

KEEP CARP CLEAR of the rivers



John Hodges, Jake Osmond,
Kurtis Joliffe and Harley Pittman
Gresford Public School

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is a 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

Hunter Local Land Services

Hunter Local Land Services works with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes. We help people make better decisions about the land they manage and assist communities and agricultural industries to be productive and sustainable into the future.

The Hunter Local Land Services region covers an area of approximately 33,000 square kilometres, extending from Mid Coast Council in the north to Lake Macquarie City Council in the south and Upper Hunter Shire Council in the west.

The landscape ranges from estuarine wetlands and mangroves, rainforests and freshwater wetlands to open grasslands, woodlands, eucalypt forests, lakes and foreshores.

The region has good soils, a subtropical climate and abundant rainfall which support a wide range of industries, including farming, forestry, fishing, oyster farming, tourism and nature-based recreation.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/hunter

Keep Carp Clear of the Rivers

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School: Gresford Public School

This book has been published as part of the Every Bit Counts Enviro-Stories program and involves schools learning about the importance of sustainably managing our farmland and natural resources and protecting them from biosecurity threats.

The Every Bit Counts Enviro-Stories program forms part of a collaborative project between all four coastal Local Land Services regions, including Hunter, Greater Sydney, South East and North Coast. This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.

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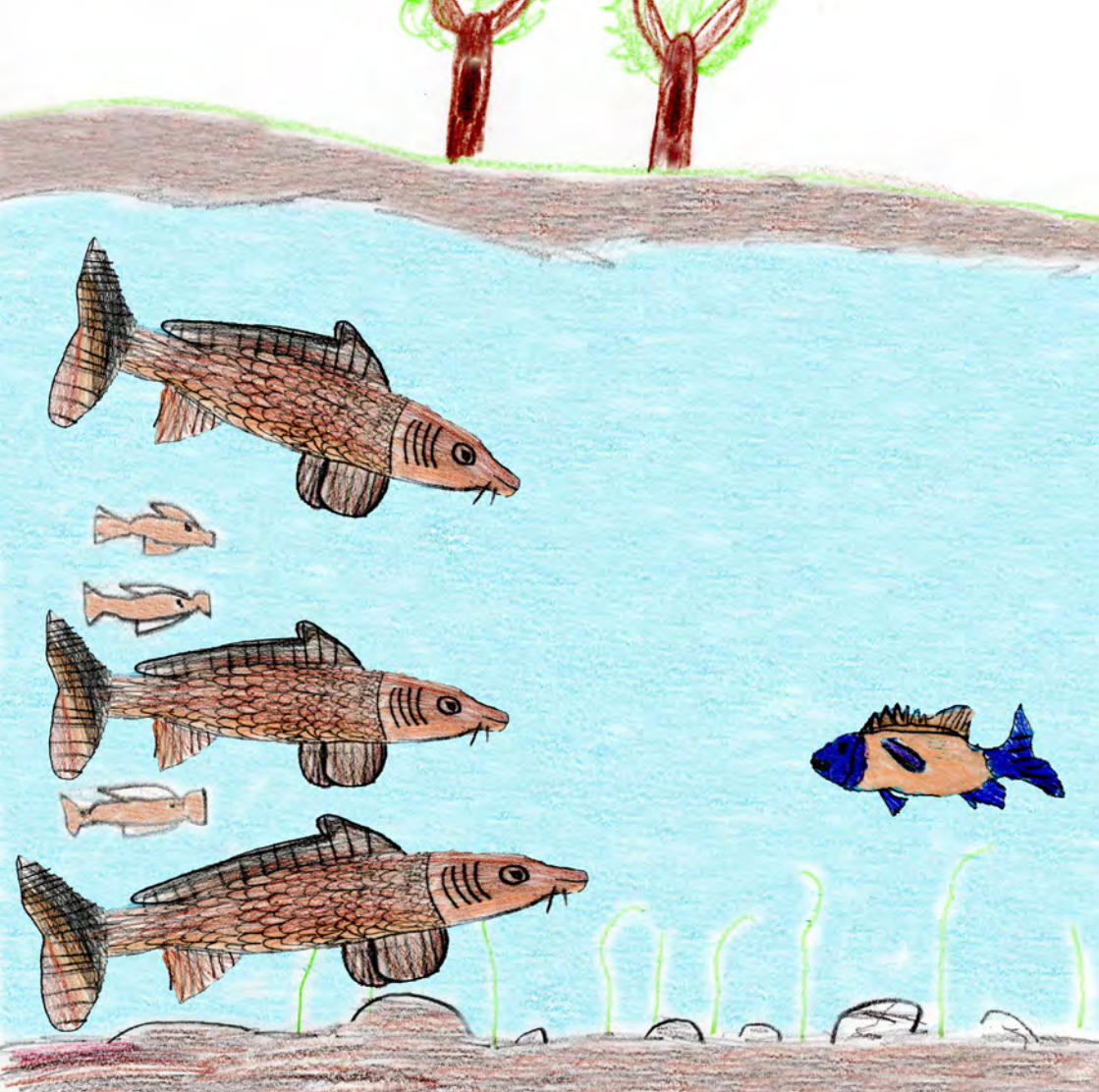


