

# The Best Feet of Marlo Estuary



Year P-2  
Marlo Primary School



## Enviro-Stories

This book has been published as part of the Enviro-Stories Education Program. 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.

*Inspiring Local Literacy*

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# The Best Feet of Marlo Estuary

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## About Marlo Primary School

Marlo Primary School is a small rural school situated on the Snowy River Estuary in East Gippsland, Victoria. Our school is focused on providing a rich and supportive learning environment that engages students, builds their capacity as learners, and helps them to develop as confident and effective community members. Our small size and our emphasis on building supportive relationships contributes to our close, family-like community.



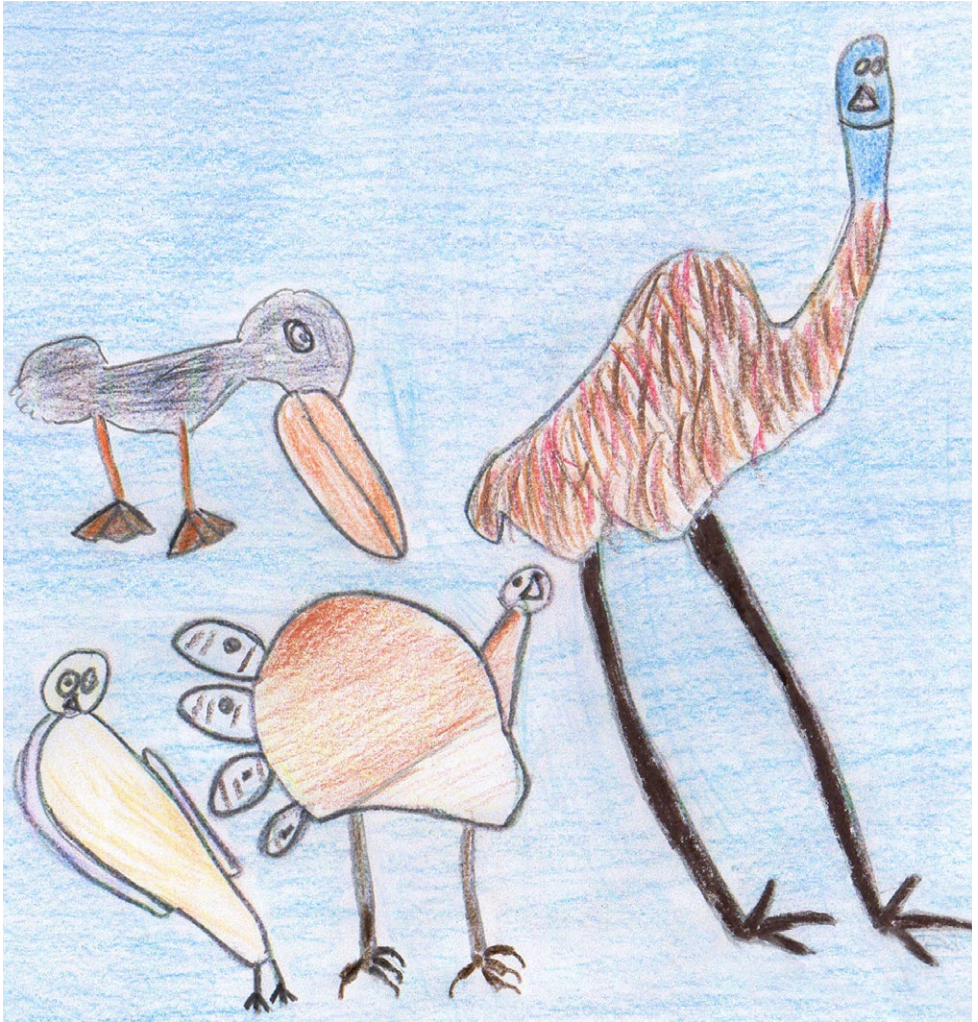
*This book is dedicated to Coral Van Ekeren, whose volunteerism has helped to make our school the wonderful place it is.*

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Marlo is normally peaceful, beautiful and joyful. But this was not always so. On a particularly sunny day, the first day of summer, things were not as peaceful as usual, as all the birds were bickering about whose feet were the best.



