

Rabbits Running Rife



Stage 2 Enrichment Class
Cowra Public School



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

Central West Local Land Services

The Central West Local Land Services region is home to around 110,000 people and covers the central west slopes region around Grenfell, Forbes and Wellington to the western plains of Nyngan and Coonamble.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centralwest

Central Tablelands Local Land Services

The Central Tablelands Local Land Services region is located in central New South Wales and covers an area of approximately 31,365 km². It includes the major towns of Bathurst, Blayney, Cowra, Lithgow, Molong, Mudgee, Oberon and Orange.

www.lls.nsw.gov.au/centraltablelands

Invasive Animals CRC

The Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is Australia's largest integrated invasive animal research program. The Invasive Animals CRC creates new technologies and integrated strategies to reduce the impact of invasive animals on Australia's economy, environment and people.

www.invasiveanimals.com | www.pestsmart.org.au

Rabbits Running Rife

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This book has been published as part of the 2015 Feral Animals Enviro-Stories program which was supported by the Central West and Central Tablelands Local Land Services and Invasive Animals CRC. The 2015 Feral Animals collection consists of the following books:

- Billy's Great Escape
- Carl the Carp
- Farmer Bob and the Red Fox
- Just Too Feral for Meadow Flat
- Nigel the Nasty Rabbit
- Rabbits Running Rife
- Some Help for Harry
- The Invasion
- The Twins and the Mouse Plague
- Who got the Chickens?

© State of New South Wales 2015 published by Local Land Services
ISBN: 978-1-74256-810-2

Enviro-Stories is a PeeKdesigns initiative.

Design by PeeKdesigns, www.peekdesigns.com.au

Printed by Progress Printing, Condobolin NSW, www.progressprinting.com.au

Citation: Cowra Public School. 2015. *Rabbits Running Rife*. Local Land Services, NSW.





Mitchell and Eliza owned their own little bit of paradise, a beautiful farm near Cowra in New South Wales. They worked hard to take care of their property and made it a very profitable place.

Like most farmers, feral animals were always a concern for Mitchell and Eliza. They knew that it was very important to control them.



One morning, Mitchell ran inside to where his wife Eliza was making bacon and eggs.

“Eliza! Come and see what something has done to all of our crops,” cried Mitchell.

“OK. What has happened?” said Eliza feeling worried. They ran outside to where their vegetables had been planted and a dreadful sight met their eyes.

"Oh, my goodness!" Eliza cried. "What on Earth happened to my beautiful cabbages?"

"I don't know," said Mitchell gravely.

"And look...all my carrots are gone too," said Eliza sadly.



After breakfast, Mitchell went out to water the crops. Most of them had been eaten, and when he looked at the soil he saw there were rabbit footprints all over the ground.



That afternoon, after trapping as many rabbits as they could, Mitchell and Eliza sat on the veranda at the back of their property drinking coffee.

"I hope we never see those rabbits again," said Mitchell.

"Yes. They are horrid, aren't they?" replied Eliza.





"I don't know why the First Fleet ever brought them out in 1788," Mitchell wondered aloud.

"They brought them out mainly for food originally," Eliza informed him. "But then, in 1859, an Englishman living in Victoria released some rabbits for hunting and to make it more like home. After that, they spread like wildfire."



Eliza and Mitchell went inside to have their dinner. It was rabbit stew, made out of the rabbits they had caught earlier that morning. After dinner they went outside to dig holes and destroy the rabbit warrens.

A few weeks later, Mitchell woke early to the sound of running feet. He got out of bed and crossed to the window. Out of the window he could see his sheep running frantically all over the place. Something else was moving amongst the running sheep, so he decided to see what it was.

When he got to the sheep paddock he saw foxes had made holes under his fences.

“Shoo, shoo, shoo!” cried Mitchell. He could also see a number of burrows the foxes had dug to use as dens near some bushes.





Eliza emerged from the house and ran towards Mitchell and the sheep paddock. "What are you doing up at this hour? And why are there foxes in the sheep paddock?" she asked in surprise.