Bruce, the wisest water dragon, was lying on a lovely, long log on the banks of the Allyn River when he heard a splash.

“That must be Barry, the bass,” said Bruce to himself. “I’ll see if I can find him.” Zoom! He pushed off into the water.

Barry was playing tips with Mike the platypus and Larry the long-necked turtle.

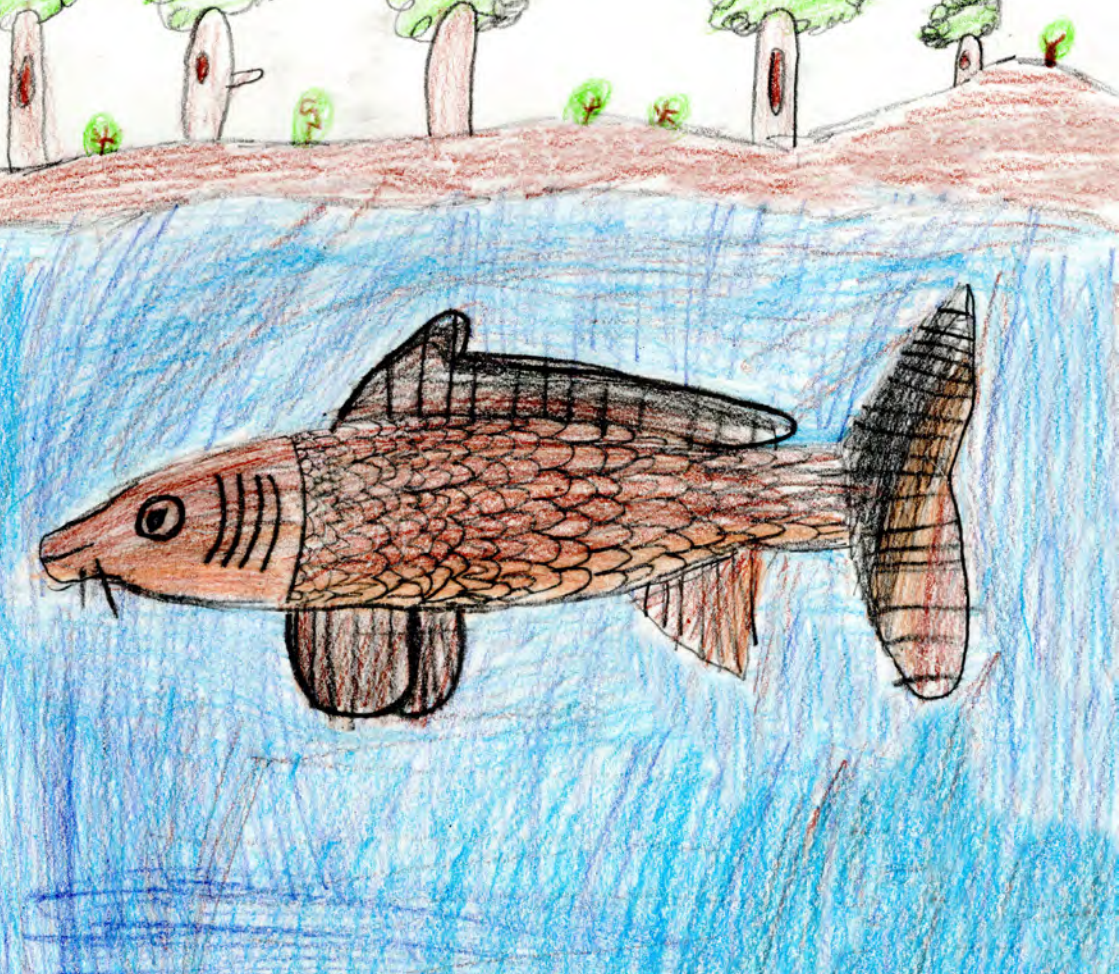




Later in the week, Barry was hunting when he spotted a weird fish that wasn't a local. The rude fish pushed straight past him without even saying hello.

