

# Nesting Disasters

Written & illustrated by Sasha Green, Natalie Sloane,  
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ENVIRO

stories

## Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource management issues. Developed by PeekKdesigns, 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](http://www.envirostories.com.au)**

## Wheatbelt NRM

Wheatbelt Natural Resource Management Incorporated (Wheatbelt NRM) is an independent community-based organisation involved with natural resource management endeavours within the Avon River Basin.

**[www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au](http://www.wheatbeltnrm.org.au)**

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# Nesting Disasters

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## Hotspot Heroes

The Hotspot Heroes Enviro-Stories Program involved schools from the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia learning about the biodiversity, threatened species and feral animals in the Wheatbelt area. A Hotspot Hero is someone who is willing to stand up and take action to help prevent our threatened plants and animals from fading into oblivion.

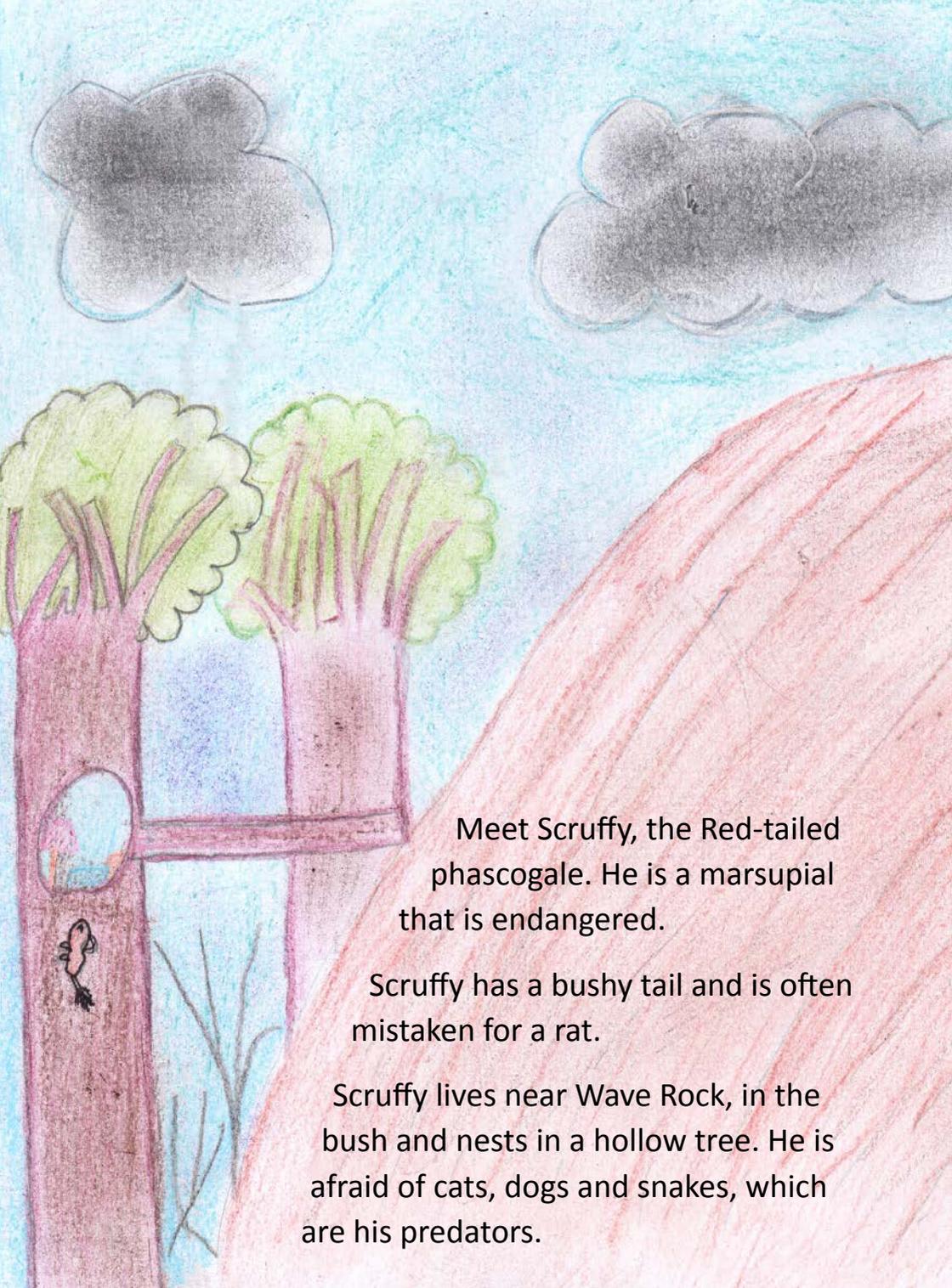
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**National  
Landcare  
Program**



