away. This mollusc was brave. He needed to go home.



About the Australian Magpie

- Magpies are a large attractive black and white bird and a member of the Butcherbird family.
- They are territorial and will defend their area rigorously from other magpies.
- Known for their beautiful song, 'Maggies' – as they are affectionately known – are a regular in our backyards and school playgrounds.
- Magpies are strong and fast flyers but predominately forage on the ground in large open spaces. They build their nests high in trees over about 15m. These facts mean that gardens with lawns, ovals, parks, golf courses and suburban streets are their habitat. Luckily, here in Willoughby, they are a familiar sight as we have a lot of green space interspersed among the urban areas.
- They are highly intelligent and can solve quite complex problems. Consequently they are often seen hanging around suburban households where there is access to human or pet food.
- They are omnivorous which means they can eat both meat and vegetation. They need a variety of foods to stay healthy, but please don't feed them! It can be harmful to their long-term health.



Magpies have a strong social order in their family groups with each flock consisting of a dominant male and two or more females, a few other subordinate males and usually some fledglings. The flock will all work towards defending the lead females nest. This can sometimes lead to a clash with humans. If you ever get swooped by a Magpie, don't fight back, just walk away and avoid the area as they are just protecting their nest.

Artwork by Thomas Reay

St. Pius X College



Artwork by Noah Elms

Day of a Magpie

By Dominic Mitchell

23rd September 2017

I wake to the sounds of the screeching cockatoos in the morning. Goodness they are so annoying when they make the kids cry and then they can't go back to sleep. So I walk out of the home to scare them away and what do they do? Laugh at me! I yell at them loudly, but it does not work. Eventually they fly away. I go back inside and feed the kids some crunchy scarab beetle that they love. I also try to get them to eat delicious, juicy worms but they just will not eat it.

Finally, I am on my way to work, a thing, which I heard are called humans, dropped something. I swoop down to tell them by poking their head and screaming "hey, you dropped something". I try it a few more times but the human waves me off and tries to get away from me so I give up and conclude that humans are weird.

When I enter work, which is Gum Tree 37, the receptionist reminds me that there is no flying at work. Also, I have a meeting with my good cousin, Mr Currawong, to discuss important matters about whether or not we should allow free trade with Brush Turkey. Then I have to go to Parliament Branch to see Short Bill, the leader of the opposition, to see if he will put my bill into Parliament. Finally, I get to do something I call relaxing in my favourite tree.

Let's just say that is all I do on an average day. So don't think that we just sit in trees and look awesome. On my way home, I tried to tell another human that they dropped something but the human did the same thing as the other. Aren't they silly!

The End.



Roxy the Magpie

By Daniel Guerrero

Roxy is a Magpie, she is a black and white bird. She sits on a tree looking around, hoping no one comes near her nest for it holds tiny eggs. Eggs that will soon hatch and bring new life. Roxy takes in all the surrounds, sounds and feels happy when the sun is shining. She loves to fly, she feels free.

Roxy loves to fly in the local park. She never wanted to leave, the park was her home. Roxy had a special friend – a pug. Jake the pug was very lucky to go for a walk each day. Jake would go with Tom his owner to the park where he would notice the magpie swoop down near the pug and then go back up again. At first Tom would pull Jake back in fear that Roxy would hurt him but then realised that Jake loved this and that they had a special friendship. Roxy would do this ten to twenty times each day. Jake would run backwards and forwards every time Roxy swooped down near him. Jake would get very excited every time Tom would get the leash ready to take him for a walk.

It had been raining for a few days, so Jake wasn't able to go for a walk. When the sun came out again, Tom took Jake to the park. Jake was very excited as he knew he would get to see Roxy again. Upon arriving at the park he couldn't see Roxy anywhere. Jake started to run around the park looking for Roxy, even yelping at times, it seems like Jake was trying to call out to her but then out of nowhere Roxy came swooping down near Jake and started running backwards and forwards like he always did.



About the Crested Pigeon



- The Crested Pigeon has a very noticeable crest and black bars on its wings, with beautiful metallic green and purple patches fringed in white at the tips.
- They can be easily identified by sight but also by the sound their wings make when they take off for flight. It's a singing-whistling sound that warns the rest of the flock that there could be danger nearby.
- They feed in pairs or small groups around the Willoughby area, eating mainly grass seeds from native grasses and lawns.
- They need to drink water every day so they particularly like open grassy areas with a water source.
- They make a delicate nest of small twigs and leaves in a dense shrub or tree. Both the female and the male incubate the eggs and look after the young chicks.

