

Peter Redfearn: Champion of the Bush Stone-curlew



Taylor Livingston, Finlay Russ, Liam
Green, Hayley Mead and Nicholas Culross

Moulamein 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

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School: Moulamein 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



CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY



Catchment Management Authority
Murrumbidgee

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A Bush Stone-curlew pauses to scan the land around him. He steps lightly through the messy grass and twigs and cautiously listens for sounds of danger. Other birds in his flock stop to listen and watch too.

In the distance, a metallic clattering sound alarms the curlew. Dust rises as a familiar throaty rumble comes nearer.



The curlews hear the sound of the four-wheeled vehicle being driven down a gravel track by Peter Redfearn.



Peter is a hard-working farmer from Moulamein NSW who has given up his time every day for many years to protect the Bush Stone-curlew, a ground dwelling native bird that is now endangered across much of southern Australia.

Peter is an environmental champion - a champion of the Murray Catchment.

In 2002, Peter reported that he no longer saw Bush Stone-curlews on his farm. Peter met with scientists and other farmers to discuss what had happened to the Bush Stone-curlews and to find ways to protect them.

Peter joined the Nature Conservation Working Group and met farmers Neville and Jan Lubke from Jindera NSW. In 2004, they set up a curlew sanctuary and captive breeding and release program.





Bush Stone-curlews need a special habitat to survive that includes:

- small stands of native trees
- fallen logs and branches
- short, sparse natural grasses
- lots of leaf litter.

Peter fenced off two areas on his property, “Farnley” to create a sanctuary for the Bush Stone-curlews. These areas have been left as natural bushland and give perfect cover for a curlew.



Five wire-netting enclosures were built on seven hectares of land that has been fenced off as the breeding area. Each enclosure has space for one breeding pair to safely live in and lay their eggs.

Peter has another ten hectares fenced off as a Release Sanctuary. When they are large enough, the young curlews are moved to a special aviary where they learn to live as a flock before being released out into this area of bush.



The captive Bush Stone-curlews on Peter's farm are fed a special mix of meat and vegetables each evening. Pipes fill their troughs with fresh water. The young chicks also get mealy worms and chopped hard-boiled eggs to help them grow.

Peter Redfearn has delivered fresh food to his curlews every day of the year for almost ten years.

That's dedication!





Bush Stone-curlews lay two to three clutches of eggs between August and February. The eggs hatch after twenty-one to twenty-five days. The chicks come out fully feathered and walking, but it is sixty days before they can fly.

Peter estimates he has fifteen or more curlews living on his farm now. Recently, he spotted a pair of curlews on his farm looking after two eggs in a nest scraped near a small stand of trees.



