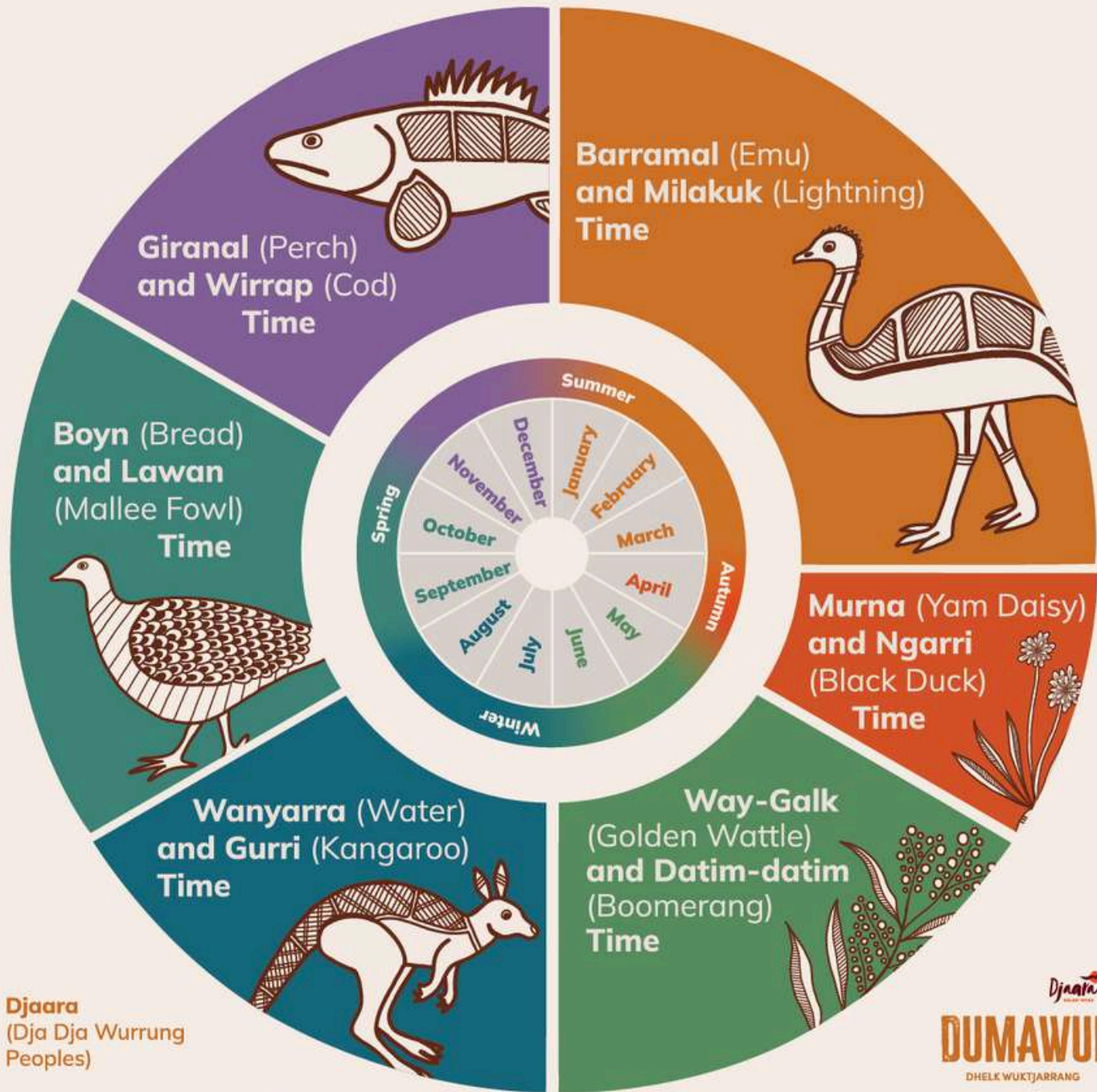


The Djaara Seasonal Calendar








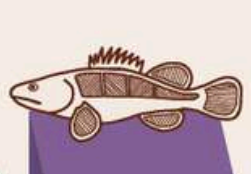
Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-Datim (Boomerang) time

This is the time to prepare for cold. The ground is wet, soft and green, ideal for gathering Murna and other resources. Tools, shelter and clothing are made and meats smoked from animals and fish. We move to higher ground away from the waterways.



