

Peter O'Shannassy Pest Controller



Zara Bunt, Mackenzie Dolan,
Sophie Jones and Nadia Raschke

Corowa South Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

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

Enviro-Stories

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

Peter O'Shannassy Pest Controller

Authors: Zara Bunt, Mackenzie Dolan, Sophie Jones and Nadia Raschke

Teacher: Lee McDonald

School: Corowa South Public School

Local Land Heroes - Securing Our Region

In 2015, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their 'Local Land Heroes' who are involved in pest management in the Murray and Murrumbidgee regions. These heroes are local individuals, couples, a business or industries that have made a difference in their local community by contributing to the management of pest animals and plants. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and Riverina Local Land Services.

Local Land Heroes is part of Enviro-Stories, a PeekDesigns education program.



Local Land Services

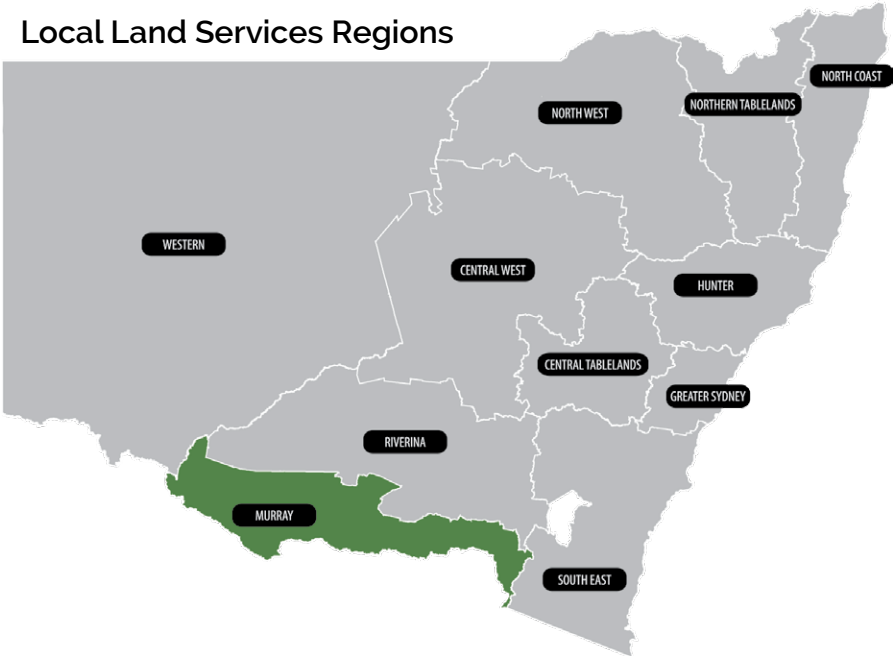


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Peter is the Team Leader in Native Species and Plant Health for Murray Local Land Services. However, he prefers to be known as a ranger, and the local community also refer to Peter as “The Ranger”. Peter was previously employed as the ranger with the Livestock Health and Pest Authority for Corowa and surrounding district.



Local Land Services Regions



Pest control is a very important issue for Murray Local Land Services. Peter's main objective is to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and feral pests in the region. This includes managing Travelling Stock Reserves in a sustainable way. To achieve this objective, Peter works cooperatively with drovers, landholders, community groups and bee keepers.





Horehound, thistles, stinging nettles and fungi are just some of the invasive plants that Peter controls.

Horehound is a very hardy plant which produces prickly seeds. These seeds grab onto anything they can which is how the plant is spread around. The seeds are also spread in waterways. The seeds contaminate and mat the wool of sheep.



Peter manages both the “good” and “bad” parasitic mistletoe plants in the environment. He has been able to successfully remove and control the “bad” mistletoe and replace it with “good” mistletoe. Peter does this to keep the host trees healthy. The mistletoe birds eat the mistletoe fruit, excrete the sticky seeds on to tree branches which establishes a new mistletoe.



European red foxes are extremely destructive pests who have adapted well to our environment. They often feed on lambs, calves, goats and chooks, as well as many native birds, small mammals and reptiles. Foxes spread diseases such as mange. Seeds from invasive weeds can stick to their fur and spread wherever the foxes go.



Peter uses several methods working hand-in-hand with property owners to control foxes. Local Land Services provides training courses on use of 1080 and Pindone baits. They also sell them to ratepayers at cost price. Peter sets traps to capture and dispose of foxes. Fumigation is another method he uses to help with eradication.

Rabbits infest a large part of our district. A female rabbit averages six babies a litter, several times a year.