**wheatbelt  
natural resource  
management**



Meet Scruffy, the Red-tailed phascogale. He is a marsupial that is endangered.

Scruffy has a bushy tail and is often mistaken for a rat.

Scruffy lives near Wave Rock, in the bush and nests in a hollow tree. He is afraid of cats, dogs and snakes, which are his predators.



One day, while minding his own business, some mean and horrible galahs took over Scruffy's nesting hollow. The galahs kicked Scruffy out of the tree. He raced up the tree trunk to get his home back, but the galahs were just too big for poor little Scruffy.



Scruffy was really sad with nowhere to live. He looked in every tree hollow around, but there was always some kind of animal already living there, such as pygmy possums and birds. He had very little family and friends to go to, because they lived too far away.



Scruffy was miserable and cold. He was not normally out during the day, however he couldn't find a nesting home and had nowhere else to go.

Farmer Fred saw him out in his yard. He wanted to help Scruffy and he had a great idea of what to do.



Fred built a home for Scruffy out of wood, called a nesting box. It had a hole that was just big enough for Scruffy, but too small for the mean galahs. It had a lot of cosy alpaca wool and a nice ladder so he could get in and out with ease.



Fred hung Scruffy's new home in a tall dead tree on his property. Scruffy loved his new home but he wanted to personalise it so it felt homey, so he went off to search for stuff to put in his house.



While he was away, a big breeze came in that was so strong, it blew the tree down. This caused Scruffy's new and improved house to cave in. Scruffy thought that he would come home and decorate his house, but his nest was no longer there.



When he got home, Scruffy was bawling his eyes out crying. He was so sad that he was homeless again and didn't know what to do.

A female phascogale that was nesting nearby heard Scruffy crying, so she went over to him.

“Hi. I’m Milly,” she said. “What’s your name?”

“My name’s Scruffy. Why are you here?” he asked.

“I heard crying and thought I’d come and see what was wrong,” replied Milly.





Milly offered Scruffy to stay with her until he found a new home. The next day they went searching for a nice tree hollow house, but were unsuccessful. There are so few trees and too many galahs.



They were spending so much time together that they were slowly falling in love.

Then one day, when they were eating some tasty berries, Milly said, "I love you," and Scruffy replied, "I love you too."



Milly and Scruffy decided that they were going to stay together forever. So they got married.