Djaara (Dja Dja Wurrung Peoples)



| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p>The hottest and driest time of the year. The night sky is bright with stars. Barramal pair up and prepare to lay their eggs.</p> <p>January - March</p> |  <p>Djaara collect the Ngarri eggs early in the season so the ducks have time to lay more eggs. Murna (Yam Daisy) is flowering and was an abundant staple food until severely impacted by the arrival of cattle and sheep.</p> <p>April</p> |  <p>When the wattles bloom, a sweet drink is made from the gum and flowers of the black wattle. Timber from the silver wattle is used to make wooden tools, including the darnuk (coolamon) and Datim-datim (boomerang).</p> <p>May - June</p> |  <p>The rain is heavy and the waterholes fill. The creeks and rivers run high and spill over Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country). Gurri are active and it's good hunting time.</p> <p>July - August</p> |  <p>The days become warmer and the bush bursts into life. Murna seeds and tubers are used to make bread. Lawan nest and lay their eggs.</p> <p>September - October</p> |  <p>Fish lay their eggs, and kangaroo grass seed is harvested.</p> <p>November - December</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The information in this document is a collection of expressions and experiences of different individual Dja Dja Wurrung people. It does not represent the Collective Expression of the entire Dja Dja Wurrung Community.

Click on one of the aspects of Country to find the seasonal indicators

Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-datim (Boomerang) Time



Djaara People

- Making possum skin cloaks to keep warm
- Gathering around campfires
- Hunting water birds and collecting eggs
- Wooden tool making time. **Darnook** (bark/wood bowl) and **Datim-Datim** (Boomerang)
- Gather **Barramal** (Emu) feathers for ceremony



Galk-Galk & Malak

Forest and Plants

- Plant colours are vibrant reflecting the moisture in the soil
- All kinds of fungi are fruiting now
- Ghost fungi glows at night
- Mosses and lichens become visible
- Greenhood orchids flowering
- **Way-Galk** (Golden Wattle), **Warrarak** (Silver Wattle) and yellow box flowering, attracting pollinators
- **Buwatj** (Kangaroo Grass) becoming dormant for cold season



Wura-Wura-Yi Dja Sky Country

- Milky Way (**Barramal** - Emu) becomes more prominent in the sky, when this happens and the first frost comes it is **Barramal** nesting time
- Lyra (**Lawan** - Malleefowl) clearly visible to northwest at sunrise. This means it is nesting season
- Canopus (**Waa**) south/southwest
- Altair (**Bundjiyl**) northwest at sunrise
- Jupiter (**Bundjiyl's Campfire**) north at sunset



Djandak Wi Country Fire

- As Country becomes more wet **Djandak Wi** stops
- Still can be performed during this time depending on the area and the amount of moisture



Gatjin Water

- Rivers and creeks start to flow
- More water in lakes, ponds, dams and wetlands



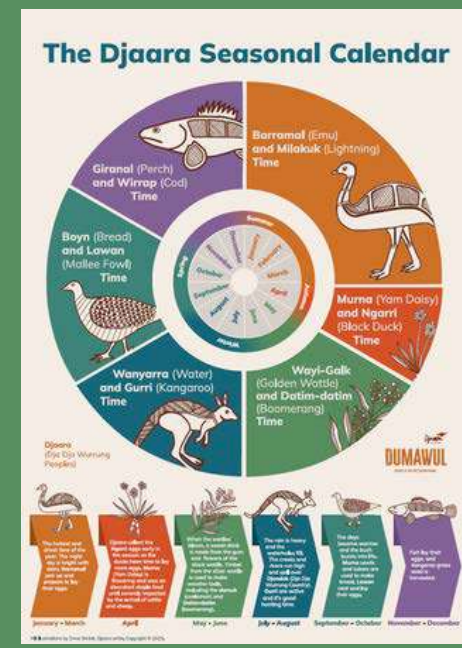
Yapuka, Wirrap & Murrun Dja

Birds, Fish & Animals

- **Dijnap** (white cockatoo) are eating the gum nuts from the trees and stripping trees of bark to create hollows
- **Dum** (frogs) are breeding
- Mammals like **Yung** (Quoll), **Wila** (Brush-tail Possum), **Yulawil** (Echidna), Phascogale and Greater Glider begin the breeding season
- Powerful Owls begin breeding
- **Barramal** (Emu) starts to nest when first frost comes
- **Ngarrri** (Black Ducks) and other waterbirds abundant
- **Ngur-ngur** (Wombat) active and healthy
- **Yapitj** (Yabby) final foraging for food before they start to burrow in the mud for the cold times
- **Lawan** (Malleefowl) begin to prepare their massive nesting mounds

Weather

- Prolonged cool temperatures
- Frost
- Drizzly rain, fog and mist appear
- Still, not much wind
- Short days





Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-datim (Boomerang) Time



Yapitj / Yabby

In Djandak waterways, Yapitj are part of Country's life.