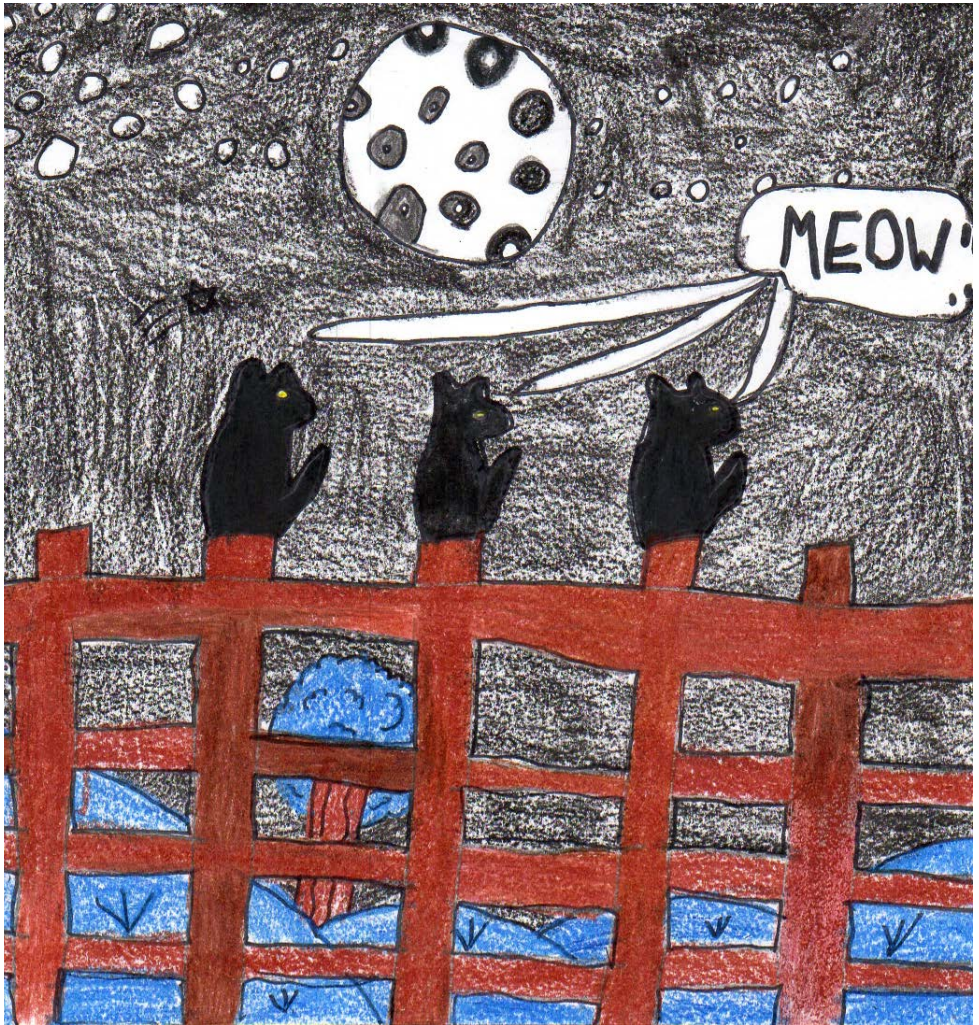
"It's those wretched foxes again!" exclaimed Mitchell.



They discussed the matter when they drove into town later that day.

"I think something must have attracted the foxes, but I am not sure what," said Mitchell.

"Hmmm, maybe it could be the rabbits. I am not sure though," replied Eliza.



A week later, Mitchell and Eliza were in the middle of dinner when they heard cats fighting.

“What are the neighbour’s cats doing?” Eliza asked puzzled.

“I don’t know, I think we should go and see,” Mitchell said.

When they got outside, there were five dead eastern pygmy possums on the ground.

“Why would anything want to harm those cute, little fluff balls?” Eliza asked sadly.

“I think it might be because rabbits have destroyed parts of the bush which are the possums’ habitat,” Mitchell said slowly. “The possums have tried to live in the bush on our farm, but now the cats and foxes are attacking them.”

They decided to bury the possums in the backyard.





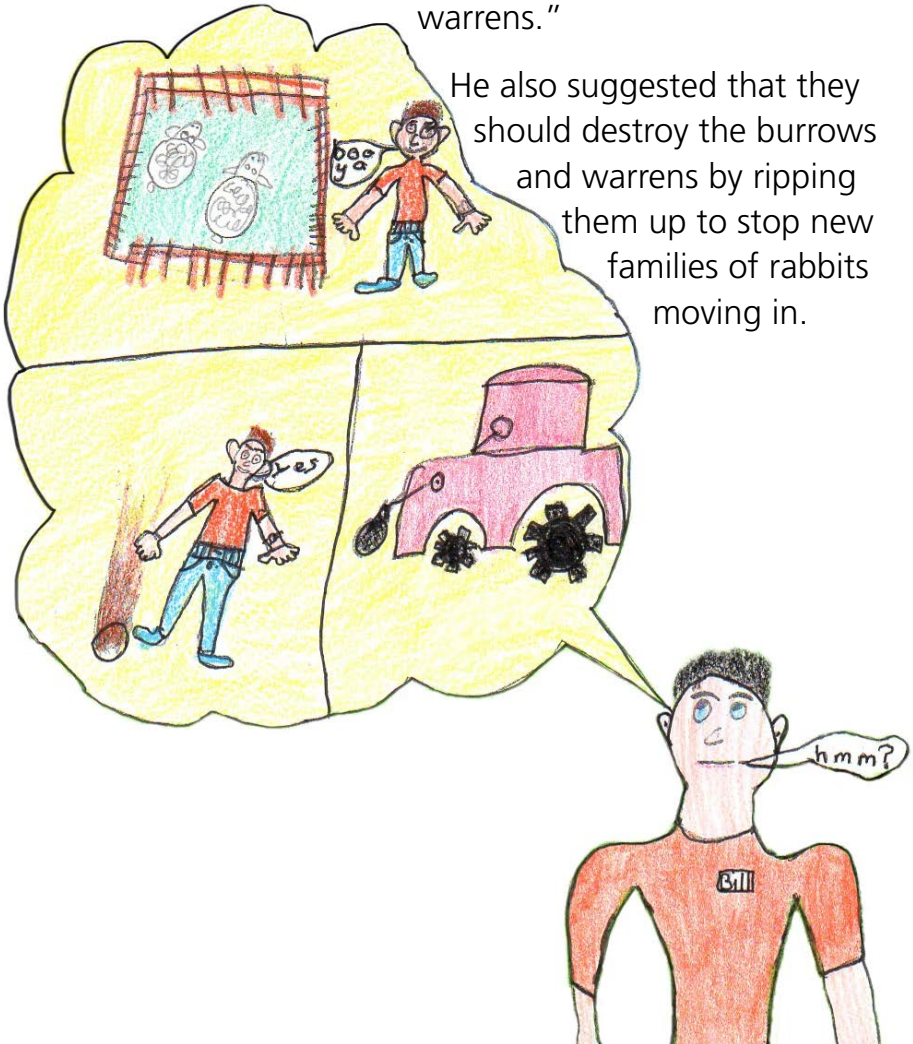
Eliza and Mitchell were very sad about the dead possums.

