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Skippy The Bush Kangaroo

Skippy the Bush Kangaroo, the remarkable story of how a crime-fighting kangaroo took on the world and won, remains one of Australia's biggest success stories. Skippy, featuring Australia's favourite animal star, screened from 1967 until the mid '70s. This was a time when Australia made the 'leap' from black and white to colour TV viewing.

Set in Waratah National Park in NSW, the show's 91 episodes were filmed over three seasons. The iconic series followed the adventures of Skippy, a female eastern grey kangaroo. Skippy and her owner Sonny Hammond (Garry Pankhurst), were carefully watched over by Head Ranger and Sonny's father Matt Hammond (Ed Devereaux).

Skippy was hugely popular throughout the world. The United States and Canada couldn't get enough of our Skippy. The show was dubbed into Spanish, *Skippy el canguro*, and was distributed to most Spanish-speaking countries, including Cuba and Spain, where it became a hit. However, in Sweden the show was forbidden because psychologists feared the show would mislead children into believing animals could do things they actually could not.

Which brings me to my personal favourite episode, *The Honeymooners*. Here, a millionaire couple were in their boat in the park when they decided they simply had to have Skippy's coat to add to their collection. Sonny was trapped, locked in the boat and it was all up to Skippy. Fortunately, Skip was able to knock the couple into the water and managed to drive the boat and save Sonny before it crashed.

What that kangaroo could do with her paws could put a micro-surgeon to shame.

Fishing from the rocks

'Think I'll drop in a line.
Tide's out. Weather's mild.'
Then the flurry: the hopeful basket, the rod, the hook, the line and sinker.
'Guess you can come with me, but stay away from the edge.'

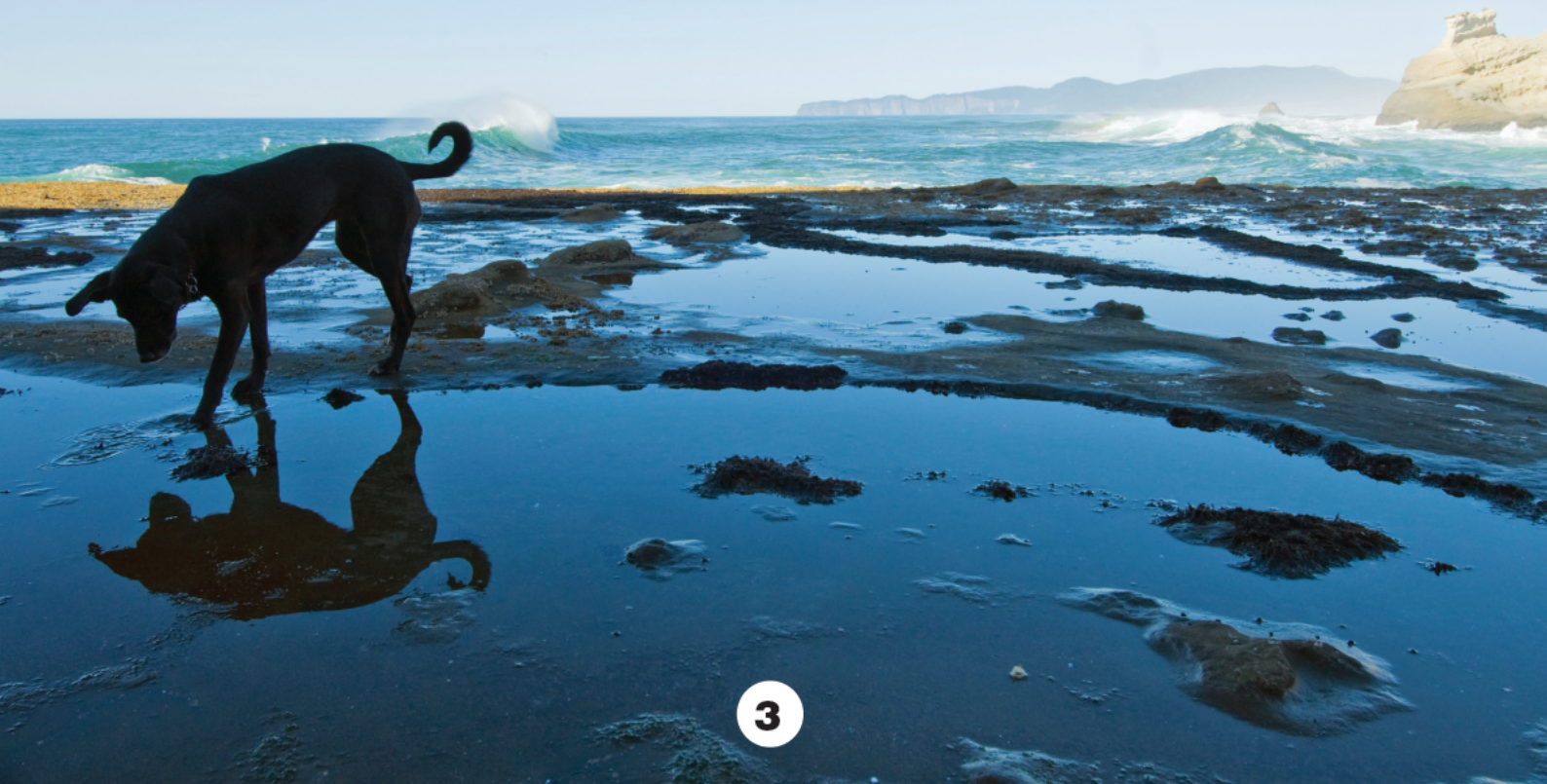
We're all following him
Across soft sand, past paddocks of cows, around the headland
To the threatening rocks, the swelling ocean.
To the promise of success, the flailing fish on the quivering line.

