

Sprinkle
streams
ahead



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Aboriginal people have a strong and continuing connection to the mountains, waterways and seascapes of Victoria. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of these places, and we thank them for caring for Country. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and to their Elders.

We all play, learn and live on the lands and in the waters of the oldest living cultures on Earth. We promise to walk gently, respectfully and with kindness wherever we go.

Sprinkle was falling...

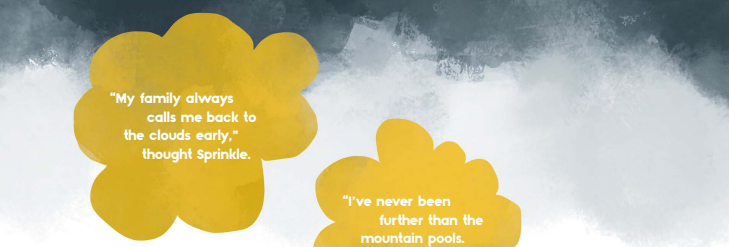


telling...



falling...again.





"My family always
calls me back to
the clouds early,"
thought Sprinkle.

"I've never been
further than the
mountain pools.


This Earth trip,
I want to
swim in the
salty ocean!"



SPLOOSH!



Sprinkle bounced onto the soaked, spongy mountain moss and dripped down into the slow and steady stream.



“The mountain wetlands
are hard at work today.
This stream has been
cleaned crystal clear!”

Two Alpine Tree Frogs croaked
and whistled at the water's edge.

"Maybe those uninvited
guests have left. They
haven't stomped around
and made a muddy
mess," said Mama Frog.

"The breeding pools
are beautiful this
year," said Papa Frog.




"When our babies hatch, they will have lots of space to grow and grow and find a pool of their own."

"Mountain wetlands are a happy home for some," thought Sprinkle.

"I wonder who else needs clean water further down the mountain?"







Sprinkle drifted into
a rustling, watery
wonderland. Towering
gums and prickly
shrubs swayed on the
banks of the creek.



"Who is that splashing up ahead?"
thought Sprinkle. "Let me dive
down for a better look."



"It's much easier to find
a wriggling, tasty treat when
the water is free of litter and
oils," said Mama Platypus.





"It's much easier to build the best burrow when the bank is earthy and free of concrete," said Papa Platypus.



Sprinkle bubbled back to the top of the twinkling, gurgling river. "Healthy water is important, from the mountains all the way to the sea!"

With not too far to go until they reached the salty ocean, Sprinkle happily closed their eyes and floated on...

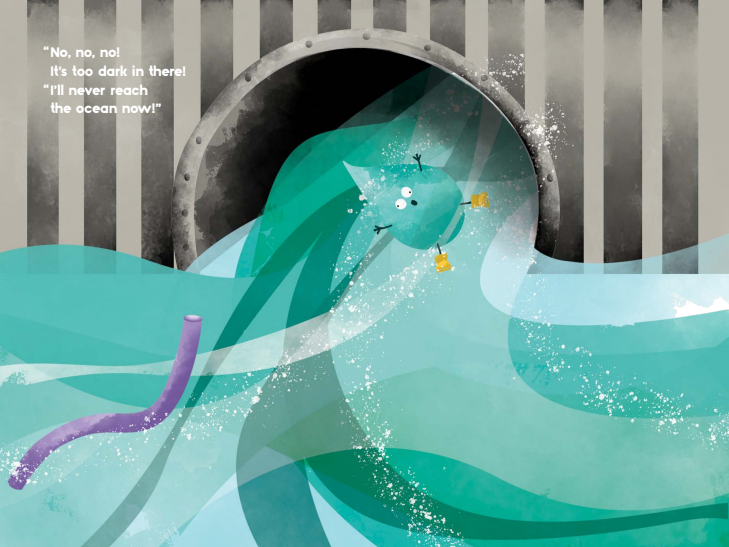


The background is a vibrant teal with stylized, overlapping wave patterns. A small, blue, blob-like creature with large white eyes, thin black limbs, and two small yellow rectangular feet is shown floating or falling within the waves. A long, thick, purple tube-like object is positioned above the creature, curving downwards. The entire scene is filled with white speckles, suggesting splashing water or bubbles.

