

# H-E-L-P P😊T😊R😊😊S!



Tanja Public School



## *Creative Catchment Kids*

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive, cooperative activities that encourage students to learn about and respond to, natural resource management and the importance of agricultural production.

**[wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/](http://wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/)**

## *Petaurus Education Group*

Petaurus Education Group identifies, develops and delivers a range of learning and curriculum experiences, resources and initiatives for schools and community groups to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues at the local level. The group was established by Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre in late-2014 to support its operations and education activities.

**[wirraminna.org.au/petaurus](http://wirraminna.org.au/petaurus)**

## *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.

**[envirostories.com.au](http://envirostories.com.au)**

# H-E-L-P POTOROOS!

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**Teacher:** Ms. Thomson

**School:** Tanja Public School

In 2017, students from Tanja Public School took part in the Creative Catchment Kids program. Throughout the year they have been involved in a Potoroo project and this book is a culmination of what they have learnt. This book has been supported by South East Local Land Services with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.

Creative Catchment Kids is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



# What Potoroos Look Like

Potoroos look like rabbits, but with smaller ears, a longer nose and a long tail. They are brown-grey in colour. Long-nosed potoroos look like rabbits with a long nose. When potoroos move they look like a kangaroo.

By Sunny and Reuben



## Potoroo's Song

We are learning about potoroos,  
they are friends with kangaroos.

They eat fruit, truffles and eggs,  
they all have very long legs.

They have a home at Potoroo Palace,  
they like eating lots of pellets.

Their eyes are very small,  
and they aren't that very tall.

By Sunny, Reuben, Loki and Kai



# Species, When and Where

Potoroos hide in the damp shade of thick under-growth. They come out at dawn and dusk when it is safer from predators.

By Finn



Long-nosed Potoroos  
(*Potorous tridactylus*)

Found along the south eastern Australia coast and hinterland. Endangered in South Australia



Long-footed Potoroos  
(*Potorous longipes*)

**Endangered.** Found in eastern Victoria south-east New South Wales.



Gilbert Potoroos  
(*Potorous gilbertii*)

**Critically Endangered.** Found in south west Western Australia.



Broad-faced Potoroos  
(*Potorous platyops*)

**Extinct.** Last recorded alive in 1875.

# Potoroo's Diet

Potoroos eat truffles, small beetles and worms. They also eat grass. They are omnivores, which mean they eat meat and vegetables.

By Leo



# Natural Habitat

Potoroos like to dig holes then cover them with leaves and branches to protect themselves against wind, rain and predators. They also do it for camouflage. Potoroos live in eucalyptus forests where they like dense undergrowth, can hide and find food.

Most people think that potoroos are nocturnal but potoroos are crepuscular (dusk and dawn) just like mice. Potoroos are only found in Australia.

**By Mahli**



PHOTO: K. COLEMAN

# Breeding

Potoroo babies are called joeys and don't have fur when they are born. Female potoroos can be pregnant for 20 days and give birth to live babies. Potoroos breeding cycle is usually throughout April. Their breeding rate is slow.

By Caleb and Nakoda



PHOTO: ATLAS OF LIVING AUSTRALIA, T. BAWDEN



# Predators of Potoroos

A potoroos defense is to go very still. Unfortunately this makes it easy for predators to eat them. Their predators include; birds of prey, snakes, cats and dogs, foxes and humans because of deforestation.

To help potoroos survive we should keep our pets in enclosed yards and plant more trees and bushes for potoroos to live and hide in.

By Kai and Loki



# Why Potoroos are Endangered

Potoroos are very vulnerable! Humans are the main threat. Deforestation removes potoroo habitat, meaning they lose their home, food, water and safety from other predators.

Their main food source is truffles, which grow under native trees and in the roots of native plants. Removing the trees, destroys their truffle supply. We need to stop deforestation to save potoroos, NOW!

