

## • CONSTELLATION STORY SCRAMBLE •

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been peering up at the night sky for thousands of years. These early astronomers noted patterns of light and darkness and how they changed over time. They identified shapes in the sky and named constellations, and they told stories of the constellations that often mirror events on Earth. One of these constellations is the Emu in the Sky. Read the story and then unscramble the words in the box below.

READ AND  
UNSCRAMBLE!

### THE EMU IN THE NIGHT SKY

The brightest objects in the Australian night sky are the moon and the **Milky Way**. The Milky Way is an enormous **galaxy** that holds our solar system. It also refers to a streak of light that stretches across the horizon in the dark sky. The glow is caused by far-off stars.

For the Kamilaroi and Euahlayi, this band of light is the **Warambul**, a waterway that held everything before the universe was turned upside down and everything ended up on **Earth**.

They believe that many creation beings are still in the Warambul. One of them is Gawarrgay, the Emu in the Sky.

Unlike non-Aboriginal people, the Euahlayi and their neighbours focus on the dark spaces of the Milky Way, rather than the stars. That is where the figure of the Emu in the Sky can be seen. Due to the tilt of the Earth and the changing of the **seasons**, the position of the Emu changes throughout the year. Depending on the time of year, the Euahlayi people see the Emu with or without legs. And sometimes, the Emu cannot be seen at all. The image of the Emu has strong connections to the animal's behaviour and when people should **harvest** emu eggs and hold ceremonies here on Earth.

The Emu first becomes visible in April and May, when it looks like it is running. The Kamilaroi see this as when the emus on Earth are breeding, and the female is chasing the male. In June and July, the male Emu is sitting on the nest, telling people on Earth that there is still time to collect **eggs** for food before they begin hatching in August.

The end of winter is the time to start planning summer ceremonies, such as the **bora**, which is the initiation **ceremony** that marks boys' transition into manhood. In nature, male emus care for the chicks. And that is similar to the bora, where men care for the boys. In August, the Emu in the Sky can look like two eggs, which is a sign that the eggs will soon be **hatching** and should no longer be collected.

Later in the year, the Milky Way and the Emu dip close to the Earth, and the Emu is thought to be sitting in a waterhole, full from the **spring** rains. The Euahlayi also call this Emu *ngurran.gali*, which translates to "emu in water". During **summer**, the Emu in the Sky cannot be seen. The Kamilaroi and Euahlayi say that the Emu has travelled to Earth.

#### SCRAMBLED STORY WORDS

gges

axylag

nymerceo

mumres

rathe

nosseas

klyim ayw

ravesht

rboa

baramwlu

gripns

tichhang

We acknowledge the Euahlayi and Kamilaroi peoples as the traditional custodians of this story and thank Professor Ghillar Michael Anderson of the Euahlayi nation for giving us permission to share and reference their story.

THANK YOU! WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED THIS ACTIVITY.



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