ROOOO
AAAAARRRRR!

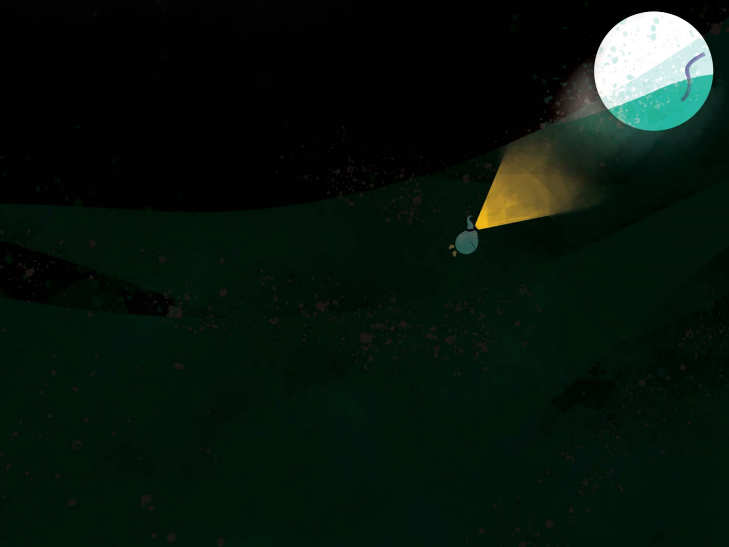
Suddenly, the water
zipped and raced
and crashed.

"No, no, no!
It's too dark in there!
"I'll never reach
the ocean now!"



WHERE
AM I?









Sprinkle jumped
in and backstroked
towards the sea.





The water pushed
and pulled, tugging
them into the waves.

The salty current pulled Sprinkle
over sparkly shells, through long strands
of slippery seagrass and past rough-rocky
hideouts for cautious creatures.



Suddenly, tentacles tickled
at Sprinkle's back.

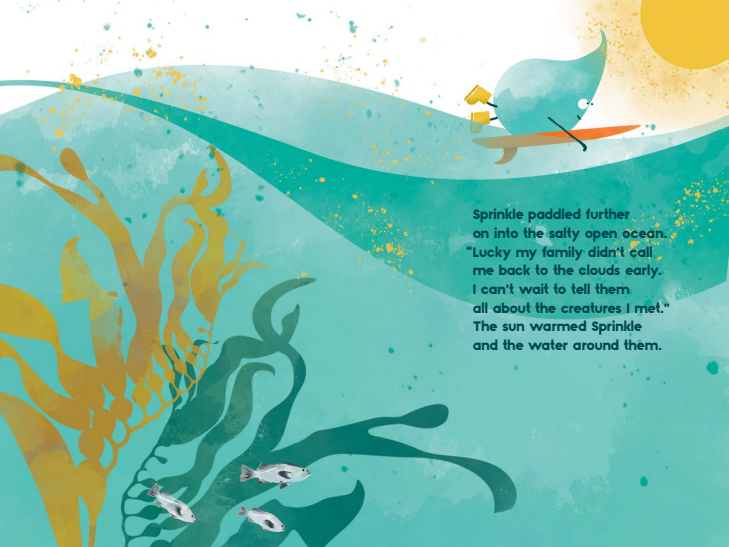




"I heard that humans
won't be fishing here,"
said Mama Cuttlefish.
"So, our babies will be safe
to grow up big and strong."

"Our favourite snacks like fish and crabs will be easy to find, now that we live in a protected place," said Papa Cuttlefish.



