

*firesticks

Webra = fire

Wahlbul Fire and Seasons Calendar

“Cultural burning... It's part of the Lore- knowing how to do it and when to do it- it's all part of being Aboriginal.”
- Roy Bell.

JANUARY

MUDJANG, MUJANG (LONG NECKED TURTLE), BING-ING, BIN,GINHNG (SHORT NECKED TURTLE), BUNAW, BUNGAW (RED BLOODWOOD), GALGANG, GALGURANG (FRIAR BIRD), BUDGIGAN (CAT)

We are known as the Turtle Divers. There are two types of turtle at Jubullum: the Eastern long-neck turtle and Macquarie (short-necked) turtle. The Short-necked turtles are our traditional tucker. The Long-necked turtle is only eaten as medicine. The long necked turtle is stinky, you often see him walking across the road. The Short-necked lays its eggs in spring-summer in burrows in the river bank and they hatch in autumn. Turtles and other water animals are best to eat in summer when the water is warm. We prepare the turtle by cleaning the legs and guts, then we put them on the fire. We don't keep all of our catch, we throw some back, like the females or smaller ones. We can feel the eggs between the sides of the shell, we eat these too. Young turtles are preyed on by the Red fox, Feral cat, Feral pig, Lace monitor and birds such as the Torresian crow and Whistling kite. The Pink bloodwood is flowering, providing nectar for Rainbow lorikeets and Noisy friarbirds.

DECEMBER

NYUMARL/GNUM-ARL (SAND GOANNA), GIDIBY (SMALL SAND GOANNA)

Jubullum is an important traditional hunting ground for Wahlbul people. We eat Sand goannas from near Rocky River in summertime, parrots with the long tail and young Currawong are good to eat at this time. The King parrot gave the Bundjalung people their language. Porcupine are poor in summer- don't eat them. The Chocolate lily is flowering, in some communities, the root tubers were roasted and eaten.

NOVEMBER

BUY-BUY (APPLE TREE), MAHRAM (BOTTLEBRUSH), MALAY, MALI (HONEYEATER)

Storms usually start in November. We wait until after the first big storm finishes before we go hunting for bing-ing (Short-necked or Macquarie turtle) - this gives them a chance to lay their eggs. Broad-leaved apple, Spotted gum, Mat rushes, Weeping bottlebrush, Hop bush and Buttercup are flowering. The Weeping bottlebrush is flowering along the river, we hit the red flower against our hand then lick the nectar off. Many birds eat the nectar too, including Yellow-faced honeyeaters, Scarlet honeyeaters, Brown honeyeaters and White-throated honeyeaters. Mat rush leaves were woven for many uses, roots used for medicine, flowers, leaves and fruit eaten. This plant also provides wildlife habitat. Buttercup flowers were a snack. The Hop bush was used by some communities as a medicine and to make clubs. Kangaroo grass was used by some communities in the manufacture of fishing nets. Both leaves and stem yield fibre for string. Seeds were ground and baked.

OCTOBER

JAHLI (BLACK BEAN), GABBI, JAMBALUNG (SUGAR BAG/NATIVE BEE), WAYLAHR, WAYLARD (YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO)

The Green tree frog comes out when it is warming up, it sings when rain comes. Black bean flowers October-November. The nectar produced by the flowers attracts insects, butterflies, birds and bats. The Yellow-bellied sheath-tailed bat feeds on these insects. Black bean bark fibre has been used for fish and animal traps, nets and baskets. In some communities the wood is used for spear throwers and the seed pods as toy boats. We collect sugar bag (honey) from the Native bee. The best time of year to do this is when there are a lot of plants flowering. The wax from which the nests are made, is also collected and used as a glue, for making tools or for the mouthpiece of a didgeridoo. The rostrum of the Yellow-tailed black-cockatoo feeds on the seeds of the Honeysuckle banksia in mid-late spring. Honeysuckle banksias occur in the mid-storey of the Forest red gum-Pink bloodwood-Grey ironbark community on the east side of the Rocky River. These cockatoos are storm birds as they appear when rain is coming.

SEPTEMBER

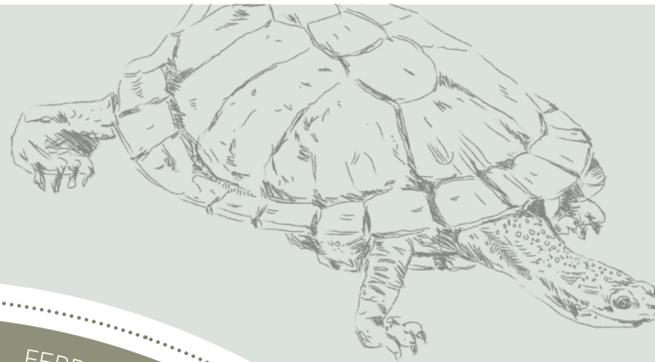
WUGARN WAGAHN (CROW), DAWDAWGAN, JURUGARI (DOLLARBIRD), DIHN-DIHN (MAGPIE LARK), GOORABALL, WURGULUMH (MAGPIE), DURRYANG (CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOO)

Many migratory birds come to Jubullum as the weather is warming up, then leave when it starts to cool down. The migratory Eastern koel and Channel-billed cuckoo- also known as the storm bird- arrive in the area in spring from New Guinea and Indonesia to breed. Both bird species lay their eggs in the nest of a different bird and their young either push the original eggs out or steal all of the food of the hatchlings. The Koel parasitises the Noisy friarbird, Red wattlerbird, Olive-backed oriole and the Magpie-lark. The Channel-billed cuckoo parasitises the Torresian crow, Australian magpie and the Pied currawong. Both the Eastern koel and Channel-billed cuckoo depart early-mid autumn. Other spring-summer migrants are the Leaden flycatcher and Rufous whistler. The Dollarbird, arrives in the area in spring from New Guinea and Indonesia to breed and departs early autumn; the Cicadabird leaves in autumn to over-winter in Queensland and New Guinea, returning in spring to breed.