Yapitj are a Freshwater Crayfish native to South - Eastern Australia. Also known as Yabby, their latin name is *Cherax Destructor* because of the damage they can cause with their burrowing.



Djali (Language)

'Yapitj' is similar to the Wemba Wemba name 'Yabidj'. The name 'Yabby' was a shortened version of this language.

Djaara Connection

Yapitj have been an essential part of the diet for Djaara for thousands and thousands of years.

Djaara have built a yabby farm (DJAKITJ) to ensure that they can continue being part of Djaara diets today.

Caring for Country

Yapitj help recycle nutrients by breaking down organic material in freshwater habitats. They are also an important food source for fish and birds.

Creation Story

In one Djaara creation story, Yapitj are responsible for making the tributaries of the Bulatjal Yaluk (Loddon River).

DJANDAK

They are found all over Djandak in creeks, rivers, dams, lakes... basically in any fresh water.

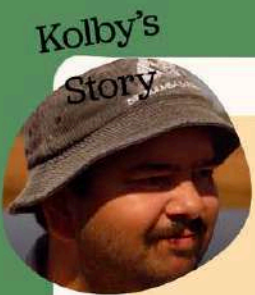




Yapitj / Yabby



Kolby's Story



FOUNDATION

Yapitj / Yabby



PDF Versions of Kolby's Story can be downloaded for printing under the season heading on our website.



Kolby Kerr is a Dja Dja Wurrung and Yorta Yorta man who grew up fishing and hunting yabbies on the Murray River with his family.
He now works at DJAKITJ, a bush food farm run by DJAARA that is farming yabbies and other foods in a sustainable way.



My family has always lived by the water.
It's in our blood.
By the water, we go fishing.
We go swimming.
But my favourite is to go get yabbies.
We get them when it is hot.
When it is cold they go to sleep in the mud.
My dad showed me how to catch yabbies.
And now I show others.
This is what Djaara people do.



[DJAKITJ Website](#)



Yapitj / Yabby

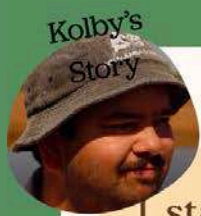


Kolby's Story



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He now works at DJAKITJ, a bush food farm run by DJAARA that is farming yabbies and other foods in a sustainable way.



LOWER PRIMARY
Yapitj / Yabby



I started working at the yabby farm about three years ago.

I was excited because I love water. It's in my blood.

My dad and uncles always showed me how to be around water, how to fish and swim, just like their father showed them.

But my favourite of all was how to catch yabbies. Put meat on string and pull it out. Cook it over the fire. The best food there is.

Yabbies are great to farm because they are so easy to look after. You just feed them once a week. Make sure the water isn't too cold. When it gets too cold they go and sleep in the mud.

Continued... 1



LOWER PRIMARY
Yapitj / Yabby



When the water is warm they are out moving and growing, and that's when you can catch them to eat them.

But we only ever take what we need.

My brother and I would teach the other Djaara kids about water, those who didn't get taught by their family. And now working at the farm I get to keep teaching others.

I hope this farm can help Djaara people connect to their Country.



PDF Versions of Kolby's Story can be downloaded for printing under the season heading on our website.

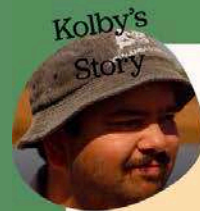
[DJAKITJ Website](#)



Yapitj / Yabby



Kolby's Story



UPPER PRIMARY

Yapitj / Yabby



I started working at the yabby farm, DJAKITJ, about three years ago.

Before then I'd had a few other jobs, but for me this was too good to pass up. I loved fishing, and water is in our blood. It's how we were raised.

