

Luke Pearce Catchment Hero



Catchment Champion

Alan Morris, Yasmin Lieschke
and Caitlyn Wardius

Walbundrie Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of the Murray Darling Association and Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between the Murray Catchment Management Authority and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to natural resource management issues. www.murray.cma.nsw.gov.au/creative-catchment-kids.html

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants. www.wirraminna.org

Murray Darling Association

The Murray Darling Association has membership of over 100 Local Government councils in the Murray-Darling Basin, as well as community groups, businesses and individuals with an interest in ensuring that the Basin continues as a valuable asset for all Australians. Since 1950, the Association has initiated various school and community education programs on managing the Basin's land and water resources. www.mda.asn.au



Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area. www.envirostories.com.au

Luke Pearce

Catchment Hero

Authors: Alan Morris, Yasmin Lieschke and Caitlyn Wardius

Teacher: Kristy Phillips

School: Walbundrie Public School

Catchment Champions

In 2013, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about 'Catchment Champions', people who have made important contributions to managing natural resources in their local community. The program was generously funded by the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchment management authorities.

The Catchment Champions books are part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program.



**Catchment Management
Authority**
Murray



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FOR
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Murrumbidgee

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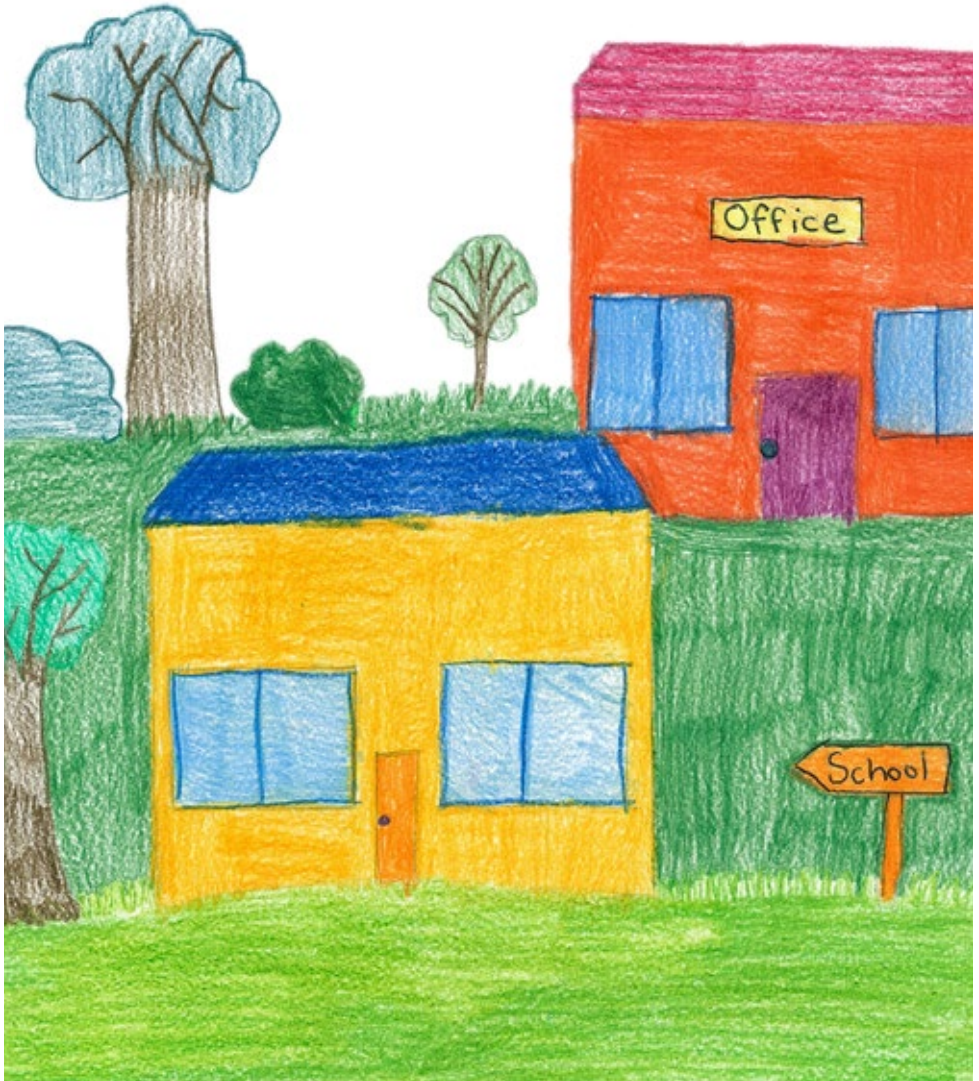
Luke's family and childhood

Luke Pearce grew up on a cattle farm with his mother Marlene, father Kerry, two brothers and one sister. The farm had creeks running through it so he has always loved to fish.