Three of us to the forbidden side of the beach.
And the long-eared dog, all excited at the daring.
'Never go further than the edge of the beach.
Stay in the safe sandy zone.'

Time begins. Fishing time extending hope.
The kids and the dog staying away from the ocean.
Watching the waves swell over the ledge
Swirling over the jagged rocks.

And in shallow pools, at least for the dog,
Something's in there, a matching goal.
'Where's the fish, Roxy, where's the fish?'
Dad and dog search the water in vain.

by Mia Gregson



Duyfken

replica sailing ship



Many people think James Cook was the first European to set foot on Australian soil, but Dutch explorers had already visited Australia many times before he did.

The first Dutch ship to arrive was the *Duyfken* in 1606, more than 150 years earlier than Cook's *Endeavour*. The Dutch sailors landed on the west coast of Cape York and were the first Europeans to have contact with the Aboriginal people of the area. The captain of the *Duyfken* made the first known map of a section of the Australian coastline.

To commemorate such an important event in Australia's maritime history, the *Duyfken* 1606 Replica Foundation was set up in 1993. The Foundation raised \$3.7 million to build a full-size replica of the *Duyfken* with money coming from private donors as well as the governments of the Netherlands, Australia, Western Australia and Queensland. Constructed using materials and building methods similar to the original, the replica took six years to complete. Enthusiastic volunteers donated their time and skills.

On its maiden voyage, the *Duyfken* replica left Fremantle and re-enacted a part of the voyage of the original ship, sailing to the Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Australia. Twelve months after this trip, it sailed from Australia to the Netherlands.

In 2006, on the 400th anniversary of the *Duyfken's* voyage to Australia, the replica sailed around Australia, visiting many ports along the way. After that voyage, the boat was berthed at the Queensland Maritime Museum and then at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. Many people have been on board to inspect the ship and have since learnt the true story of Australia's maritime past.



Weeds

I love weeds. I love their bright, spidery-green leaves. I love that they don't ask permission to grow. I love that they don't care about neatness or position — they'll grow in, on, out of, beneath or between anything; in places other plants seem to fear or scorn. I think the weeds in my Dad's garden are the most beautiful plants there.