An artistic illustration of a character named Sprinkle, depicted as a blue, teardrop-shaped figure with a white dot for an eye and two small yellow rectangular fins, riding a red surfboard on a teal wave. The background is a bright yellow sun in the upper right corner, and the water is a vibrant teal with yellow and blue splatters. In the lower left, there are large, stylized yellow and green seaweed-like plants. Three small, white fish with black stripes are swimming near the bottom left. The text is positioned on the right side of the image, within the teal water area.

Sprinkle paddled further
on into the salty open ocean.
“Lucky my family didn’t call
me back to the clouds early.
I can’t wait to tell them
all about the creatures I met.”
The sun warmed Sprinkle
and the water around them.

The platypus
need healthy
natural creeks.



The cuttlefish
need healthy
rocky reefs.




"The frogs
need healthy
mountain
wetlands.



Healthy watery
habitats are important,
from the mountains all
the way to the sea!"





The water and the air
grew warmer, and
Sprinkle began to change.
They grew lighter and
began to float up...





...UP...

Their family hugged them in tight.



"I'm so ready for my
next journey from the
mountains to the sea!"
said Sprinkle.



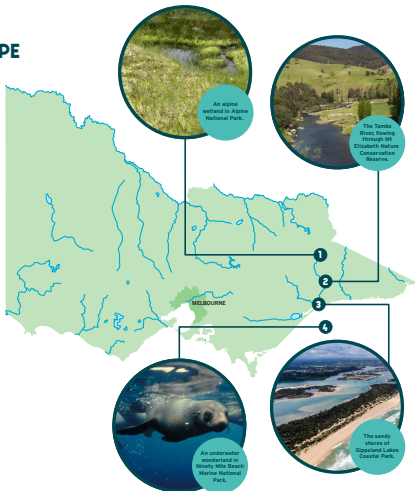
THE END



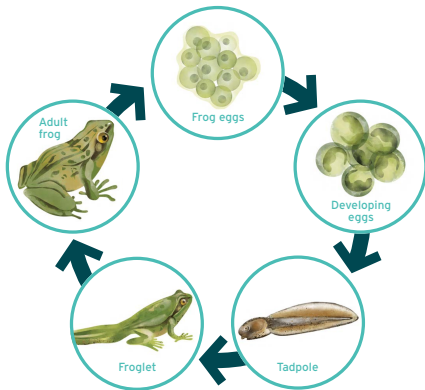
MOVEMENT OF WATER THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE

From mountain wetlands to tiny streams, to mighty rivers moving out to sea, waterways shape the landscape and make important homes for plants and wildlife. Just like in Sprinkle's story, water in Victoria follows a cycle from the clouds to the earth and back again. This cycle connects life on Earth and moves water through different ecosystems.

- 1 Mountains act as huge water towers, storing water up high. Winter brings lots of rain and snow to the mountain peaks. In the alpine region, some of this water collects in wetlands. As the weather warms up, snow and ice melt and alpine wetlands begin to slowly release water, which trickles down the mountains in streams and creeks.
- 2 Along the downhill journey, streams and creeks join to form larger rivers and waterways. Moving water is powerful! It can carve a path through the earth as it makes its way across the landscape. It moves loose soil, rocks, plants and nutrients from one place to another. Rivers and waterways support plants and animals all along their banks, as well as underwater.
- 3 Eventually, rivers make their way to the ocean or large inland lakes. On the way to the ocean, water might travel through coastal habitats, which include the sandy and rocky areas where the land meets the ocean, before moving into marine habitats.
- 4 Marine habitats include all the underwater areas below the high tide mark and ocean surface. These habitats are home to many underwater plants and creatures.



The life cycle of the ALPINE TREE FROG



Alpine Tree Frogs are tiny creatures found in a small patch of mountain wetlands in alpine Victoria. These amphibians spend part of their life in water and part on land. Healthy mountain wetlands are important for their lifecycle. During summer, males sit by the water's edge and whistle for a mate. Females attach their eggs to underwater plants and leave them to incubate.