"My feet are the best of course," squawked Eagle.

"No my feet are the best," shouted Emu.

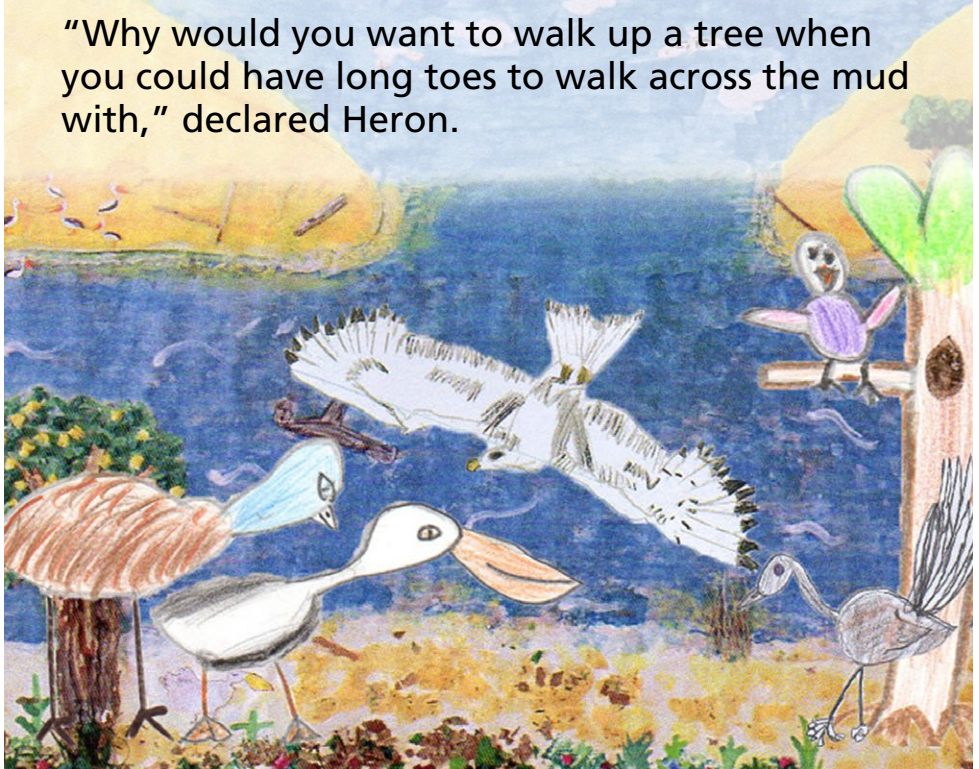
"Your feet couldn't even dig up a worm," coughed Lyrebird.

"A worm! Seriously! Why would you want a worm when you could go to sleep sitting on a branch?" bickered Parrot.

"What could be as handsome as lovely webbed feet," boasted Pelican.

"Who would want webbed feet? They are useless. You can't even walk up a tree with them," announced Treecreeper.

"Why would you want to walk up a tree when you could have long toes to walk across the mud with," declared Heron.





Owl was tired of all this bickering so he decided to have a contest to determine who had the best feet in Marlo Estuary. He told all the other birds. They made a plan.

Owl designed posters to go up around Marlo inviting all birds to participate.





Finally the big day arrived and Owl got everyone together. "Let's begin!" he called.

"Your first challenge is to pluck a large fish from the estuary using only your feet."

Instantly, White-breasted Sea Eagle took off into the blue sky, dived into to the deep water, grabbed a fish in his talons, and flew off.

"Excellent display,"  
cheered Owl.  
"Very skilful indeed."





“For the next challenge, you must walk across the mud flat without sinking.”

Eager Eagle tried to walk across the flat, but as soon as his heavy talons hit the mud, he began to sink.

“That’s not how you do it,” bossed Heron.  
“Watch me.”

And with that, Heron spread his long toes and walked delicately across the sticky, sinky, wet mud until he had reached the water.