My Dad would disagree. He pulls out weeds at every opportunity. No — let me rephrase that: he makes me pull them out at every opportunity. That's my job at home. I don't mind too much. The weeds don't mind either. They grow back almost as fast as I can yank them out. If I can yank them out. That's another reason I love them: they're so tough. Or weak, depending on how you look at it. They either cling relentlessly to the earth, or snap off just above the ground so that their roots are no longer accessible. Very smart. And boy, do they know how to protect themselves, hiding amongst the tangled stems and roots of bigger plants so that even the most determined hands can't squeeze in far enough to grab them. It can take several hours to do my job. If I didn't admire weeds so much, I'd detest them.

I haven't told my Dad that I like them, of course. He'd say something like, 'Weeds are the vermin of the plant world, son; a rash on Nature's backside.' But I remember him once telling me that 'A weed is just a plant you don't want'. So I guess, to me, weeds are not weeds at all. They're hardy little battlers who have to outsmart every other plant, because they're the plant no-one wants. How could I not love that?



Out at Midnight

Tomas screamed and scuttled backwards, horrified.

Andrej, too, fell backwards, forgetting about being brave. When a wolf is so near that one can see one's face reflected in its eyes, there is no such thing as courage. There is only the shrieking desire to become further away from the wolf. The brothers yelled and scrambled, fighting against the weight of their packs to push themselves to their feet, slithering in the grass and striking their elbows and all the while remembering that a boy cannot escape a wolf, not even if he runs.

Nevertheless they found their feet and bolted, over the grass and out the gate and headlong down the street in a sightless plunge, Andrej hauling Tomas by the arm and both of them trilling wild songs of fear. They tore along the cobbles, the bars of the fence going by like a solid wall, yet Andrej heard the fall of wolf feet behind him, heard the smack of fangs at his ear, and knew that running was futile, and that he must make a stand. Shoving Tomas ahead, he wheeled – and saw that the street behind was empty, that only dust galloped at their heels, that the wolf had miraculously vanished, or had never been there. Staggering, Andrej shouted, “Stop!” and Tomas halted his helter-skelter charge instantly but apprehensively, hopping and skipping, staring about with rabbit eyes. “It’s all right,” Andrej promised. “Look!”

Fixed to the fence was a sign painted with purple and yellow flowers and golden fleur-de-lis; ribbon blue letters woven between the flowers announced: ZOOLOGICKA ZAHRADA. Tomas couldn't read, so Andrej read it for him: “It says *Zoological Garden*. It's a zoo.”

Tomas wobbled in the middle of the road, blinking, looking from the sign to the road and back again. “Is the wolf in a cage?” he asked finally.

“It must be. It hasn't followed us.”

TEACH THAT OLD
DOG SOME TRICKS

NATIONAL AWARDS
RECOGNISE 'GOOD
EGGS'

WHALING REPORT
FUTILE - RSPCA

IT'S BACK!
RSPCA ANIMAL WALK

WHAT'S IN IT FOR
THE HORSE?

CAT FOOD MADE
SAFER

RSPCA APPROVED
FARMING

SAY NO TO
CROCODILE HUNTING

SWANS AND
COCKATOOS SAFE
FOR NOW

VOLUNTEERS KEEP
TAILS WAGGING AT
THE RSPCA

MEMORIAL TO
ANIMALS IN WAR

THE REAL VALUE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
TOURISM

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RSPCA OPPOSES CROCODILE SAFARI HUNTING IN NT

The RSPCA is strongly opposed to the introduction of safari style hunting in the Northern Territory. The RSPCA believes that allowing crocodiles or any Australian native wildlife to be hunted for trophies and commercial gain is unacceptable.

“There is no possible conservation benefit to be derived from the killing of crocodiles for trophies, nor does it provide a means of controlling problem crocodiles,” said RSPCA Australia Chief Scientist Dr Bidda Jones.

“This is nothing more than killing animals for entertainment and there is no justification for that. The culling of saltwater crocodiles should be firmly in the hands of trained and competent professionals, not tourists whose only aim is to bag another trophy to show-off back home.”