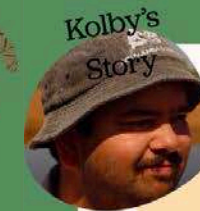
My dad and uncles showed me how to swim, fish and catch yabbies, just like my granddad showed them. My granddad was the king fisherman in Echuca Moama.

You'll always find us mob here around water, just like our ancestors always have been. I don't have a memory where I didn't know how to be around water.

The idea for a yabby farm came about because they are native, and they are sustainable and robust. They grow really easily, you just have to feed them like once a week and keep the water warm. Even if the water gets too cold they just bury down into the mud and go to sleep. They can survive for years down there. There's even stories of farmers building a dam where there is moisture and yabbies coming up from the mud.

Continued...

1



UPPER PRIMARY

Yapitj / Yabby



When the water is warm, they keep eating, shedding their skin and growing year round. They also keep breeding, and they can lay up to 1,000 eggs at a time. If the temperature is right, they can even breed up to three times in the warm season. So, the numbers can build up really quickly.

Yabbies are important for Country 'cause they keep the water clean and are good food for birds and fish.

We also have other native bush foods like Kangaroo Grass and Murna (Yam Daisy) growing, and one day maybe even emus.

Soon we will have enough yabbies we can start to give them out to Djaara people, and also sell them to restaurants and pubs to make sure that we are still able to make money and stay running.

My dream is that this farm helps Djaara people connect to Country and to their Culture.

Kolby Kerr is a Dja Dja Wurrung and Yorta Yorta man who grew up fishing and hunting yabbies on the Murray River with his family.

He now works at DJAKITJ, a bush food farm run by DJAARA that is farming yabbies and other foods in a sustainable way.



PDF Versions of Kolby's Story can be downloaded for printing under the season heading on our website.

[DJAKITJ Website](#)



Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-datim (Boomerang) Time



Yapitj / Yabby



Yapitj are a delicacy to eat, you might find them served at high level restaurants

Lifespan

4-8 years.

Size

Usually around 10-20cm, although can grow up to 30cm.

Diet

Yapitj eat plants, algae, small animals, and decaying matter— basically anything they can grab with their claws.

Role in the Ecosystem

Yapitj presence can indicate healthy freshwater systems, seasonal changes, and water availability.

Habitat

Freshwater ecosystems such as rivers, lakes, dams and ponds.



Yapitj can be used as bait when fishing

Masters of survival

They can survive drought by burrowing deep into mud and going dormant until water returns. Some can live like this for months and even years.

Appearance

Colour is highly variable and depends on water clarity and habitat. Yabbies can range from black, blue-black, or dark brown in clear waters to light brown, green-brown, or beige in turbid waters.

Temperature

Yapitj are highly sensitive to temperature. When warm, they keep eating, growing and breeding year round. Once they get too cold, they slow their system down and hibernate in the mud until it is warm enough again.



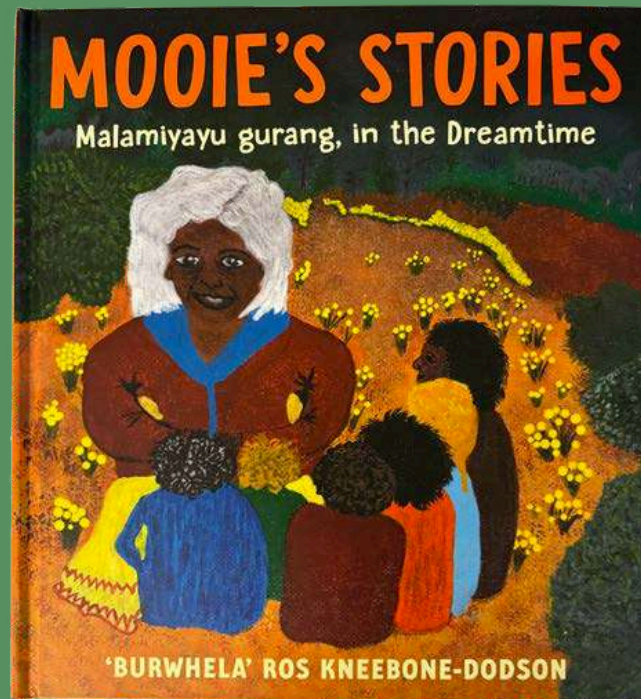
Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-datim (Boomerang) Time



Yapitj / Yabby



Educational Prompts - Lower Primary



Literacy

Mooie's Stories contains Aunty Ros' creation story of Wabee, the freshwater crayfish.