Once hatched, the tadpoles live and grow in slow-flowing or still streams, bogs and pools. Tadpoles need a lot of energy to grow quickly and will eat almost anything that fits in their mouths.

Tadpoles undergo metamorphosis before the end of summer, which means their bodies start to change as they become froglets. They grow legs and lungs to help them live on the land. Adult Alpine Tree Frogs come back to the wetlands to breed the following summer.

The way that water flows through alpine wetlands impacts these frogs. You can help by staying on the path. This stops diseases from the soil being walked into Alpine Tree Frog habitat. Staying on the path also stops plants and soil in the habitat from being stepped on.

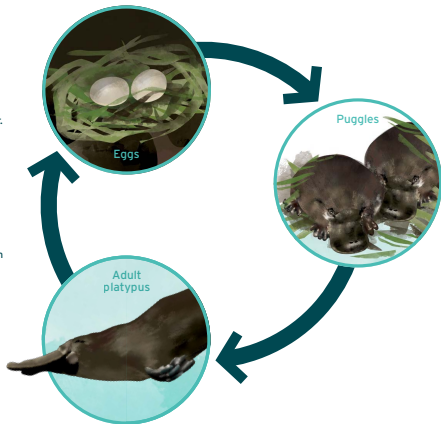
The life cycle of the PLATYPUS

Platypus love to swim in freshwater rivers, creeks and lakes in Victoria. Their favourite freshwater spots have gravelly or stony bottoms, which make good hiding places for their prey. Platypus prefer waterways with natural, earthy banks and lots of plant cover. These banks make it easy to build burrows for shelter during the day.

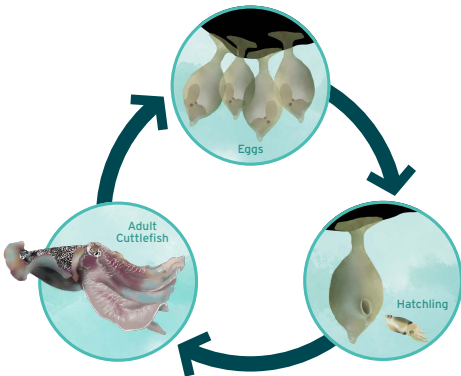
Platypus are monotremes, or mammals that lay eggs. In late winter to early spring, females lay up to three eggs. They care for the eggs in their burrow for about ten days.

Hatched young, called puggles, spend up to four months in the burrow. They suckle milk from skin on their mum's belly, not from a teat. Puggles leave the nest in summer and learn to swim on their own.

Platypus are environmental indicators. This means their presence tells us when waterways are healthy. Keeping waterways healthy by planting native shrubs and removing litter is important for Platypus. We can all help by taking our rubbish home after we visit parks and put it in the right bin, so it doesn't find its way into Platypus habitat.



The life cycle of the GIANT AUSTRALIAN CUTTLEFISH




Giant Australian Cuttlefish can be found along the coastlines and in the seas of Victoria. They mainly live around rocky reefs where they can hide under ledges and seaweed.

Mating season for cuttlefish is one big show! Male cuttlefish stretch out and display moving stripes along their body. While large males fight other males, some smaller male cuttlefish have a different tactic. They display patterns to look like females so they can sneak past other males without a fight.

Eggs are left on rocky reefs. Giant Australian Cuttlefish hatchlings look like tiny perfect cuttlefish and quickly take cover in nearby rocks or seaweed. They begin hunting small crabs and shrimp, which helps them grow quickly.

Due to their short life span, it is very important that cuttlefish breeding locations are safe and protected. Marine Protected Areas are important for protecting habitat and ensuring a safe place for young cuttlefish to grow. You can help by following the rules about where you can fish.



"The frogs need a healthy mountain wetland.
The platypus need a healthy natural creek.
The cuttlefish need a healthy rocky reef.
Keeping watery habitats healthy is important,
from the mountains all the way to the sea!"



**HOW
COULD YOU
HELP TO
KEEP HABITATS
HEALTHY?**



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Sharing
Nature's
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