As Barry swam further up the river, he was shocked to find more fish that looked the same.

Upset by these fishy intruders, Barry decided to finish his hunt and go home.



“Who were those strange, long fish that have started invading my peaceful river?” Barry wondered. “Some of them must be 1.2 metres from head to tail. They have a pair of whiskers next to their mouth, small eyes and are slippery and slimy. They’re sure ugly! I wonder what they are?”

During the following week, mud and dirt started washing down the river. Barry the bass and Mike the platypus found that they couldn't hunt very well with all this cloudy, dirty water.

They started to get very hungry!



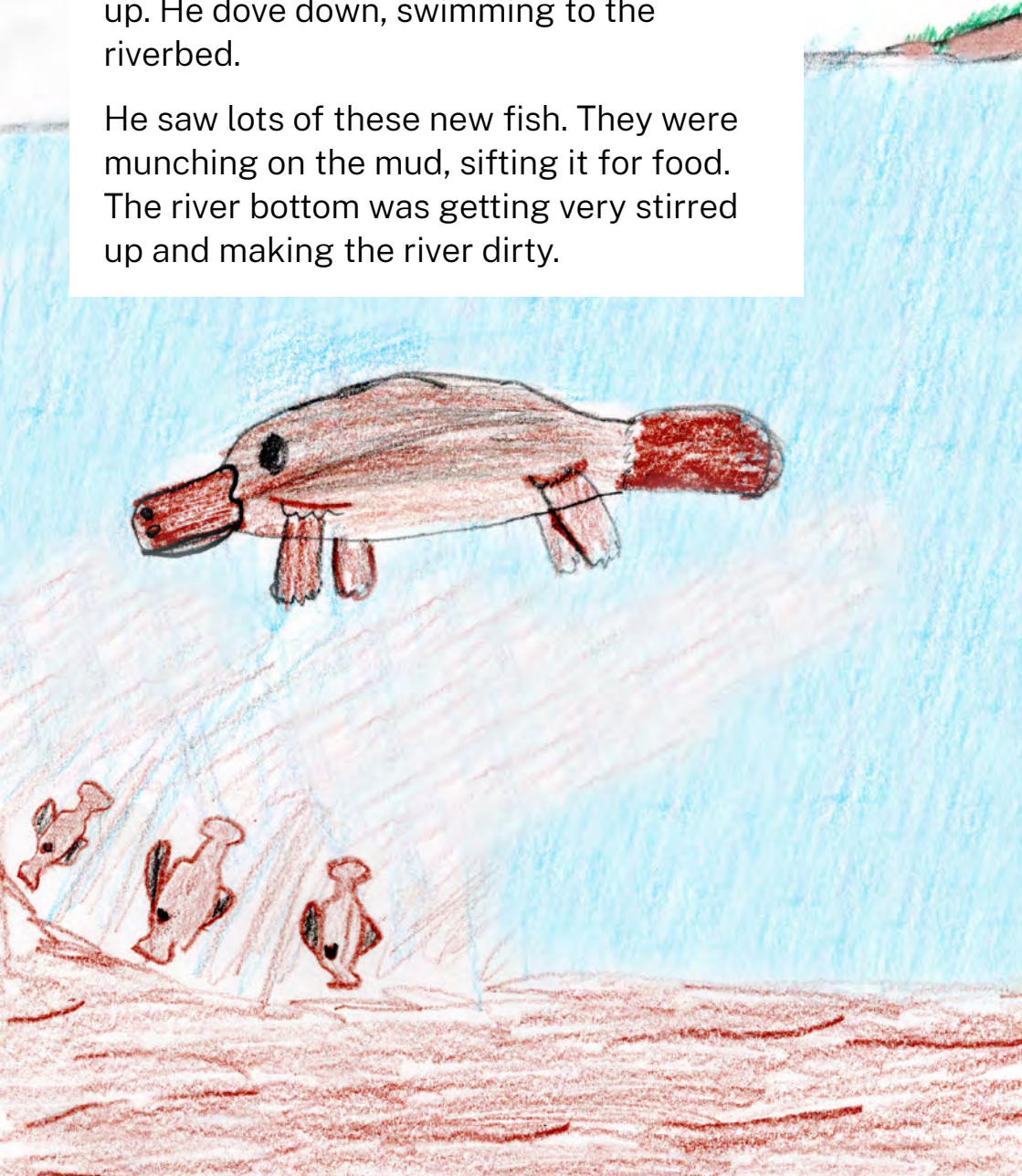


The next day, all the river creatures met in an unusually warm pool of water. There was Mike the platypus, Larry the long-necked turtle, Bruce the water dragon and Barry the bass.

“We need to find out why the river is so dirty,” said Barry.

Mike, the platypus, went into the water to find out why the mud was getting stirred up. He dove down, swimming to the riverbed.

He saw lots of these new fish. They were munching on the mud, sifting it for food. The river bottom was getting very stirred up and making the river dirty.