AUGUST

BOODABI/BUDABEE (KOALA) MIBIN (EAGLE), GAR-GOON (KOOKABURRA), MAN-GUR (WATTLE), BARUBUM (GUM TREE), MUNGUDAR (FOREST RED GUM), BOWIN (WIND), BOOWIN (WINDY)

Fireflies come out at sunset. The Wedge-tailed eagle is a special animal for Wahlbul people- it is known as the great warrior bird. Wedge-tailed eagles breed in winter. Wedge-tailed eagles come in after a fire to hunt for prey. The Laughing kookaburra calls during late winter to establish its breeding territory for spring. When the Wattle flowers at the end of winter it is time to start eating the warm weather bush tucker- e.g. goanna. Gum from the wattle and eucalypt was chewed/ eaten. Koalas breed from August to February. As the weather warms up, males start to call and fight over females. The female has one baby each year.



FEBRUARY

WAHGINJE, WOGINGE, WOGINJE, WOGIN (CAT FISH), JARGINJE (EEL), MOOGEEN (PERCH), JULLUM (FISH/MULLETS), BULLUN (RIVER), NUBAE (WATER)

Floods wash everything away. After good rain, Catfish and Eels are good to eat. We can find the catfish by the circle of small stones near the edge of a stream or pool which is their nest. Catfish are the best fish for eating. The native tomato fruits in summer. The Tree dtella is a type of gecko which lays an egg that usually hatches around February. Snakes are active during hot weather time.

MARCH

NGUYAGAL (RIVER OAK), JALI (TREE)

We eat the sweet potato from the vine with the yellow flower- we dig them up, make a fire in the sand, cook them and eat them down by the river. River oaks line the Rocky River. The Leaden Flycatcher leaves the area in late summer/autumn for northern Queensland and southern New Guinea, returning to breed in spring.

APRIL

GWE-AHNJE, WING, GUWIN, GUYAHYN (POSSUM), GURRUMAN (KANGAROO), MANI (WALLABY, KANGAROO)

Eastern grey kangaroo and Rabbit are good tucker that we hunt all year round. Kangaroos are good for fur and skin for clothes, beds, bags and good for eating. The Common ringtail possum is a totem of people around Jubullum. The possum is a messenger animal. Possum skin cloaks were very important to Wahlbul people. The Brush-tailed rock-wallaby is an important animal, this species is listed as threatened in both NSW and all across Australia which means it is at risk of going extinct if we don't help it. These wallabies live around overhangs on rocky bluffs overlooking the Rocky River. Buffals may have young joeys in their pouches at this time of year.

MAY

JARAHNY (FROG), WANDJAL (BROWN FROG)

The Soap bush is well known for its use as a soap. The leaves froth when crushed and mixed with water. The Great barred frog can be found in the Rocky River, it only comes out at night to eat insects and worms. The migratory Rufous Whistler leaves in mid-late autumn moving north to Queensland and returning to breed in spring. Numbers of the White-throated gerygone, Yellow-faced honeyeater and the Noisy friarbirds move to the lower elevation forests of Jubullum in the autumn from breeding areas at higher elevations on the Northern Tablelands, adding to the populations of these species that are resident around Jubullum.

JUNE

JINGIR-JINGI, JINGGIR-JINGGIR, JIGIR-JIGIR (WILLY WAGTAIL)

Cold weather is Bush lemon time. When we are out hunting, we are happy to find a lemon tree. We sit under it and eat a lemon, it refreshes us. They are good for colds and flu- skin and all. The Willie-wagtail, Jacky winter and Eastern spinibill travel from the cold Tablelands to spend winter around Jubullum.

JULY

BUNINJ, BUNINGJE (ECHIDNA/PORCUPINE), JUBUL (WITCHETTY GRUB), GARAHBIL (BLADY GRASS), BAMBAR (BANKSIA), WADDING (COLD), WUDJ-WUDJ, WUDWUD (BUTCHERBIRD)

Cold weather is Jubul (Witchetty grub) time. We go into the bush and find a tree which has a hole in it and sawdust lying nearby- this tells us there is a jubul inside. We use a tomahawk to make the hole bigger, then a piece of wire with a hook on it to fish the jubul out of the hole. You can eat the jubul straight from the tree or cook it. It is one of our favourite foods. We let the turtles breed during winter- don't eat them. Porcupine are fat and best to eat in winter. When an area is burnt often, a lot of Blady grass comes up- this is an indicator many fires have come through. Coast banksia flower during winter and provide nectar for wildlife during a harsh time of year. The Butcherbird watches us as we come and go from Jubullum Country.



“Rocky River is where we grew up and got our food from- it is our hunting ground and our play ground- it is everything. We came home from school and ran straight down to the river. People were born down there. It is a learning place, a dancing and gathering, and a teaching place. It is the most beautiful river in Australia. That's what it is to me: everything.”
- Ernest Hicking.



WAHLBUL COUNTRY
Ngali - nga gulla jugun
Wena jung ma gulla jugun
Ngali nga gala jugun
Boogima werlu gulla jugun.

Respect this country
We belong to this country
We look after this country
Don't do wrong or harm this country
We don't harm this country here
We belong to this country
Wahlbul country.



WAHLBUL LANGUAGE
The Aboriginal language words included in this calendar are the language of the Wahlbul nation of north-eastern NSW.

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