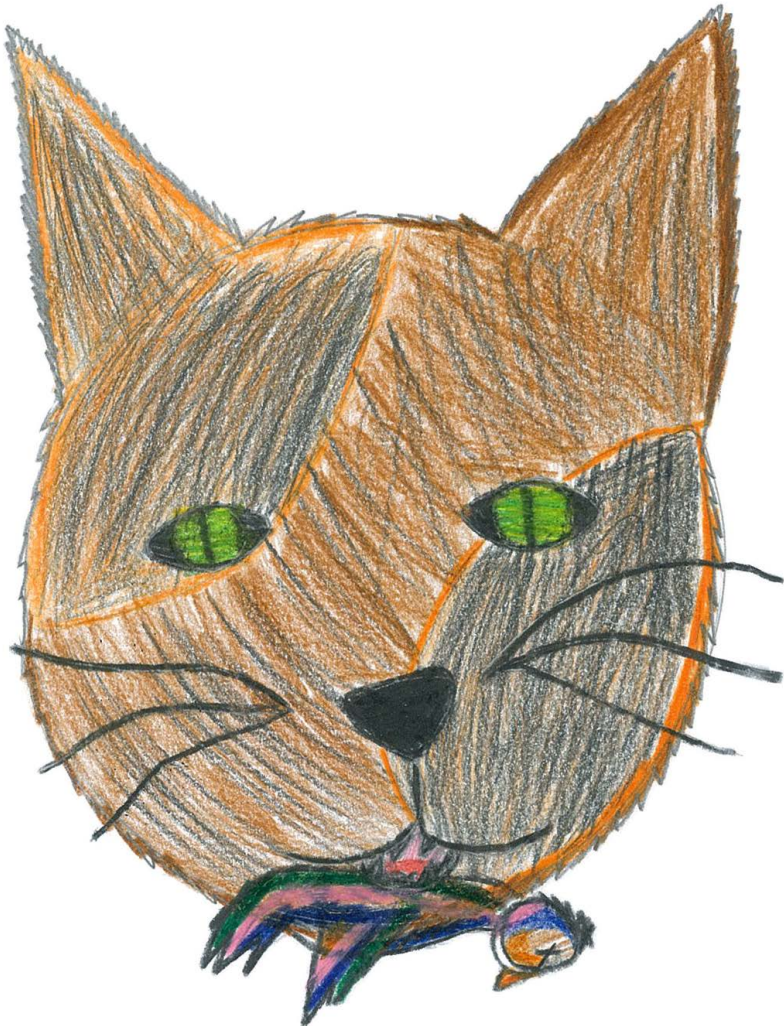
Rabbits cause land degradation when establishing warrens and digging for food. They compete with native animals for food. As rabbits eat their own droppings to extract moisture, they can survive in extreme conditions.

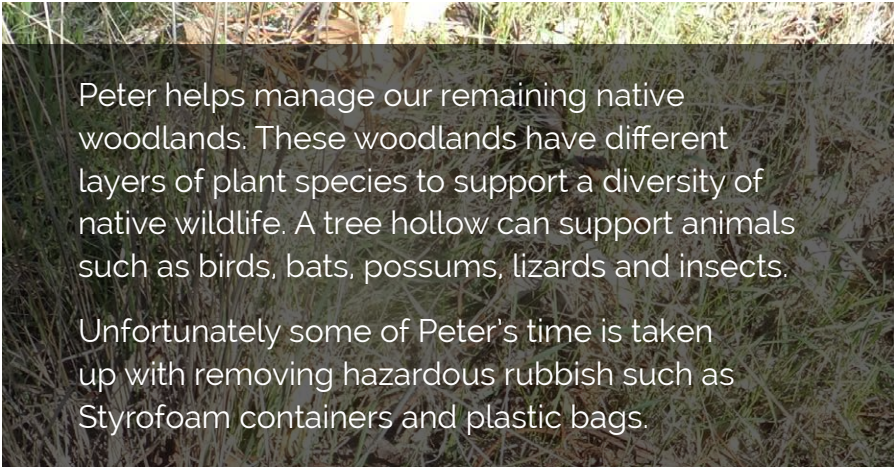




As with foxes, Peter uses a combination of methods in rabbit eradication. Traps are set. Baiting with 1080 and Pindone poisoned carrots and fumigation with carbon monoxide gas are effective. Biological controls such as myxomatosis are also useful in rabbit control.

Although Noisy Miners are native to our environment, their numbers have increased for them to be considered pests. They chase little woodland birds away, which in turn threatens the biodiversity of the environment. A wide range of bird species helps control invasive insects such as locusts, moths, beetles and thrips.





Peter helps manage our remaining native woodlands. These woodlands have different layers of plant species to support a diversity of native wildlife. A tree hollow can support animals such as birds, bats, possums, lizards and insects.

Unfortunately some of Peter's time is taken up with removing hazardous rubbish such as Styrofoam containers and plastic bags.





Peter...

- loves working outdoors.
- likes horses and dogs, his favourite being the English Springer Spaniel.
- has found new species of spiders and frogs, including the Sloane Frog.
- likes working with landholders.
- recommends keeping your eyes open at all times.
- gains satisfaction when a disease or pest is eradicated.
- finds his job really rewarding.
- enjoys observing hawks, kites, eagles and owls.



Nadia Raschke, Mackenzie Dolan, Sophie Jones and Zara Bunt

2015 Year 5/6, Corowa South Public School

CONGRATULATIONS

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the 2015 NSW Junior Landcare Team Award and will be competing in the 2016 National Landcare Awards.



Local Land Services