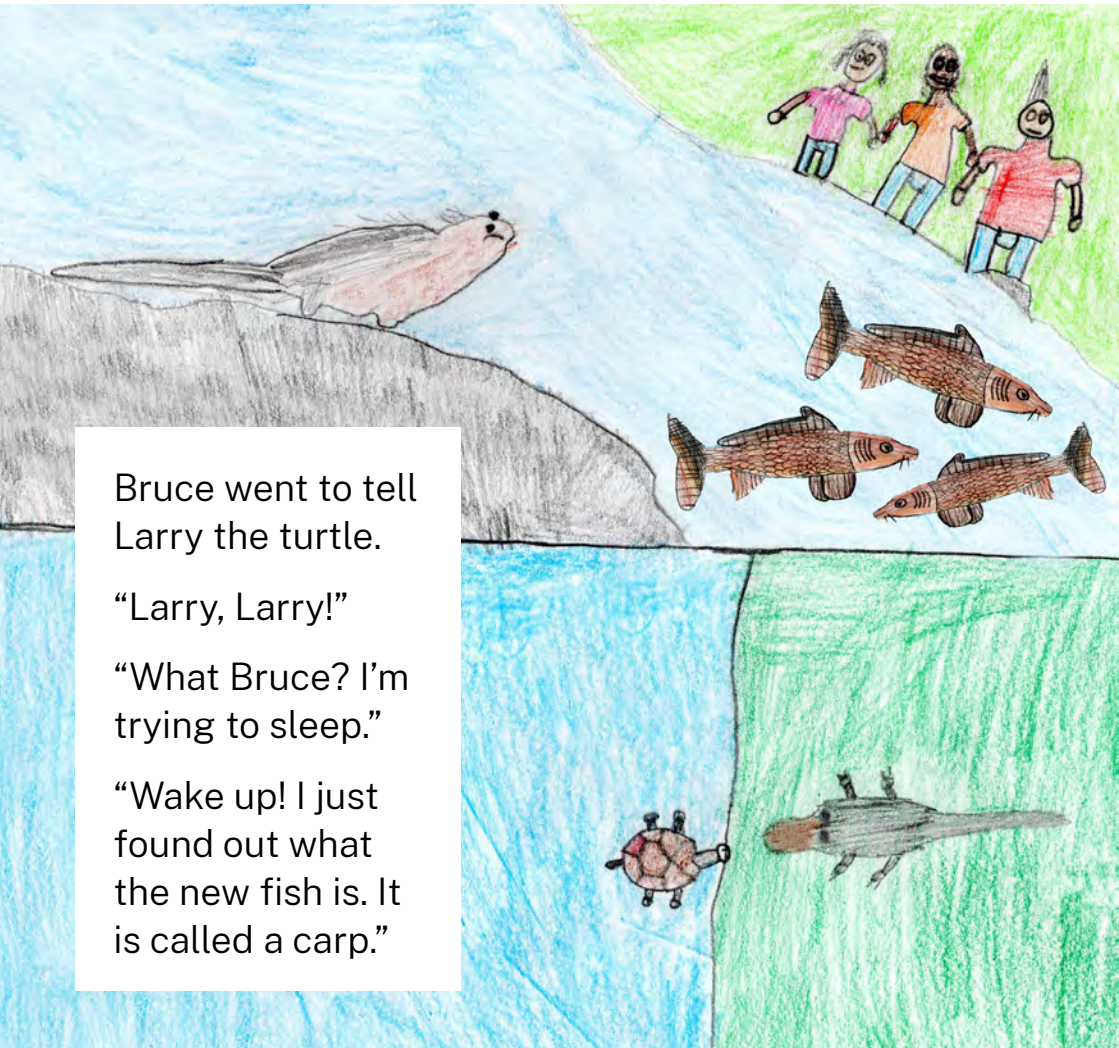


Bruce, the water dragon, was having the best day. He was lying on a hot rock when he heard some humans. The humans were talking about a new type of fish.

