

## EAGLE, CROW AND EMU: BIRD STORIES

Authors: Gladys Milroy and Jill Milroy

ISBN (PB): 9781925163711

Year level: Y2–5

Cross-curriculum priorities: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; Sustainability

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Three fantastic stories by Indigenous mother-and-daughter team Gladys and Jill Milroy collected together for the first time. Told in the tradition of teaching stories, these take readers on adventures of self-discovery and fulfilment with endearing animal characters and exciting plot lines.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Gladys Milroy was born in Perth in 1927 and grew up at the Parkerville Children's Home in the Darling Ranges, just outside of Perth. Her people's country is the Palyku country in the eastern Pilbara. The languages of her family are Palyku and English. When Gladys was young she loved playing in the bush and watching the birds and animals, like the magpies and wallabies, but especially the brumbies. Her favourite places were the bush and the deep swimming hole she used to visit near Jane Brook, which runs into the Avon River. Gladys's stories are inspired by her concern about the damage that is being caused to our environment, especially the effect it is having on the birds and animals.

Professor Jill Milroy is the Dean of School of Indigenous Studies at the University of Western Australia. In 2011 Jill was made a member of Order of Australia in recognition of her services to Indigenous education. Jill is a Palyku woman whose country is in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

### THEMES

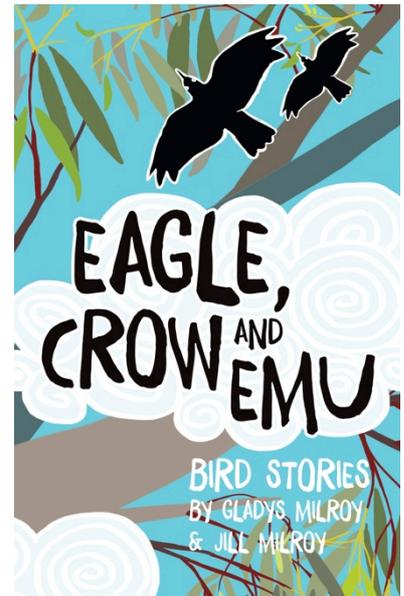
- Friendship
- Individuality
- Bullying
- Selfishness
- Forgiveness
- Australian animals and their habitats

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- Y2–5 English
- Y2–5 Humanities and Social Sciences
- Y2–5 Biological Sciences

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- ABC Splash – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures:  
<http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/topic/494038/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-histories-and-cultures>
- Department of Education WA – Aboriginal Education Portal:  
<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/apac/detcms/navigation/lesson-plans>
- WWF Australia 'change the way you live' links – sustainable living:  
[http://www.wwf.org.au/get\\_involved/change\\_the\\_way\\_you\\_live](http://www.wwf.org.au/get_involved/change_the_way_you_live)



Gladys Milroy

## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### *Discussion questions for Eagle and Bullfrog*

1. How would you feel if you were Little Eagle and the other birds laughed at you because you could not fly? Do you think this is bullying? Why is it unkind to tease others?
2. What is your school's bullying policy? What are some actions you should take if you see someone being bullied? Create a list as a class.
3. Would you have helped Serpent if you were Little Eagle? Even though he stole your feathers?
4. Spider returns every night to her web – what do you call animals that are active at night and sleep during the day? Create a list of such animals.

### *Discussion questions for The Great Cold*

5. If you were Crow, would you risk the journey to the Cavern? Why/why not?
6. Do you think it is Goanna's fault that Baby Bird is born without his wings? Why/why not?
7. What is the scientific term to describe when the moon blocks the sun? How often does this happen?

### *Discussion questions for The Water Tree*

8. If you were Emu, would you tell your bush friends about the water tree? Do you think Emu is being selfish and greedy by keeping it a secret?
9. Magpie tells Emu to 'follow his heart' in order to make the right choice. What do you think this means? Can you think of a time when you followed your heart to make the right decision?
10. Do you think Emu should sacrifice his golden feather? If you were Emu, would you make this sacrifice? Why/why not?

### *Creative writing*

11. What do you imagine the goannabird to look like? Make an A3 illustration or a clay model.
12. Create your own hybrid creature, then write and illustrate a short story about its adventures.
13. Is Bullfrog a land animal, sky animal or water animal? Or does he belong to more than one of these categories? Is he native to Australia or an introduced species?
14. Which Australian animal would you like to be for a day? Write an imaginative story about a day in the life of this land, sky or water animal. You will need to research your chosen animal (habitat, predators, diet etc) to help you brainstorm ideas for your plot.
15. Do you think there is a moral to any of the stories in *Eagle, Crow and Emu*? What lessons do the characters learn in each bird story?
16. Stories that have a moral are called fables. In pairs, plan and draft your own fable starring up to three Australian animals. What lesson will the main character learn? Through what event/experience will their values change?

### *Informational writing/biological sciences*

17. Informational writing is writing that seeks to explain. Practising your research, scanning, highlighting and referencing skills at your school library, write a report on a creature of your choice from this book: eagle, bullfrog, spider, crow, magpie, goanna, wombat, emu, snake, kangaroo or lizard. Use the following subheadings to structure your report: physical characteristics, life cycle, diet, habitat, conservation status, native or introduced.

### *Sustainability cross-curriculum priority*

18. Gladys Milroy says that her stories are inspired by her concern about the damage that is being caused to Australia's environment, especially the effect it is having on the birds and animals.
  - a. What environmental damage does Australia face right now?
  - b. What are the causes of this damage?
  - c. Do you think it is important to protect Australia's flora and fauna? Give reasons.
  - d. Visit a wildlife sanctuary or investigate the fundraising opportunities for conservation groups in your local area – what can your school do to help?