



THE WAGYL

(The Nyoongar Rainbow Serpent)

Along time ago in the Dreaming, the animals and other beings were huge. Two rainbow serpents, called wagyls (maned, seal-faced creatures), left York and followed the Avon River down to Walyunga National Park, to where the river bends east. The female wagyl laid some eggs, then the two wagyls crossed over the hill and continued along the other side before rejoining the Swan River.

Today you can see where the eggs have turned to stone. You can also see the side of the hill without trees where the wagyls slithered. The wagyls continued along the river to where Ascot Raceway is today at Belmont. The male wagyl shook himself so hard that some of his scales fell off. They can still be seen embedded in the riverbank, although you may mistake them for shells.

The wagyls continued on to Melville Waters and swam around, creating the huge bay. The female wagyl laid some more eggs at the foot of Kings Park where Kennedy Fountain is today. She then went south, under the ground. Where she surfaced she created Bibra Lake. She then went on to create Yangebup Lake (Jilbup), Thompson Lake and White Lake.

In the meantime, the male wagyl went north underneath Kings Park, coming up and creating Lake Monger, Karrinyup Lake, Joondalup Lake and Yanchep Lake. Later they got lonely and went back underground to meet again at Melville Waters.

The two rainbow serpents were glad to see each other. They swam around together, so creating Crawley Bay, then followed the river down to Fremantle. There they lay in the sun creating a rock bar across the river. At one Time Nyoongar people used this bar to cross the river. Then the two serpents followed the river out from Fremantle, beyond Rottneest Island and back to the dreaming.



FIRESTICK

During the Dreaming, the Nyoongar people were marlee (swans). They had no fire to keep warm and they had to eat raw meat.

In these times Meika, the moon, had fire on his tail but would not give it to the people. Kower the purple-crowned lorikeet and Watta the pigeon were ngoolijar-mat (brothers-in-law). They said, “We will get the fire for our demman (cousins), the marlee.”

Meika looked around and saw Kower and Watta running away with the fire. He called out, “Kal-yung, Kal-yung” (“Fire, give, fire, give”). He kept calling out but they continued to run away.

Meika was very angry and called upon Waddern the sea, the moon’s uncle, to put the fire out. Waddern rose up and flooded the land.

Kower the lorikeet quickly ran to the balga (the blackboy bush), took the fire from his wing and put it in the flowering stem high up in the balga bush. Kower then showed the marlee (the swans) how to make fire from the balga flower stems.

They were so glad to have fire that they called the balga stem Kower after the lorikeet. The lorikeet still has a red fire under the wings to show the swans that he was a fire bringer. The Nyoongar people never kill the lorikeets, for they are sacred (winnaitch).