As a kid he liked chasing animals, camping, fishing and being outdoors. Luke is married to Peta and has two boys, Tom who is 4 and Lachlan who is 10 months old.

His education

Luke went to Adelong Public School and Yanco Agricultural High School, before studying at Canberra University. Luke is currently doing his Masters at Charles Sturt University in Thurgoona, studying the Southern Pygmy Perch.



Why Luke has chosen to work with fish

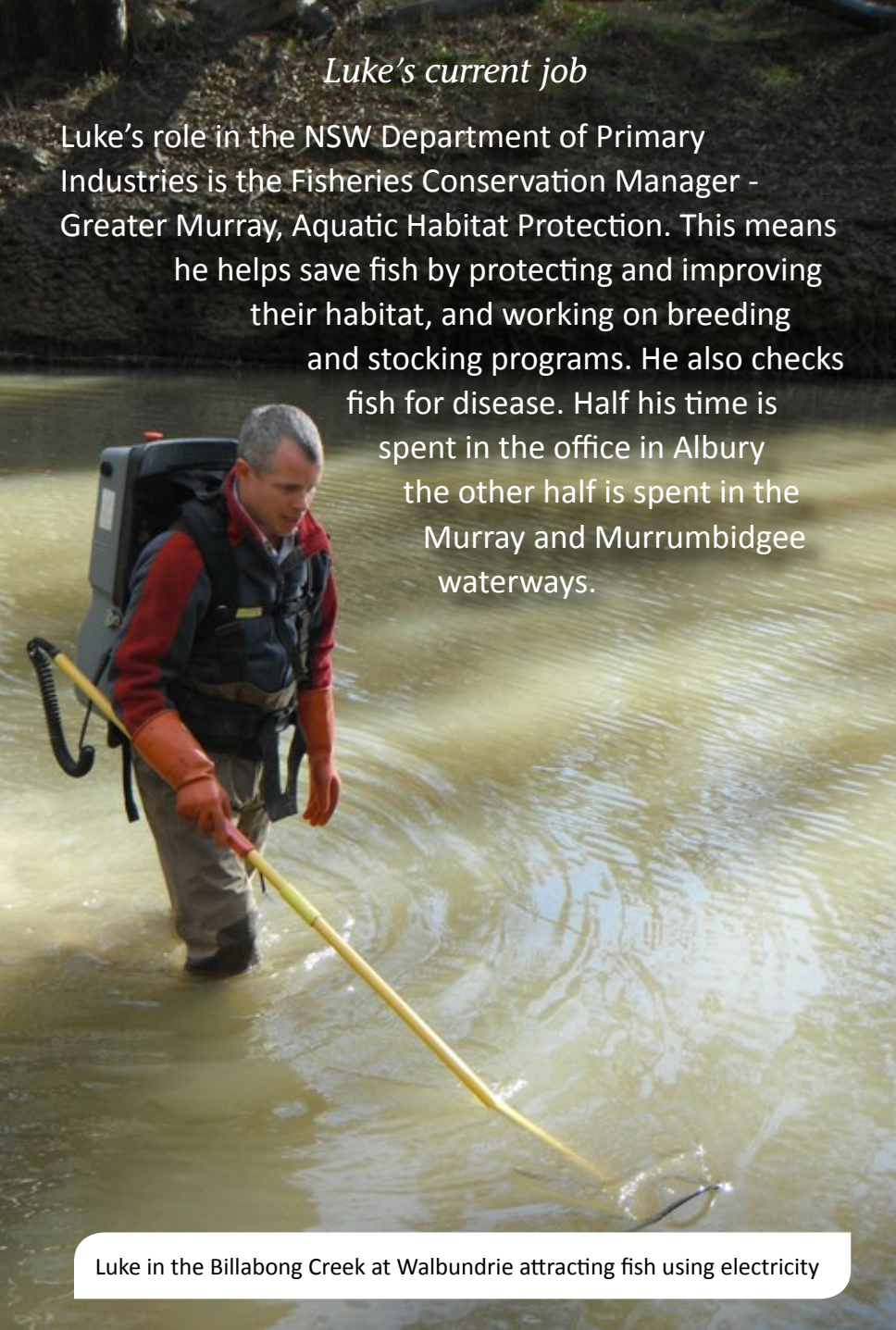
Luke has chosen to work with fish because he has always loved fishing. His favourite person to fish with is his dad. He went fishing a lot growing up when camping by the river.