“Well done!”  
congratulated Owl.  
“What a graceful bird.”

“And now let’s see who the fastest swimmer is. We will have a race to the far shore.”

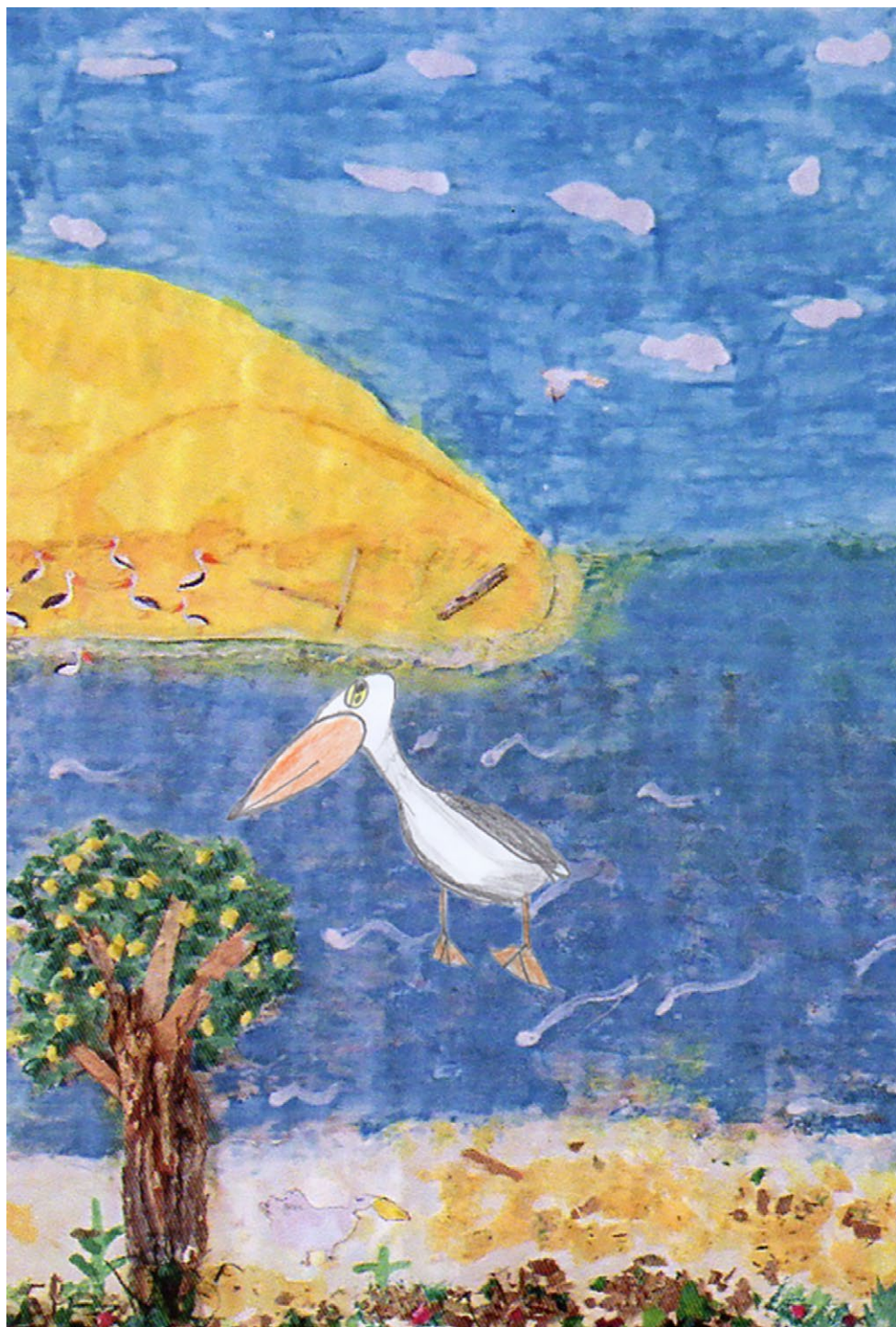
Before the other birds had even moved Pelican had taken off across the shimmering water like a water snake and was standing on the opposite bank

The other birds shouted, “We can’t believe how quickly you got there.”

