

Steve Morrow: Our Local Environmentalist



Catchment Champion

Caitie Torpey, Jessica Alderton, Grace
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Gol Gol 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: Gol Gol 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



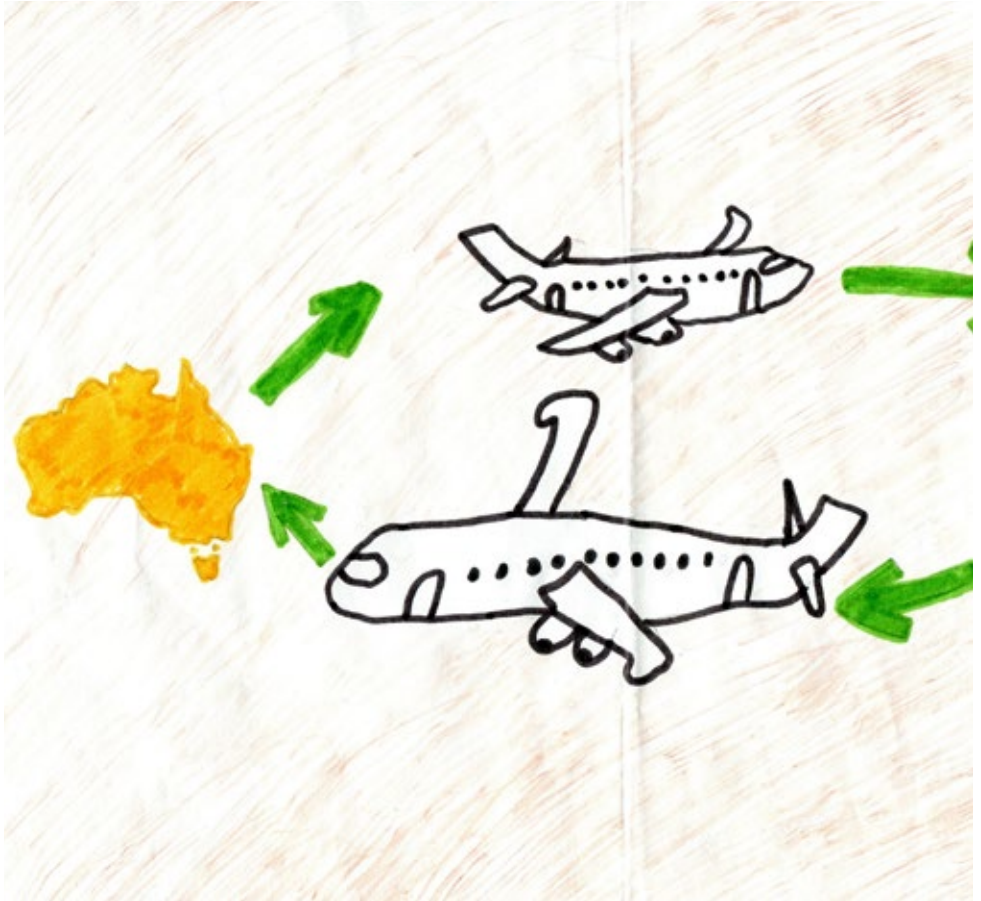
Catchment Management Authority
Murrumbidgee

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This is a story about Steven Morrow, a friend of the environment, a snake catcher and environmental photographer who lives in Gol Gol, NSW. Steven has had a love of the environment and for all the animals that live in it from an early age.





Early Years

Steven was born in Penrith, New South Wales, in 1973. His mother was Australian and his father was from New Zealand. He lived in Australia with his mother, father and his two brothers. When Steven was two and a half he and his family shifted to New Zealand where they lived for the next ten years. Steven had an interest in wildlife even as a child and loved reading about it in books.



Back to Australia

When Steven was 12, his mother and father divorced. He moved back to Australia to live with his mother and his two brothers. He arrived in Sydney before they made their way to Mildura. This is where he received a big surprise when he saw a kangaroo for the first time.