“Have you seen that new fish?” said the adult human.

“Yes, I think it is a carp,” said the boy.

“I keep catching them,” replied his cousin.

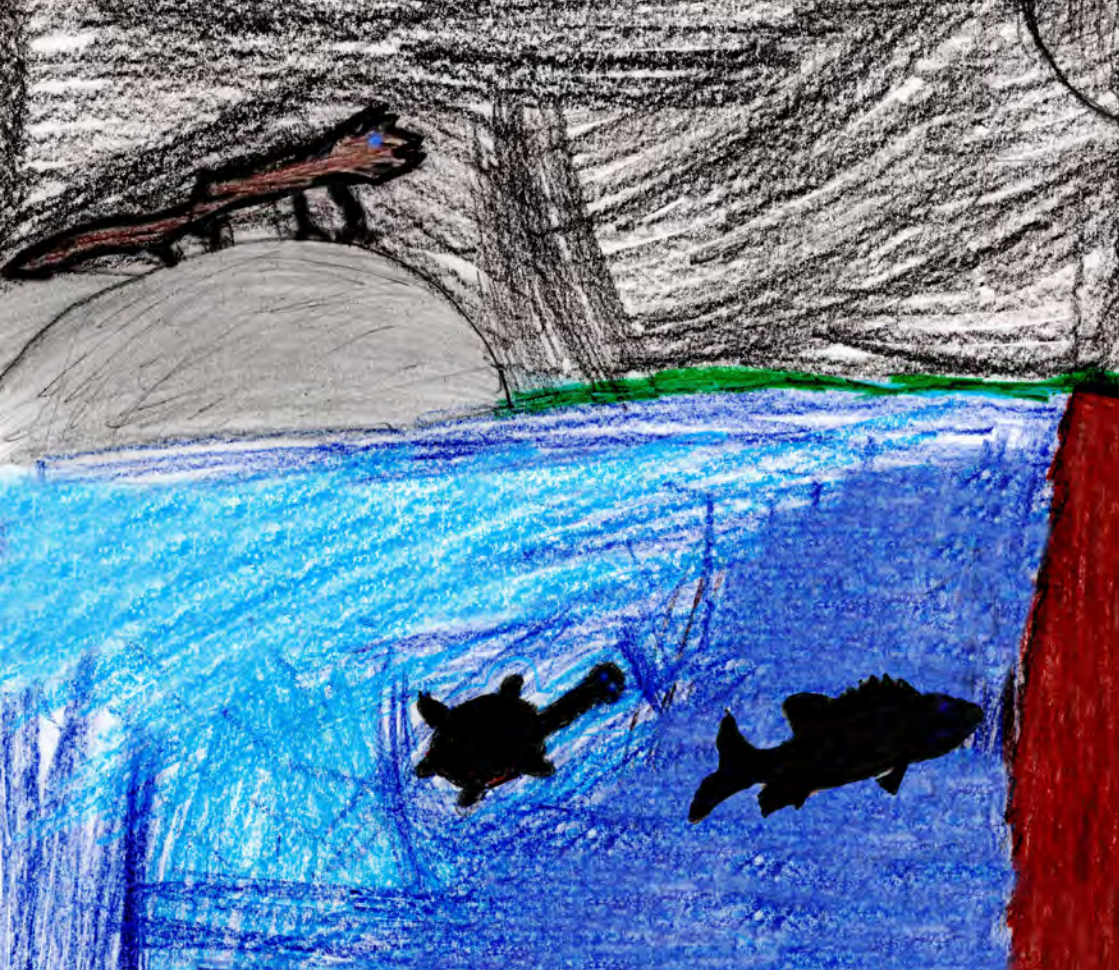


Bruce went to tell Larry the turtle.

