

Charlie, Doug and Frank

Meet 'n' Greet

Written and illustrated by Calvin Hardy,
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from Wheatbelt Primary Extension
and Challenge



ENVIRO

stories



Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource 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

Wheatbelt NRM

Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated (Wheatbelt NRM) is an independent community-based organisation involved with natural resource management endeavours within the Avon River Basin.

www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au

Charlie, Doug and Frank Meet 'n' Greet

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Hotspot Heroes

The Hotspot Heroes Enviro-Stories Program involved schools from the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia learning about the biodiversity, threatened species and feral animals in the wheatbelt area. A Hotspot Hero is someone who is willing to stand up and take action to help prevent our threatened plants and animals from fading into oblivion.

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Crackle! Whoosh! The heat followed Charlie as he rushed through the clumpy, dry and brittle scrub.

“Run! Everyone run!” Charlie yelled as he sped away from the fire.

Charlie’s eyes were watering from the thick smoke. The flame singed his brown tail, turning it black.

“Eeeeeek!” Charlie shouted in pain



Charlie is a Chuditch from Merredin Reserve in the Avon Region, Western Australia. He is 35 cm from his nose to the tip of his tail, and his fur is brown with prominent white spots. Charlie loves to eat birds, invertebrates and rodents. Right now, his only worry was getting away from the fire!

Meanwhile, two predators were also in the area. Doug, the dingo, was having a cruisy day, and Frank, the fox, was catching a few sun rays when Charlie came thundering past, legging it for Jim and Joe's farm. These two farmers had partnered with Wheatbelt NRM to protect the native flora and fauna on their land.

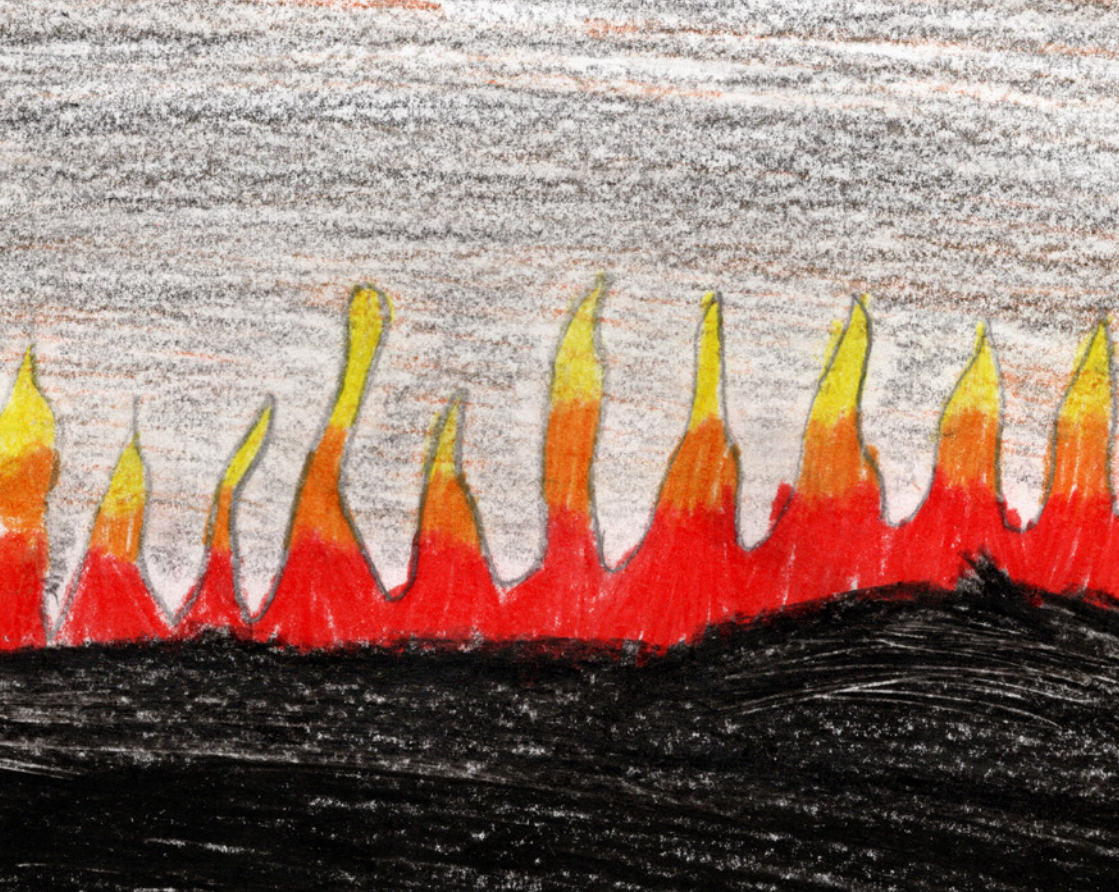




As Charlie ran, he stepped on Frank's tail and disappeared behind a tree. Doug had seen the commotion and just a glance of Charlie's singed tail.

"Hey! I'm coming for you!" Frank called out in anger.

Frank and Doug were in hot pursuit. "He's mine!" Doug snickered.



Little did they know that the menacing, hot-headed, fiery, flame-filled predator was still behind them, relentlessly destroying everything in its path - their homes and loved ones. The trio created a cloud of dust as they dashed across the plains. It was getting dark except for the eerie orange glow created by the fire.



As Charlie surveyed his surroundings, he saw some spotlights in the distance. They were advancing towards him like two menacing eyes. Desperate for safety, he sped into the path of the rapidly advancing Ute.

Skrrrrt! The Ute swerved off the road, barely missing him but thankfully blocking off Frank and Doug's path instead!



