

# D'harawal

DREAMING STORIES

## Boo'ambillyee

THE STORY OF SHARK ISLAND



[www.dharawalstories.com](http://www.dharawalstories.com)

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# Foreword

Throughout the past two hundred years, society has come to regard the Koori Dreaming stories as something akin to the fairy stories they were told as children.

However, for thousands upon thousands of years, the stories in this book were used as a teaching tool to impart to the youngest members of the clans the laws which governed the cultural behaviour of clan members. The successive attempts to destroy the Koori culture and assimilate The People into the Euro-centric population were unsuccessful, and the Dreaming Stories were able to continue in their disguise as charming legends where animals became the heroes and the heroines.

Historians and anthropologists have studied the Koori culture since they first arrived on this continent, and have come to the conclusion that the D'harawal culture is dead. Of, course, this has been done without reference to the descendants of that culture, and without even asking the proper questions. The D'harawal culture is not dead, it is a strong, living, vital culture of the Sydney and South Coast regions that just had to go underground for a while to be able to survive. Now that the right questions have been asked, we have the key to unlock a vast wealth of knowledge of this part of the country in which we live.

It is difficult to explain to a society based on commerce fuelled by the profit motive, that D'harawal culture is not based on the ownership of tangible things like land and dwellings and possessions, but it does have a very strong sense of ownership of information. That information, particularly in story form, was not traded, but could be given, and given freely, but its ownership was respected, those stories were not told or passed on by those to whom they had been given, but the knowledge in them was used by the receiver whilst ever they walked in the Land of the D'harawals, This Land.

It is hoped that our present society is now mature enough to be able to accept the Koori Dreaming stories as they were, as they are, and as they were always destined to be; tools to teach the Children of The People about living with Earth, the Mother, in peace and harmony.



Each story contains several layers of knowledge, the first of which are the secrets. Which can only be passed on or discussed with persons of the same level of knowledge or higher than the story teller. These secrets are never told within a legend, but are remembered separately from the legend itself. These are very important components of any legend, and it is the knowledge of the secrets which determines the level of the person's worthiness to ownership of that story.

The next layer of knowledge within the stories was the law, or laws, to be obeyed. The laws of the stories were told and often repeated after the telling of each story, after which the laws were discussed and their application in life demonstrated in a variety of ways.

The third layer of knowledge contained in each story was the lessons which could be learned from the story and the lessons were taught to all members of the group as well as visitors. These lessons introduced Peoples to the means to live in harmony with each other, and the land and its resources.

In this series of D'harawal Law Legends, there are many lessons to be learned. The D'harawals believed that children learned better and more quickly when they were encouraged to work through a problem, rather than be told the answer. By sharing the stories of our ancestors with you, it is hoped that not only will you recognise and learn the lessons and laws of the Peoples of This Land, but you will also come to understand and respect the culture of The People and our feelings and relationship with the land.

The stories do not in themselves act as an instruction manual - rather they point the way and encourage The People to think, to learn and to live. It is hoped that by sharing our stories, you too may be able to think, to learn and to live in This Land.

With understanding and respect for each other we can learn to more easily share This Land and live together in peace and harmony.