“There is no evidence that safari hunts will provide income to Aboriginal landholders and any economic arguments should not overrule the ethical welfare arguments against the killing of animals for sport.”

RSPCA Australia has long opposed the hunting of animals for sport because of the potential for cruelty and the extreme difficulty in enforcing animal welfare legislation in remote areas. Successive federal environment ministers have rejected similar proposals for safari hunting, concluding that this is not a suitable approach for the responsible management of crocodiles in the NT. This decision, unfortunately, may change in the future.

Encounter in Castle Estondrake

Ayleth and William stood very still, each studying the other with a dispassionate gaze. Ten years had passed since they had seen each other and if they recognised each other now, it could not be perceived on their faces.

Here in the depths of the stone passageways under Castle Estondrake, there was no-one close by. No-one to hear a call for assistance. No other soul nearby. Now they were face to face.

Ayleth, the former queen of her island empire, was tall with fine, hard features. Her flawless face framed penetrating eyes that shone with deep emerald intensity. Her ebony hair was pulled back and plaited tightly in a manner befitting her once regal status in her now enemy-occupied homeland. She had spent the last decade in restless exile, gathering her loyal followers from far-flung regions of the known world, from distant islands in distant seas where they had been forced to flee in the last years of the struggle against the enemy from the cold North. She convinced them that the cause was still alive, that, with determination, strength of will and large doses of cunning, they could wrest their homeland back and restore their paradise home to its citizens.

And now, here she was in the enemy's main stronghold with a small, hardy band of her finest fighters. They had slipped into the castle through a little-used access gate fronting the river; one that had seemed all but forgotten by the defenders and protectors of the bastion. Ayleth had not expected any encounter with the enemy in this part of the fortress. Even less had she expected to meet the one person from her home who had once been her closest and most trusted advisor—indeed the one person she had once claimed as her only true friend.

As she had rounded a corner, a soldier in the uniform of the enemy had been striding along the gloomy corridor in her direction. At first he hadn't seen her, a map held in front of him consuming all his attention. The shock of meeting anyone at all in this part of the castle had made Ayleth momentarily lose her concentration. Rather than swiftly retreating before being detected, she had paused long enough for William to raise his head.

It was William who spoke first.

The melting Third Pole



Most people know of the importance and the fragility of the frozen environments at the north and south poles. What is less well known is the significance of the vast glacial region in the world's most mountainous place, the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region of central Asia. This region is called the 'Third Pole' because it contains one-third of the world's glaciers — the largest volume of ice outside the Arctic and Antarctic.

Home to Mount Everest and many of the world's tallest mountains, the HKH region contributes meltwater from more than 54 000 glaciers to 10 major river systems in Asia. More than 210 million people (and 25 000 plant and animal species) call this region home and one-fifth of the world's population relies on its waters.

The researchers at the Kathmandu-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) monitor the condition of the glaciers and advise on sustainable

land management in the HKH region. Collecting accurate information is essential to their work.

ICIMOD reports that glaciers at lower altitudes are receding and sending more water downstream in the monsoon season and less in the dry season when farmers most need it. Should this trend continue, the consequences could include an increased risk of severe flooding during the monsoon and extended dry seasons, adversely affecting agriculture and fisheries in the heavily populated lowland areas.

The HKH region spans a number of nations which have complex border and other political issues, making the development of a unified approach to the management of the glacial waters problematic. Given that the HKH region is estimated to already have 30 million environmental refugees, equating to 15 per cent of the world's migrants, the health of the glaciers in the Third Pole needs to be carefully monitored.

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Out at midnight

Extract from *The Midnight Zoo* by Sonya Hartnett, Penguin Australia, 2010. Reproduced with permission of Penguin Australia. Image © Poznukhov Yuriy. Used under licence from Shutterstock.com

Skippy the Bush Kangaroo

Image © Fauna Productions Pty Limited. (nd). Publicity Photo Skippy the bush kangaroo. Sydney, NSW, Australia: Fauna Productions Pty Limited

The melting Third Pole

Image © Image Plan/Corbis

Cover

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