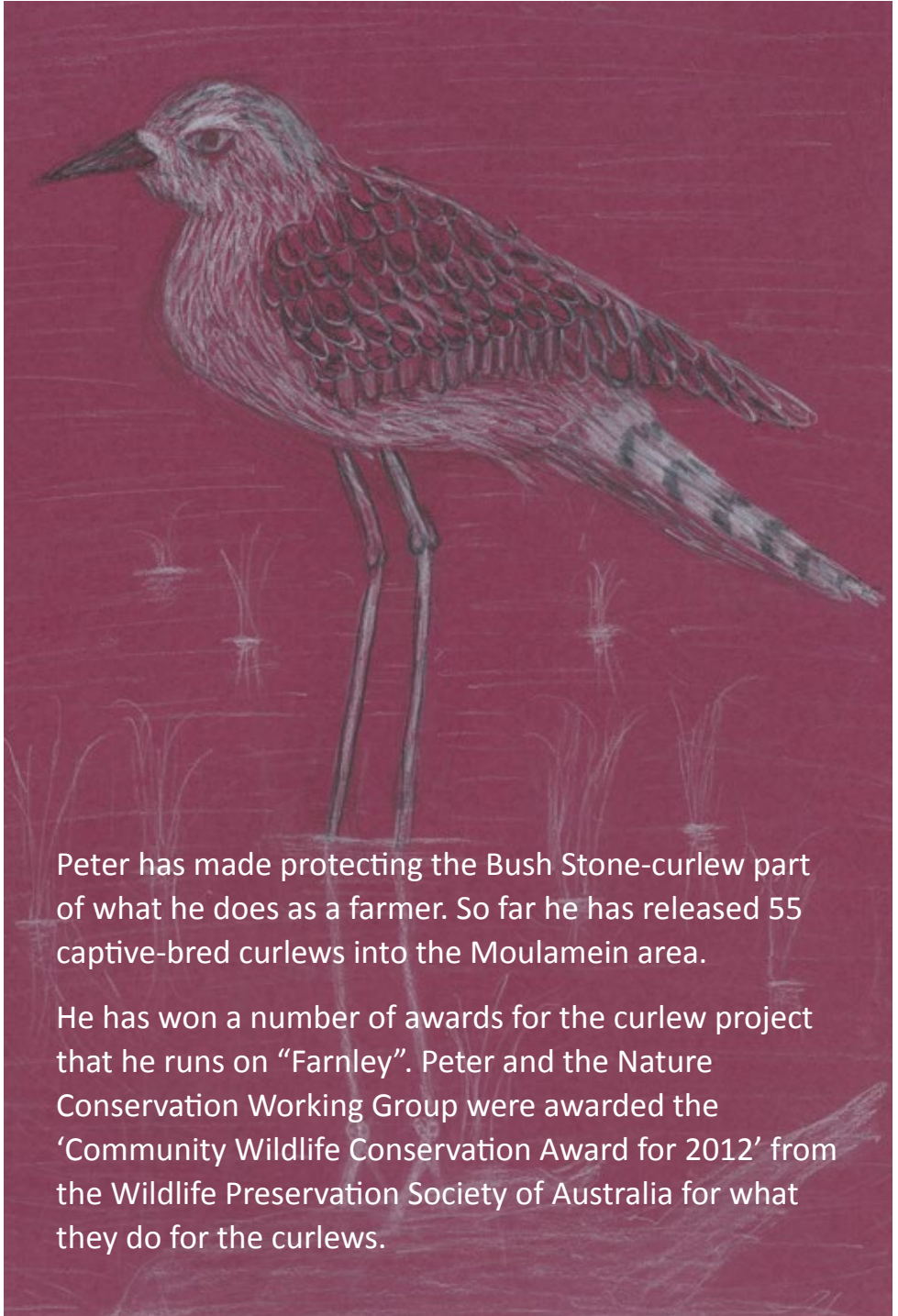
Peter's project shows many ways to help protect the Bush Stone-curlew.

1. Leave small stands of trees with logs and bush litter on farms for curlews.
2. Get rid of foxes and feral cats - they eat young curlew birds, chicks and eggs.
3. Control stock grazing so that grasses are thinned and larger animals such as cattle don't trample curlew eggs.



4. Control insect pests by using environmentally friendly insecticides.
5. Have areas of short, sparse native grasses because thick, tall grasses and crops give predators a place to hide when hunting curlews.

There are many farmers like Peter who know much about their land and the native animals they observe. These farmers can help scientists and other people to understand how to protect the Bush Stone-curlew and the environment.



Peter has made protecting the Bush Stone-curlew part of what he does as a farmer. So far he has released 55 captive-bred curlews into the Moulamein area.

He has won a number of awards for the curlew project that he runs on “Farnley”. Peter and the Nature Conservation Working Group were awarded the ‘Community Wildlife Conservation Award for 2012’ from the Wildlife Preservation Society of Australia for what they do for the curlews.



Peter is a passionate observer of the natural world. By tracking and observing the Bush Stone-curlews, Peter can report that the number of curlews in the Moulamein area has been increasing over the ten years of his project.

Peter feels it is a privilege to have curlews living in the bush on his property again.

He is a champion of the Bush Stone-curlew and a Catchment Champion!





Liam Green, Hayley Mead, Nicholas Culross, Taylor Livingston and Finlay Russ

2013 Year 5/6, Moulamein 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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