Steven loves Australia. He says that Australia has such unique animals.



Australia vs. New Zealand

Steven feels lucky to be from both New Zealand and Australia, but they do have their differences.

Steven remembers the first time they drove across the Chaffey Bridge over the Murray. He had to ask what it was because the brooks and streams in New Zealand were so clear you can see the bottom and the Murray River was murky and brown.

Although New Zealand is a nice place, it is the Australian climate and especially the Australian wildlife that he have become his passion.



First Encounter with a Snake

Steven's first encounter with a snake occurred after he had moved back to Australia. He was inside his house, the very day they had moved in, when he heard an almighty bang.

He ran outside to investigate and saw someone standing there with a shotgun and a splattered blob on the ground. He asked what it was and was told, "It's a brown snake."

Snakes

Ever since the day he saw his first snake Steven became fascinated with them and the way they lived.

He would follow snakes, staying behind them, watching the way they moved, lived, caught their food and where they made their homes.

Snakes are shy, fragile animals that shouldn't be kept as pets. Snakes are extremely territorial and if not relocated further than 10 to 15 kilometres away they will find their way back to where they came from. It's impossible to put a snake into wild if it has been born in captivity. They fret and die.



Pretty From a Distance

According to Steven the hardest type of snake to catch is the brown snake. Baby snakes are the most challenging as they are the best at camouflaging themselves.

Snakes have two different sorts of bites, a dry bite and a wet bite. A dry bite is just like a scratch that doesn't inject any venom. A wet bite injects the venom which is dangerous so you need to get help fast.

Snakes don't actually like to use their venom on humans because their venom is precious and mainly for hunting.





Learning to Live with Snakes

Eight out of the ten deadliest snakes in the world live in Australia. Steven says we have to learn to live with the snakes because our urban sprawl brings them closer to people's homes. The urban sprawl is only going to get worse as the Australian population grows.

People often try to stop snakes coming into their yards. No matter what you do if a snake wants to it will find a way because to a snake your yard is part of it's territory.

Snakes are more scared of us then we are of them. They are an important part of the Australian animal food chain and we should learn to share the environment with them.

Weird Places Snakes Have Been Found

Steven has found snakes in many different weird places. One day, a lady was playing her piano and thought it didn't sound quite right. She had a look inside the piano and found a snake.



Snakes have been found under couch cushions, in window frames and lots of other places in people's homes. A couple of snakes have even been found on curtain railings. It's a fact that it's better to paint things white because if there is a snake you'll be able to see it.

Steven even had to catch a hitch-hiking snake once. A truck driver in Perth stopped for a rest and little did they know that a snake curled itself around the bottom of the truck ready to take a ride.

The snake had a pleasant ride in a cool place in the shade. It survived all the way to Gol Gol.



Snake Catching

When Steven goes on a snake hunt his wife gets worried that he might get bitten.

Steven's family don't really like him catching snakes they all think he's crazy.

Steven feels safer if he can control the situation and remain calm. He doesn't like anything around when trying to approach a snake, especially pet dogs and cats.

Wildlife Photographer

Steven's day job is managing a fruit farm which has wine grapes, pistachio nuts and citrus.

Steven has many interests but photography is at the top. He has a passion for it. These days we have zoom lenses on our cameras but back when he first started there was no such thing. He used to get freakishly close to snakes just for a photo; his camera lenses got quite scratched and he even got a couple of dry bites. He feels it is worth it when you get a good shot.

We would like to thank Steven Morrow for helping us with this project. We loved listening to his stories.





Caitie Torpey, Jessica Alderton, Grace Phillips, Grace Power,
Steven Morrow and Olivia McKinnon

2013 Year 5 & 6, Gol Gol Public School

The 2012 and 2013 Creative
Catchment Kids writing
program was showcased
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Congress, held in Morocco
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