Three kind men stepped out of the car, two of whom Charlie recognised as Jim and Joe, farmers famous for their respect for the native flora and fauna. Charlie did not know the third man; however, on his shirt was the name Rowan. He was from Wheatbelt NRM.

All three were checking the cat and fox traps, the camera footage and the bat boxes, before seeing Charlie on the road.

“Hello, little fella. What are you doing here?” asked Jim curiously.



“There’s a fire coming! There’s a fire coming!” explained Charlie desperately. Jim kept looking at Charlie, but all he could hear was: “Screech! Screech! Screech!” coming from Charlie’s muzzle.





Only when they saw the fire did they start to understand what Charlie was saying. They quickly got into the car and sped down the road to the sheds, bringing Charlie with them.

Back on the road, Frank and Doug stayed hidden but still wanted to catch Charlie. They made their way towards the sheds.

Jim, Joe, Rowan and Charlie finally arrived at the sheds and hopped into their firetruck. They charged towards the roaring fire and started to extinguish it.



Charlie ventured through the burnt bush to find other animals and see if they needed help. He finds a chuditch with its head poking out of a hollow in a tree surrounded by a smoking ring of fire.





Charlie races up the tree, grabbing the unconscious chuditch and carrying her down. The chuditch slowly gains consciousness and introduces herself as Chelsea. She explains that she was out gathering insects as food for her parents when the fire surrounded the tree.



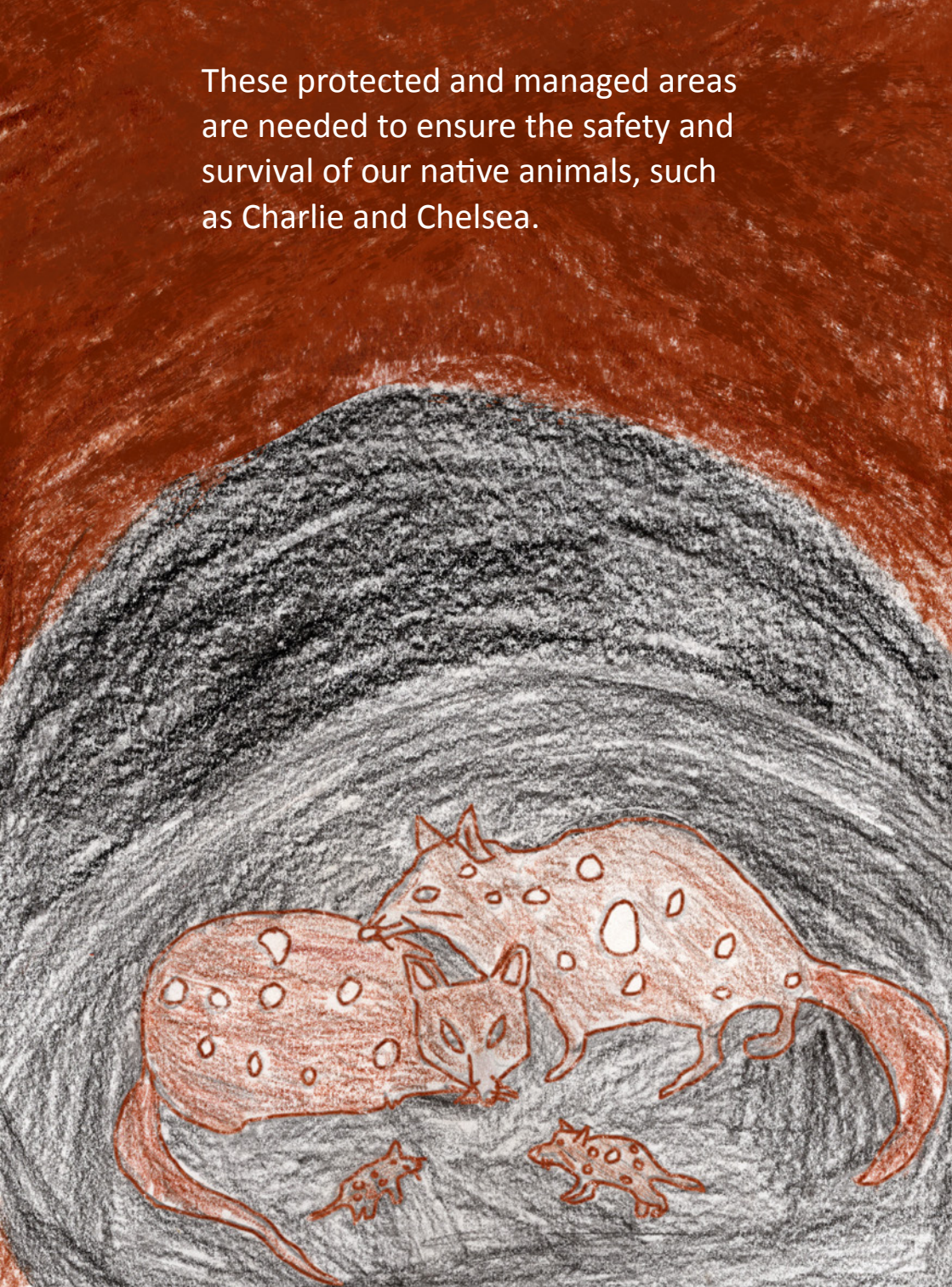
Charlie takes her back to the firetruck and stumbles across the remains of Doug the dingo and Frank the fox, who look to have been swallowed by the fire.



The chuditch pair returned to Jim, Joe and Rowan, who had put out the fire. They are collected into a crate and taken into care while a new home is found.

A few weeks later, Charlie and Chelsea are released into their new home, where fences have been installed, trees have been planted, and hollow logs placed in the bush. They had everything they needed to start their own family.

These protected and managed areas are needed to ensure the safety and survival of our native animals, such as Charlie and Chelsea.





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