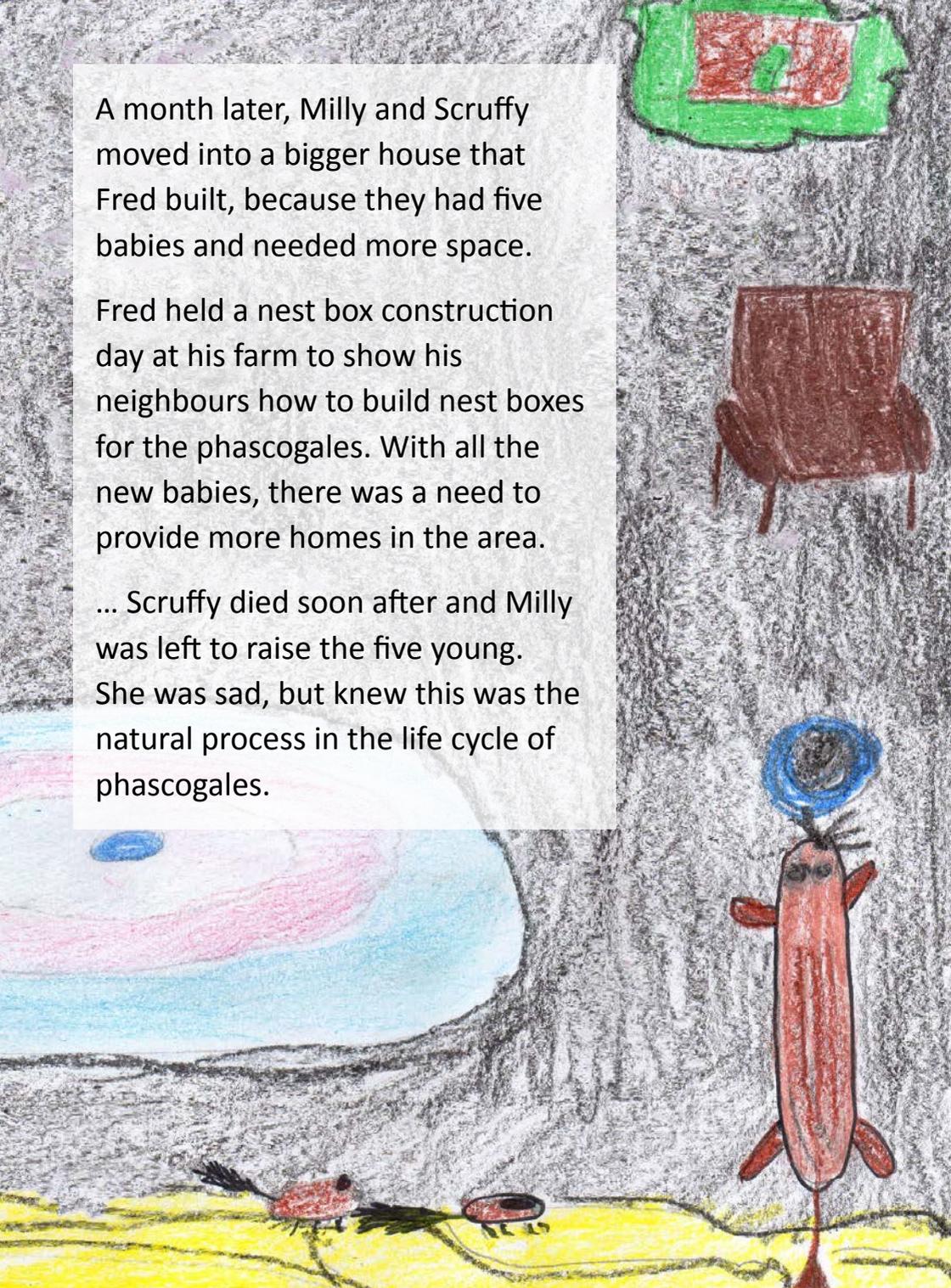
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A month later, Milly and Scruffy moved into a bigger house that Fred built, because they had five babies and needed more space.

Fred held a nest box construction day at his farm to show his neighbours how to build nest boxes for the phascogales. With all the new babies, there was a need to provide more homes in the area.

... Scruffy died soon after and Milly was left to raise the five young. She was sad, but knew this was the natural process in the life cycle of phascogales.



# Box Construction Day



There aren't many phascogales living in Australia so we need to help these endangered species by doing thoughtful things like Farmer Fred.

Something you can do is build nest boxes for phascogales and other species that live in your area. It is a great community activity and you feel good knowing that you're helping out our native wildlife.



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