Purchase [HERE](#).

ATSIS Learning sequence and teaching notes [HERE](#).

Maths

Looking at the seasonal calendar, which seasons might you think a yabby would be active growing and breeding for? How many months might this be?

[VC2M1M03](#)

Geography

How do yabbies help Kolby feel connected to Country? What might it mean for him if yabbies went extinct on his Country?

[VC2HG2K01](#)

Science

Compare the different environments where yabbies live. What do they have in common? What might be essential for yabbies to survive?

[VC2S2U02](#)

Design & Technologies

How does DJAKITJ (Kolby's yabby farm) meet the needs of Djaara people? What other products or services might they provide to Djaara people?

[VC2TDE2S01](#)





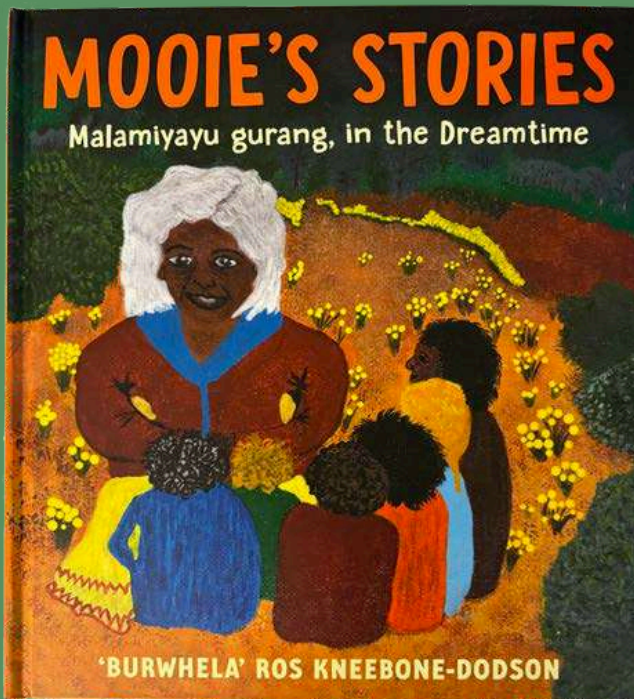
Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-datim (Boomerang) Time



Yapitj / Yabby



Educational Prompts - Upper Primary



Geography

Read Aunty Ros' story about Wabee. How might this influence Djara beliefs and practices around sustainability?

VC2HG6K04

Maths

If a dam is stocked with 50 yabbies at the start of the warm seasons, make an estimate (with reasoning) of how many yabbies there might be by the end of the warm seasons.

VC2M5N09

Civics & Citizenship

In Victoria, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are exempt from needing a fishing license. This is explained [HERE](#) & [HERE](#). Discuss why they might have different legal rights to other citizens.

VC2HC6K05

Science

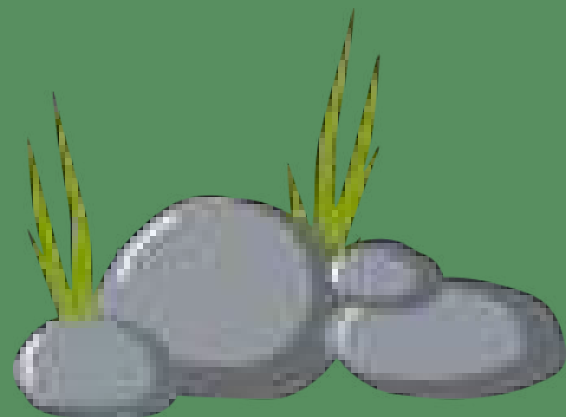
Create a chart the water temperature of a local body of fresh water - what times of year would yabbies be breeding?

VC2S6U01

Design & Technologies

Create a digital flow chart that represents how DJAKITJ are providing Yabbies to the community

VC2TDE6C02





Way-Galk (Golden Wattle) and Datim-datim (Boomerang) Time



Yapitj / Yabby

A video on Kolby made by Agriculture Victoria



Links

[NSW Gov Website](#)

[Aus Museum](#)

[CSIRO Food Web](#)

Djakitj Article