By Max and Janu

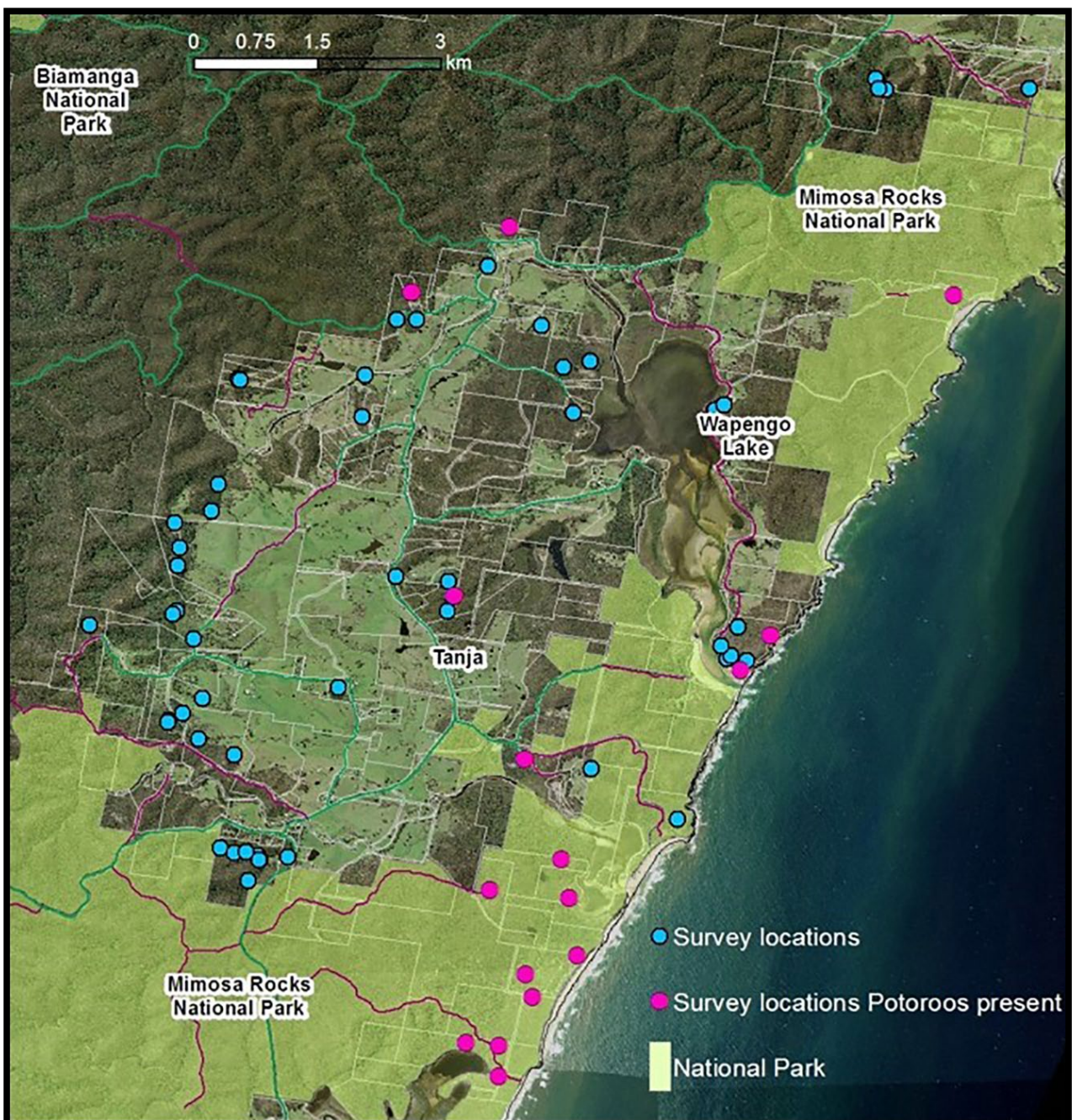


PHOTO: ENVIRONMENT EAST GIPPSLAND

# Potoroos in the Local Area

Motion sensitive cameras were placed in the local area around Tanja to spot potoroos. The pink dots on the map are where the potoroos have been seen on camera footage. The blue dots are where the cameras are placed and there have not been any sightings of potoroos yet. This helps experts to estimate potoroo numbers and identify where they are living so people can help protect potoroos in the area.

By Jakiya and Adelaide



## Olivia from Local Land Services

Olivia was the Potoroo Project Officer with South East Local Land Services. She helped landholders and other organisations monitor and protect potoroos in south east New South Wales on public and private land.

For five years, she worked in the potoroo unit, compiling information and figuring out what is causing a decline in their numbers. She also advised people in the local area on ways they can protect potoroos and provide environments that encourage an increase in their numbers.

This picture shows the equipment used. Olivia used truffle oil and peanut butter to attract the potoroos (blue circle) and a motion sensitive cameras (red circle) would photograph them in their natural environment.

By Rachelle



PHOTO: O. FORCE

# Helping Potoroo Numbers Rise

Potoroos like thick, shady undergrowth with lots of places to hide. To help potoroos navigate open patches of grass you can plant strips of shrubs and undergrowth between clumps of bushes.

On your property, you need to keep feral animals under control. Dogs, cats and foxes prey on potoroos and rabbits steal their home

By Otis



## Potoroo Palace

Alexandra is the owner of Potoroo Palace, located in Merimbula, NSW. She has looked after and rescued lots of animals in Potoroo Palace, including the potoroos.

Alexandra has cared for all the animals that she has rescued for many years. Alexandra has also rescued and released her animals to the wild.

There are around 100 animals in Potoroo Palace. The biggest animal in Potoroo Palace is a Kangaroo. When we visited there were 24 Potoroos in Potoroo Palace.



*Interview with Alexandra at Potoroo Palace on 1st August 2017.*

**By Georgia**



PHOTO: POTOROO PALACE

## *About Tanja Public School*

Tanja is located on the Far South Coast of NSW in the Bega Valley Shire council area. The traditional owners of the land are the Yuin Nation. Our town is 30 minutes from Bega (a rural town) and 10 minutes from Tathra (a coastal town). Most of our township area is located on a mountain with rural and ocean views. There are many paddocks with cows, sheep and horses. Many of our residents are artisans and Tanja galleries are world renowned.

Tanja Public School is a small school where we all learn together (Kindergarten to Year 6) in one classroom, with one teacher who is also our Principal.

We have free range chickens, a vegetable garden, orchard, oval, peace garden, sound garden and many trees where we make cubbies and hide-outs. We have a heritage listed building which we use as a music classroom, with a range of instruments from ukuleles to drums. We are also very lucky to have Deb teach us music once a week. We have a library full of wonderful books, thanks to Rosemary and Sue. Our classroom has flexible learning spaces, with yoga balls, whiteboard tables, lounges, pillows, foot stools, padded seats and special areas to allow us to be away from our siblings. We have a cooking program, which Liz conducts, where we use our home grown vegetables to produce yummy meals, which we consume with delight on Thursdays.

We do not wear uniforms, only on special occasions or excursions, where we wear our Tanja Blue shirts. This year we came third in State relay at the athletics and our swimming relay team came fourth at the State carnival. We also won the coveted Bird Calling Olympics and published this fantastic book!



2017 Year K-6 students, Tanja Public School

## *Congratulations!*

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.