Camping by the river on his birthday as a kid

Luke's current job

Luke's role in the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the Fisheries Conservation Manager - Greater Murray, Aquatic Habitat Protection. This means he helps save fish by protecting and improving their habitat, and working on breeding and stocking programs. He also checks fish for disease. Half his time is spent in the office in Albury the other half is spent in the Murray and Murrumbidgee waterways.

A man wearing a dark vest over a red long-sleeved shirt, grey waders, and orange gloves is wading in a river. He has a large black backpack on his back and is holding a long yellow pole that extends into the water. The water is murky and brown. The background shows a dark, wooded bank.

Luke in the Billabong Creek at Walbundrie attracting fish using electricity



His working career

Luke has been in similar jobs for twelve to thirteen years but he has been in this job for four years. In the future he wishes to continue to help keep our native fish plentiful and healthy by working to protect endangered fish species.



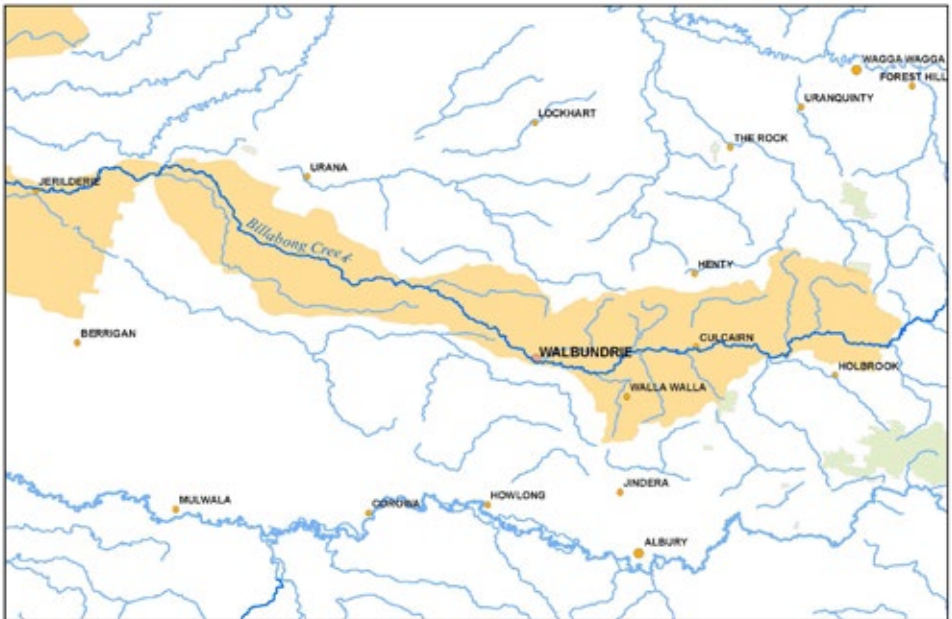
Luke and a workmate rescuing Southern Pygmy Perch at Coppabella Creek

Organisations Luke works with

In Luke's role he also works with Landcare, farmers, Catchment Management Authorities, fishing clubs and groups, Greening Australia, local councils and other government departments.

The Billabong Creek

Luke has spent a lot of time helping the health of the Billabong Creek. Through breeding programs, the creek has been restocked in several places. He saves unhealthy and injured fish and has worked with Landcare to help farmers put fences along the creek to keep stock out. He monitors threatened fish species by catching, measuring and counting the fish. The Billabong Creek needs more people who care as much as Luke.