“Larry, Larry!”

“What Bruce? I’m trying to sleep.”

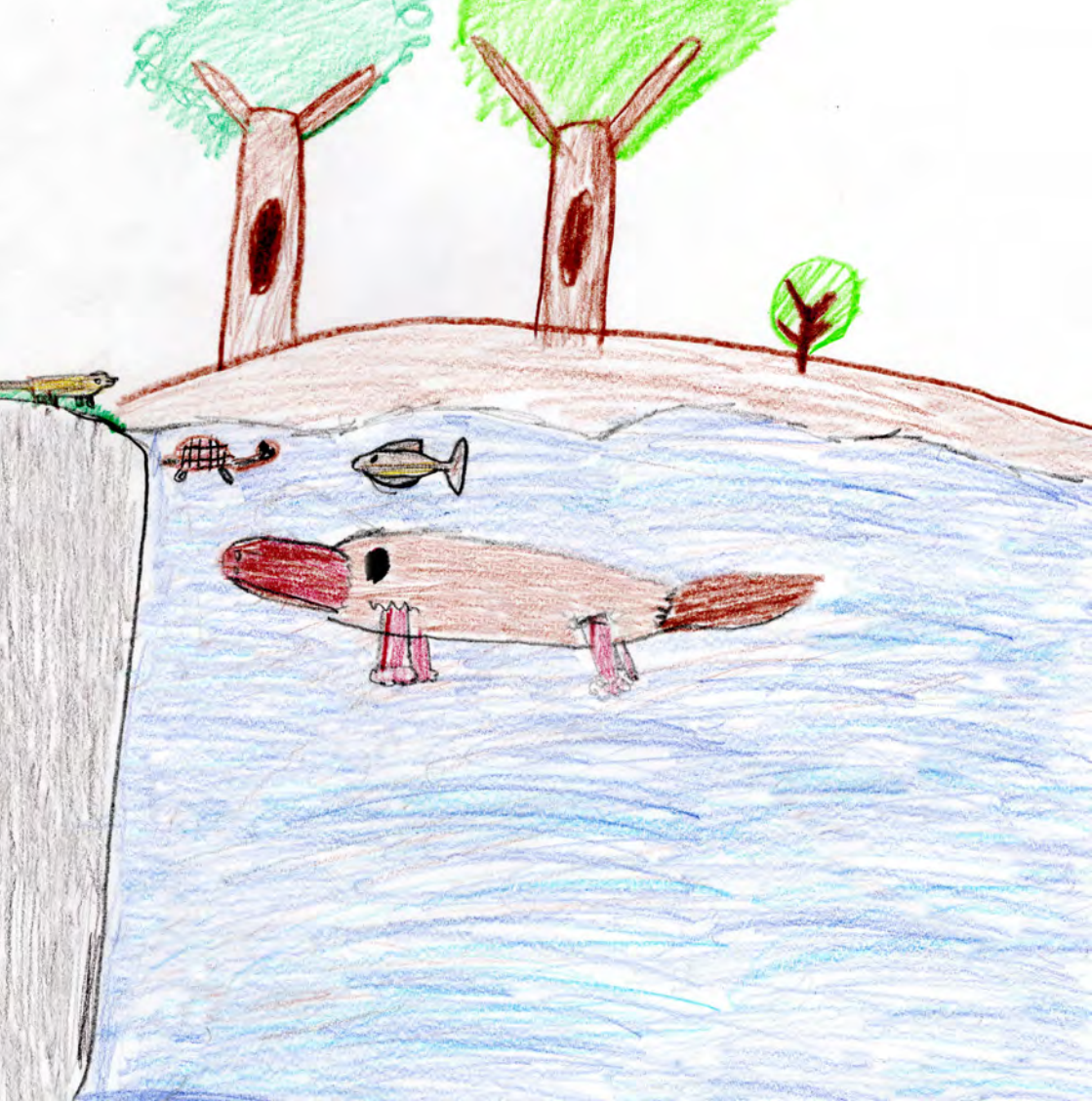
“Wake up! I just found out what the new fish is. It is called a carp.”



Bruce and Larry quickly jumped into the river to look for Barry the bass. “Barry, Barry, where are you?” called Larry.

“I’m over here munching on muddy river shrimps,” said Barry miserably. “They taste horrible.”