The Crested Pigeon displays interesting social behaviour such as the male wooing the female to breed. He does a special flight display for her including fanning out his tail, bobbing up and down and bowing to her. He also sings with a rather musical 'whoop' which starts softly, builds up to a crescendo then abruptly stops.



As they like to search for seeds in open grassy areas they are at risk of being caught by cats, dogs or foxes. Often in larger flocks there may be a sentinel member who will stand guard and watch for danger while the others feed.

Try letting your lawn grow longer letting it seed. It will provide seed for birds like the Crested Pigeon and the Galah. Also longer grass allows more water to be retained, it's collected and directed down to the soil and roots of the grass.

Artwork by Jorja Casamento

St. Thomas' Catholic Primary School



Artwork by Coco Barassi

Meet Walter P. Crestwell

By Sahara Tran

Walter P. Crestwell is not very tall.

In fact he is quite stocky and small.

He is an unlikely hero who lives in the suburb of Willoughby.

He proudly sticks out his plumage as he patrols the church house wall.

You see, Walter P. Crestwell is a Crested Pigeon.

A bird that is the Commander in Chief of the Royal Crested Pigeon Squadron.

A black crest on his head distinguishes his species and it's Walter's sole job to protect his flock.

If Walter is startled, he takes flight with a characteristic whistle as his wings feathers cut through the air, often warning his flock of imminent danger.

Walter is a highly decorated officer with a squadron of ten recruits.

His wings are decorated with glossy green and purple patches and the ladies find him irresistible.

He is admired by all, with male pigeons wanting to be him and the neighbouring cats wanting to eat him!

But Walter P. Crestwell doesn't let any of that phase him.

He goes on with his job patrolling his station.

If you by chance have an opportunity to meet him, please keep your distance and respect his habitat.

He has taken a lot of time to build his delicate nest of twigs and a small foot in the wrong place can disrupt this.

Feel free to admire him from afar as most others do.

Walter P. Crestwell, it's a pleasure to live near you!



A Day of a Crested Pigeon

By Emma Purcell

As I look out my window one warm spring morning new,
I see a small group of Crested Pigeons chattering away in a tuckeroo,
Their soft grey feathers shimmered in the bright light,
And the crests upon their heads were perfectly upright.

They flew down to the morning dew, kissed ground,
And searched for Willoughby's native seeds hidden with a leaf mound.

When they had had enough and were ready to go,
They started their journey to Sanders Park.

When they had finished their journey to the park,
They started to look under bark to find some fresh water to sip,
Before playful kids come to scare them away,
Like they do almost every day.

When they have finished their activities for the day,
They fly back to their ever so delicate nests where they lay,
As they nuzzle together to go to sleep,
They are so tired they won't even peep.



About the Eastern Yellow Robin

- The Eastern Yellow Robin is a small grey bird with a black beak and a beautiful bright yellow chest. There are many different types of robins but this one is only found in the eastern and southern parts of Australia.
- Their call is often the first one you hear well before dawn. It is a very high pitched clear, double noted, piping whistle.
- The Eastern Yellow Robin is insectivorous which means they feed on all insects and spiders. They like to forage in protected gullies adjoining open woodland and forest.
- During winter the robin will migrate to warmer areas. We often see more in the Willoughby area during winter as they have come down from the Blue Mountains to get away from the extreme temperatures.
- They build a cup shaped nest woven carefully from, leaves, vines, bark and grasses held together by spiders web. They are good environmentalists as the parents will often recycle the materials used in previous nests.



More importantly Willoughby's bushland needs little birds like the Eastern Yellow Robin to eat insects and help maintain healthy biodiversity. The little birds feed on insects like Lerp Psyllids that can breed in great numbers and defoliate trees causing devastating dieback especially in our Eucalypts.

Planting native shrubs densely in your garden provides more habitat and protection for little birds.

Artwork by Claire Fleming

Willoughby Public School



Artwork by Allegra Nearhos

Eastern Yellow Robin's Day Out

By Diva Choradiya and Leslie Rondan

The Eastern Yellow Robins, average size 16cm,
Wakes up at 4am.
Did you know she's the first to call?
But after that she goes to the mall.
After she has finished all her shopping,
She meets her friends the Pink and Rose Robin.
Believe me they can chill,
With their small black bill.
She eats a few cockroaches,
Then home is where she approaches.
My fledglings will be hatching soon,
Any time before June.
Soon it's time to go to bed,
The Eastern Yellow Robin said.