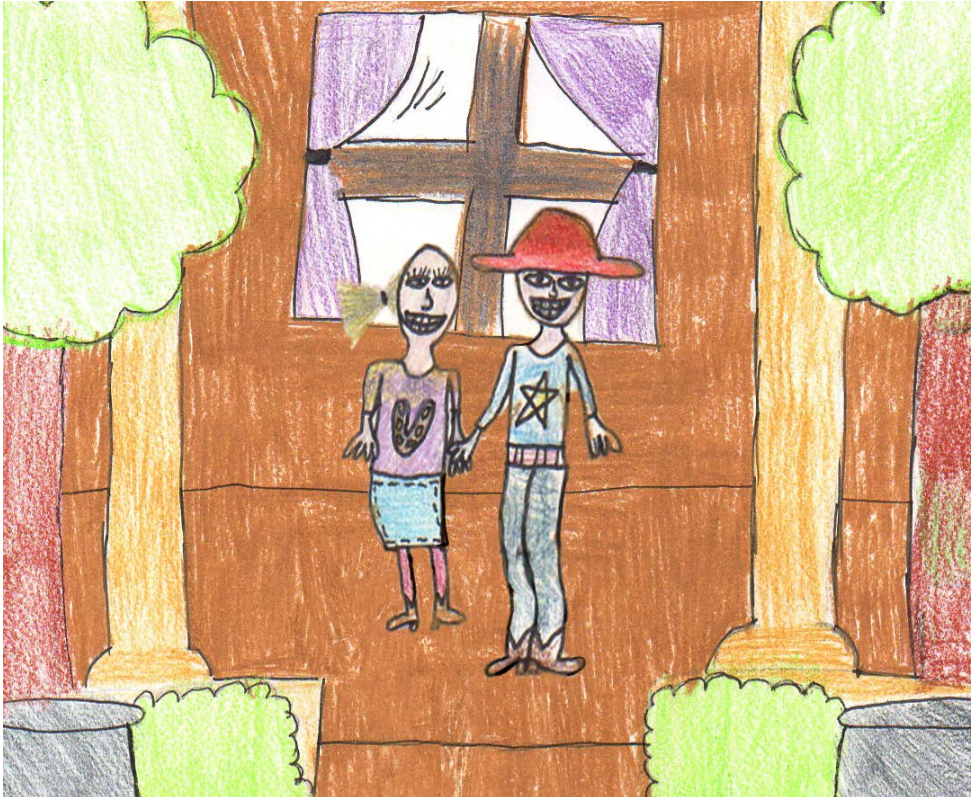
"I think we should call the Local Land Services to see what we should do," Mitchell said. They rang the Local Land Services office and spoke to a man called Bill.

Bill informed them that pests like rabbits, can attract other predators to a farm. These predators will then prey on small farm animals and native animals.

“The best way to control the cats and foxes is to get rid of the thing that was attracting them to the farm in the first place,” Bill said. “You can put new rabbit-proof fences up, trap the rabbits and smoke them out of their warrens.”

He also suggested that they should destroy the burrows and warrens by ripping them up to stop new families of rabbits moving in.





"Thanks Bill," Mitchell said. "We'll put up those fences straight away."

So Mitchell and Eliza put the fences up, smoked out and destroyed the rabbit holes and trapped, shot and poisoned the surviving feral animals on their farm. Over time, their farm recovered and began to change back into the beautiful place it once was.

Mitchell and Eliza are still keeping a close eye on their crops and sheep to see if there have been any feral animals around. If they do spot any damage, they now know how to deal with the problem.



Cowra Public School, Stage 2 Enrichment Class 2015