“We have so much to tell you. The humans are worried. The new fish is called a carp and they are breeding fast. Blue-green algae is covering the river pools and growing quickly in the muddy water; it tastes horrible.”



Mike also swam as fast as he could to tell Barry the bass what he has seen.

“It is those new fish eating the mud to get bugs out of it. They are stirring up the water.”

“This is bad,” frowned Barry. “Really, really, bad.”



The humans, Jim, Bob and Sally, came back down the river to fish and have a picnic. They were alarmed when they noticed that the native river animals had problems with the invasive carp.

They saw how badly the carp stirred up the mud. This meant that the river creatures couldn't see their food.

The muddy water also felt a lot warmer than usual. Jim told the kids, "the murky water absorbs the sunlight easier, making it warmer. This is very bad for some of the native river animals. Little fish are vulnerable as they can't see the predators coming and have to get out of there if they are going to survive. Lastly, the carp eat all of the worms and other bugs. Already, the local fish are beginning to starve."

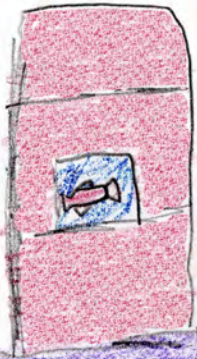
Bob and Sally felt sad for all the river creatures and decided they wanted to help.



The children went home and got help from their dad to send an email to the CSIRO. They told the scientists that the carp were not meant to be in the Allyn River and were causing problems.

They explained that the carp were destroying the river life by stirring up the mud and mixing it with the water.

Also, fewer worms and other waterbugs made it hard for the native fish to find food. There was not enough food left for them and their young ones.



Later that day, the CSIRO sent an e-mail back. They thanked Jim, Bob and Sally for being concerned citizens and letting them know the state of the carp in the Allyn River.

The CSIRO informed them that plans were underway to remove the carp. They had created a fish virus that only would target the carp and kill them by shutting down their kidneys and liver. The virus was called 'the Carponator'. It was hoped to be instrumental in getting rid of carp in Australian rivers.

The virus is thoroughly checked by CSIRO scientists before being released into the rivers. It is extremely important that the virus does not kill or harm other native fish and wildlife. It would be very sad if something they released hurt other things.

If the Carponater virus is successful, there might be no carp in the rivers again. The carp would not stir the mud up and wreck the beauty of our rivers. This would be very good for native fish, platypus, water dragons, freshwater turtles and their native habitats.