A Little Yellow Birdy's Life

By Billie Hurley

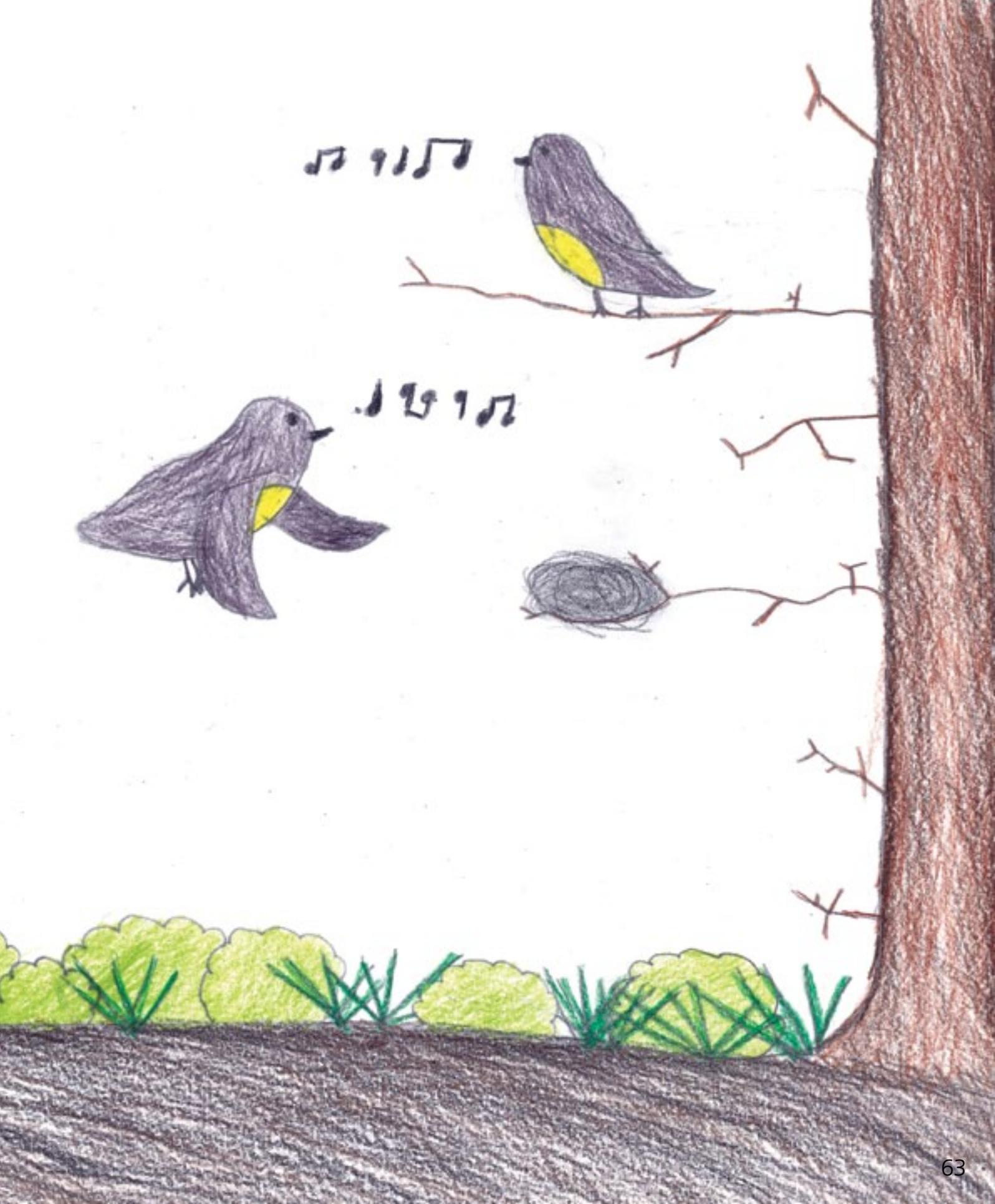
I wake up in the morning,
To give the early calling.
I make my sound,
So very proud,
But I don't give any warning.

My nest is very small,
It's just the right size for me,
I make it out of sticks and silk,
And hide it where predators can't see.

I eat lots of insects,
And flick them off the trees,
I give them to my babies,
And my family.

I have a yellow tummy,
That holds things that are yummy,
And if you please,
Feel that breeze,
On a day that's warm and sunny.





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WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

A Willoughby City Council Wildlife Storybook