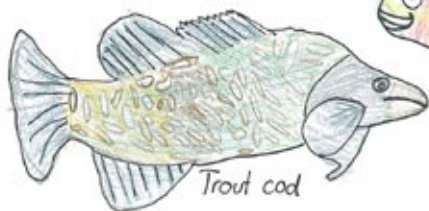




Southern Pygmy Perch

Formerly found in the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan catchments, the southern pygmy perch, which Luke is studying, has now disappeared from most locations in NSW. It has only been recorded at a handful of sites in the last 25 years. In NSW, only three populations are currently known from near Holbrook Jingellic and Yass.

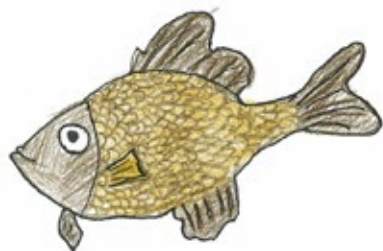
Flat headed Galaxias



Trout cod



Southern pygmy perch



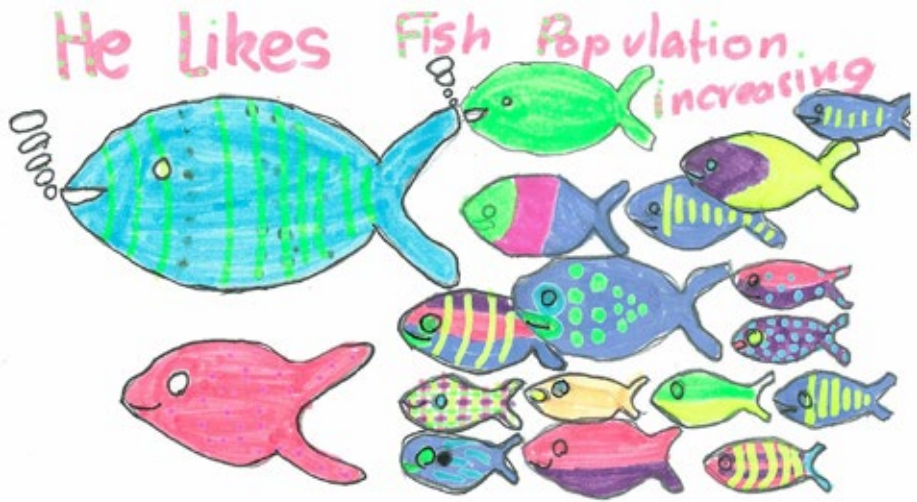
Olive Perchlet



Macquarie Perch

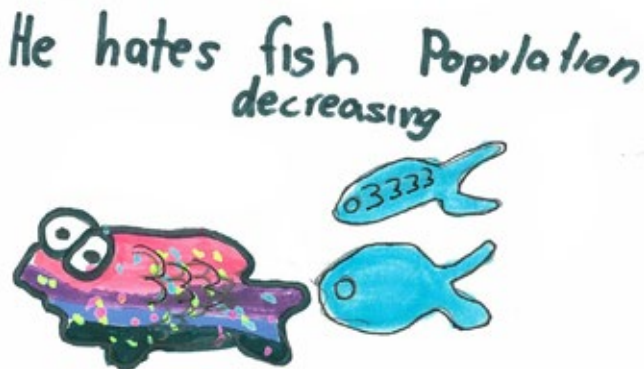
Other fish Luke has worked with

Luke has worked with lots of fish! Some of them include the Southern Pygmy Perch, Macquarie Perch, Flat-headed Galaxias, Olive Perchlet and the Trout Cod. These are all threatened species.



The best things and worst things about his job

Luke likes lots of things about his job. He likes saving and releasing the fish and seeing the rivers and creeks healthy. Luke likes being outdoors, helping endangered fish and seeing his favourite kind of fish. He doesn't like the fish population decreasing. He likes seeing the population of the Southern Pygmy Perch improve.



We thank Luke Pearce for letting us write a book on him and his career, and also for letting us use his photos.





Alan Morris, Yasmin Lieschke, Caitlyn Wardius and Luke Pearce

2013 Year 6, Walbundrie Public School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative Catchment Kids writing program was showcased at the Seventh World Environmental Education Congress, held in Morocco during June 2013.



Catchment Management Authority Murray



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