

Stephen Wilson

Pest Control Ranger



Zoe Lieschke, Charlie Seidel and Nathan Wardius

Walbundrie 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

Stephen Wilson

Pest Control Ranger

Authors: Zoe Lieschke, Charlie Seidel and Nathan Wardius

Teacher: Sean Scott

School: Walbundrie 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



Australian Government



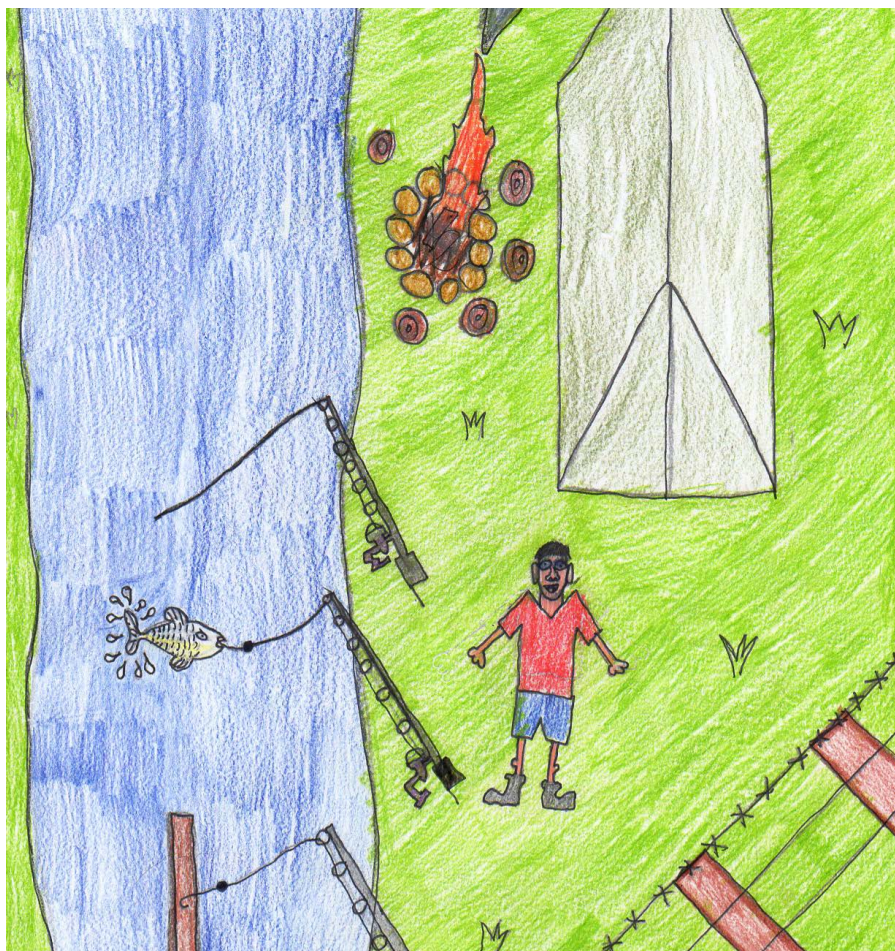


Whether it's trapping feral pigs, poisoning rabbits, or eradicating wild dogs Stephen Wilson is definitely considered a Local Land Hero!

When pests are ruining your crops, killing your livestock, digging up your paddock, or spreading disease there's no need to worry. One quick call and Stephen will be on the job! In no time, he will have your pests under control.



Stephen grew up in Wodonga. He enjoyed doing many outdoor activities like hunting and fishing with his family. He also played sport such as football and cricket and got an education at St. Augustine's Primary School in central Wodonga. He is married to his wife Robyn, and they have a daughter called Charlotte who is two years old.



Stephen's passion for wildlife first started when he was a little boy. He loved going fishing and hunting with his brothers and father. Stephen trained as a teacher and taught at Tallangatta and Yackandandah Primary schools. Eventually the outdoors called him back. One day he saw an advertisement in the newspaper for a Pest Control Ranger. He tried his luck and went for the job. Ever since, he's been helping farmers control pests and he loves his job.



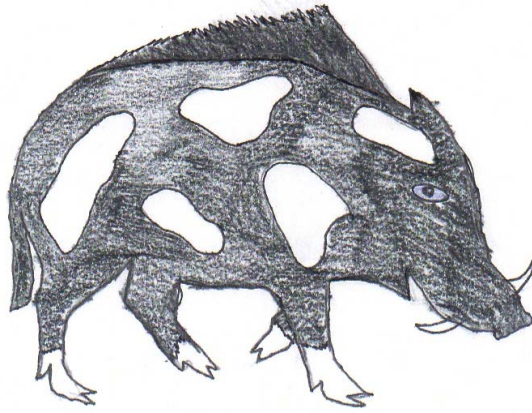
Feral pigs are the largest pest Stephen deals with. They cause big problems. They dig up the dirt, ruin crops and cause erosion. They also destroy native wildlife and spread diseases. Feral pigs are a major pest in both New South Wales and Queensland.





To catch feral pigs, Stephen needs to set a trap. Firstly, he soaks some wheat in red cordial for 2 days. Then he puts the wheat into the unset trap. On the first three nights he will leave the trap open to encourage as many pigs as possible to enter and give them a free feed.





On the fourth day, he sets the trap with a stick. There is a trip wire at the back of the trap connected to the door. When the pigs go into the trap, they hit the trip wire and the stick will fall down, closing the one-way door. When Stephen comes the next morning he will shoot the pigs and bury them.





The worst pest Stephen works with is rabbits. He gets many calls from farmers due to rabbits because they cause havoc eating the crops and digging big holes. To stop this, Stephen will chop up lots of carrots and use a special machine called a carrot layer to dispense them.

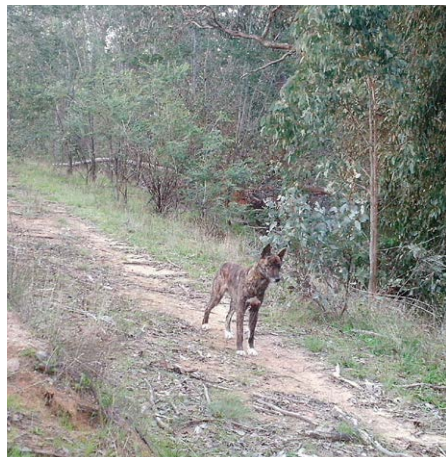


Stephen tows the carrot layer behind his ute and as he drives the carrot layer will spin and some carrots will fall out of an opening. While this is happening a disc is digging a furrow to attract the rabbits because they love the smell of fresh dirt.

Stephen will give them what is called a free feed. This is when he gives them carrots without poison. He will do this over three nights. This is to get them use to having carrots. Therefore, they won't suspect it when there's poison on them. After the free feeds he will coat the carrots in poison. After eating the poisoned carrots, the rabbit will die and the job will be done.



Wild dogs are horrible pests that are found all over Australia and kill many animals from birds to sheep and cattle. That's where Stephen comes in to the picture. Stephen sets up a small rectangular camera on tracks near where wild dogs were spotted. He leaves it for 4 days and checks the footage for any sign of wild dogs and if there is, that's when he takes action.





He then calls in a dog trapper. The dog trapper uses his own dog to find the perfect place for the trap. When the wild dogs come to investigate, hopefully they step on the pressure plate. Then **SNAP!** The wild dog is stuck. The trapper will come back the next morning and shoot it and bury it. That means one less wild dog in Australia thanks to Stephen and his friends.



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2015 Year 5 and 6, Walbundrie 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