Pelican cackled, “Of course I got here quickly. I used my trusty webbed feet. They always do the job. You guys must be so jealous of them.”

“Perfectly done,” cheered Owl. “But I wouldn’t boast if I were you.”





“You must all be feeling pretty hungry by now so let’s make our next challenge to catch the biggest, juiciest worm.”

Before any other bird had moved a feather, Lyrebird started digging with his powerful claws, throwing dirt everywhere. In the blink of an eye, he had dug up the biggest, juiciest worm any other bird had ever seen.



“That was impressive,” shouted Owl. “Could I share your feast, as I also like to eat worms?”

“Help yourself,” invited Lyrebird.



“Now,” called Owl, “for an acrobatic challenge. You need to climb up the side of this tree trunk using only your feet and you must not fall off. You only get one try.”

“Easy,” said Treecreeper using his front claws to dig into the rough bark above him and his back claws to brace himself so he didn’t fall backwards. He climbed effortlessly to the top.

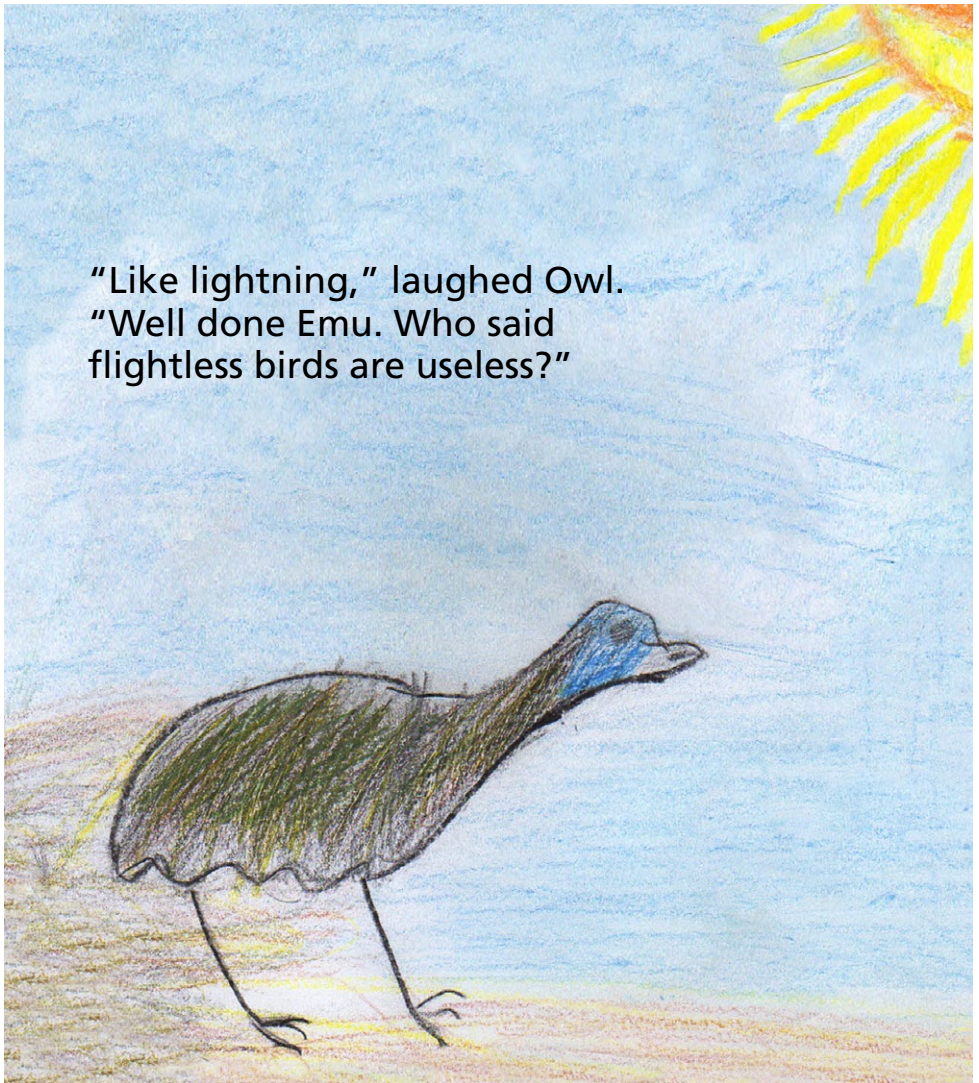


“Truly amazing,” chuckled Owl. “Isn’t it exciting to have an acrobat in our group. But do we have a sprinter?”

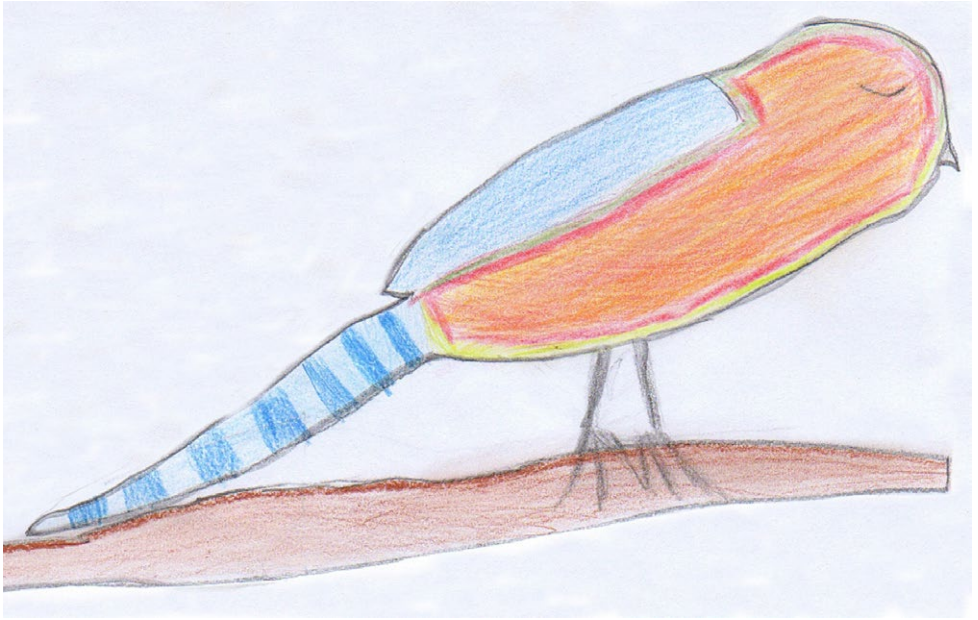
“To find out, our next challenge will be a running race from here to the furthest tree.”

Before the other birds had stopped talking, Emu had taken off, his long, muscular legs striding out across the plain. All the other animals could see was a cloud of dust.

“Like lightning,” laughed Owl.  
“Well done Emu. Who said flightless birds are useless?”







“Now, considering you must all be very tired I think you will appreciate this next challenge. You must go to sleep perched on the narrow branch above us.”

Parrot flew up to the branch and perched. Then Pelican joined him. Pelican tried to balance his big webbed feet on the narrow branch, but he just wobbled and wobbled until he fell backwards, thump, onto the ground!.

The other animals laughed and then looked up expecting that Parrot would fall off too, because of all the wobbling, but they were wrong. Parrot was fast asleep with his claws wrapped tightly around the branch, still perching comfortably.

“Now you have all stopped bickering I will tell you why I made the contest,” announced Owl. “I made it so you would understand that no bird’s feet are the best. They are all useful for something. So there are no medals because there are no winners. We are all winners because now we understand how clever the feet of each bird are.

Owl continued, “To celebrate I would like you to all go and collect your special food and bring it back to the old cubby house, where we will share a meal.”







That night they all gathered around the table tasting each other's food. It did not take long before they started to bicker about whose food was the tastiest.

"Here we go again," said Owl under his breath.









Photo credit: Rosie Broughton

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