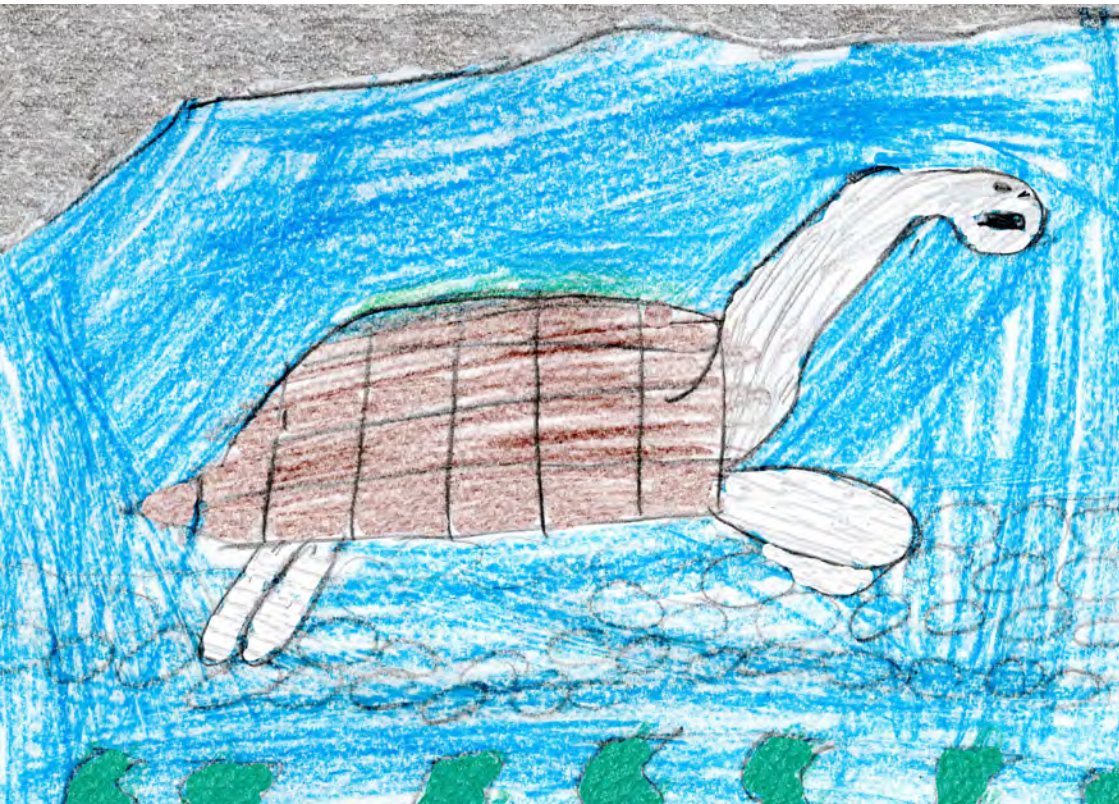


The animals heard the children talking about the virus that the CSIRO was making.

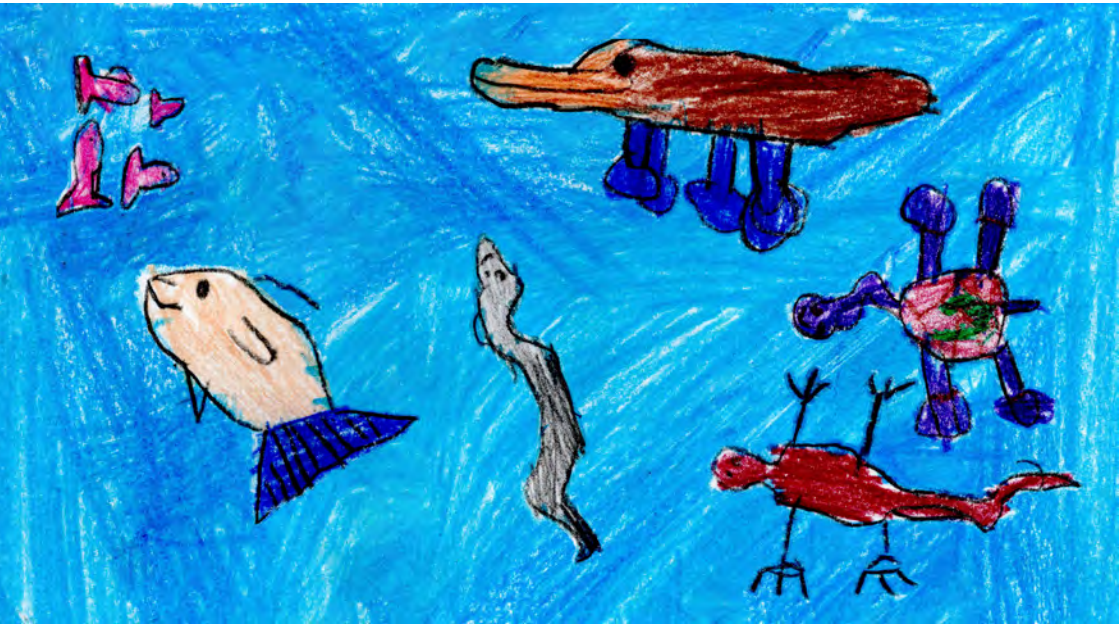
They began to worry that they might get sick and die too. They were glad they heard Sally mention that it was being tested and trialled before it was released.

The idea of the virus was exciting, but it was not ready to be used yet. The children wondered what could be done to help the river animals in their struggle against the carp now.

They asked their contact at the CSIRO what they could do.



So how did the children help the river animals in the meantime?



The children wrote a book to educate more people about the problems with carp in the river. The book shared important information like: if you catch a carp, do not put it back in the river; keep a record of where you caught or saw carp and how many there were; consider running a community event like a carp muster; and they also recommended that people should try eating some of the carp they catch.

Jim, Bob and Sally spread the word about how to help the river through their friends, family and the wider community. One day, they hoped Barry, Larry, Mike and Bruce could have their crystal-clear water back in the Allyn River. They weren't going to give up!

They will keep trying to find ways to
help fight the problem and...

Keep carp clear
of the rivers!

ENVIRO

stories



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