*Frances Bodkin*



THE STORY OF SHARK ISLAND

# Boo'ambillyee

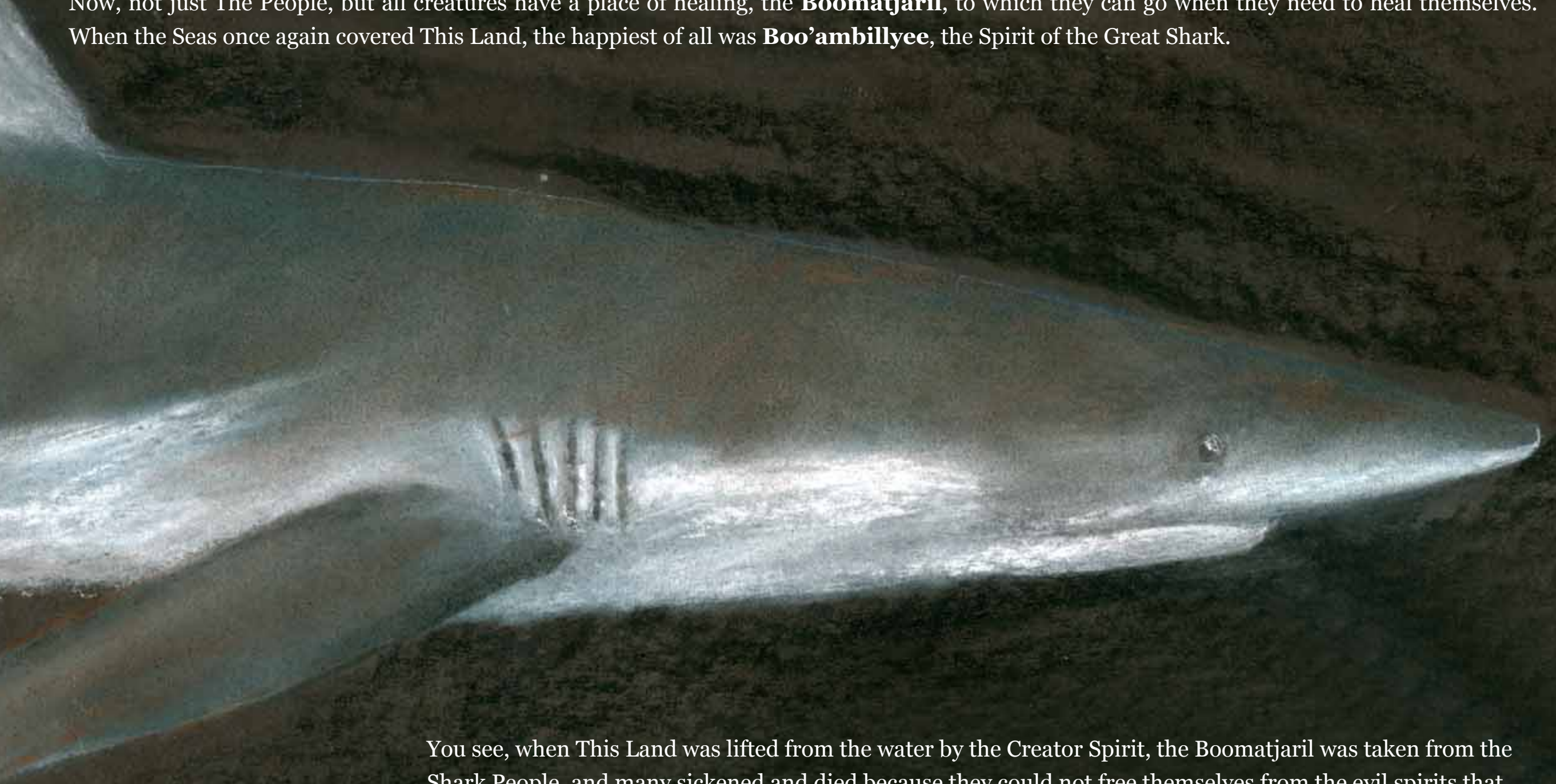


A very long time ago in the Dreaming,  
there was much celebration amongst the  
Sea Spirits.



Because of the misdeeds of The People who lived in This Land, the Sea Spirits were able to reclaim the lowlands. And where once The People danced upon The Land, the Sea Spirits were again, able to swim and frolic in the waves.

Now, not just The People, but all creatures have a place of healing, the **Boomatjaril**, to which they can go when they need to heal themselves. When the Seas once again covered This Land, the happiest of all was **Boo'ambillyee**, the Spirit of the Great Shark.



You see, when This Land was lifted from the water by the Creator Spirit, the Boomatjaril was taken from the Shark People, and many sickened and died because they could not free themselves from the evil spirits that sucked away their very beings.



A painting of four sharks swimming in dark, deep water. The sharks are depicted with realistic detail, showing their fins, gills, and eyes. They are swimming in various directions, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the sleek bodies of the sharks against the dark background.

With the rising of the water, the Boo'ambillyee was able to seek out the Sacred Place of Healing once again.

She made her way into the almost forgotten waters, swimming silently past the **Boora'birra**, and feeling the great power of the place, even though it was now covered by water.

But something else was drawing her closer, a place more powerful to the Boo'ambillyee, than any other.

Although she was The Great Shark Spirit, she too, had not been able to heal herself, but as she drew closer to the Sacred Place, she could feel her old wounds getting better, she could feel the scars falling away, and she could feel the aches and pains easing.



She sang a song that only her children could hear, guiding them to a place to where they had never been, but of which they all knew.

The Boo'ambillyee bared her many, sharp teeth in a smile.

Now, once again, her children would be the most feared Warriors of the Sea.

Now, once again, they would be able to carry out their duties of keeping the seas clean of the weak and the sick, and be able to come to their Sacred Place to be healed.



But there was something strange about the place. There was the sense of a strange creature, a creature of other waters, and as she peered through the swirling waters, she saw a shadow, a long shadow, an unfamiliar shape. “Come forward, Creature” demanded the Boo’ambillyee. **Parra’doowee**, the Great Eel Spirit had felt the disturbance caused by the presence of this powerful spirit, and had come to see what it was.

Never before had he ventured this far, even when the lands were free of the Sea Spirits. “Why come you here?” Asked the Parra’doowee. “You are a stranger to This Place.”

The Great Shark Spirit faced the Great Eel Spirit, each seeing a creature so strange that they could scarcely believe their eyes. “I am no stranger to This Place.” Said the Boo’ambillyee. “This is where my people have come to heal themselves when evil spirits have made them ill. But when This Place was taken away from us, we were unable to come here, and many of my children died.”

Parra’doowee nodded. “I am sorry that happened, but could you not find another healing place?”

Do you not know? In the Beginning, every creature was given a place where its children would be able to heal themselves. Don’t you have such a place?







Parra'doowee nodded thoughtfully. "I am the guardian of the Dreaming Place of the Eel Peoples. My children came there to renew themselves, but since the rising of the waters, they have been afraid to make the journey, the river waters are no longer sweet." He indicated the direction of the Dreaming Place "I do not come this far usually, but I felt your presence, and came to investigate."

Boo'ambillyee peered through the waters towards the deep hole where the Parra'doowee lived. "As I felt your presence." She said. "My children need to come here to heal themselves. Your children need to go there to heal themselves. There is no dispute, we can live side by side, when your children are in my country, they must obey our laws, and when my children are in your country, they must obey your laws."

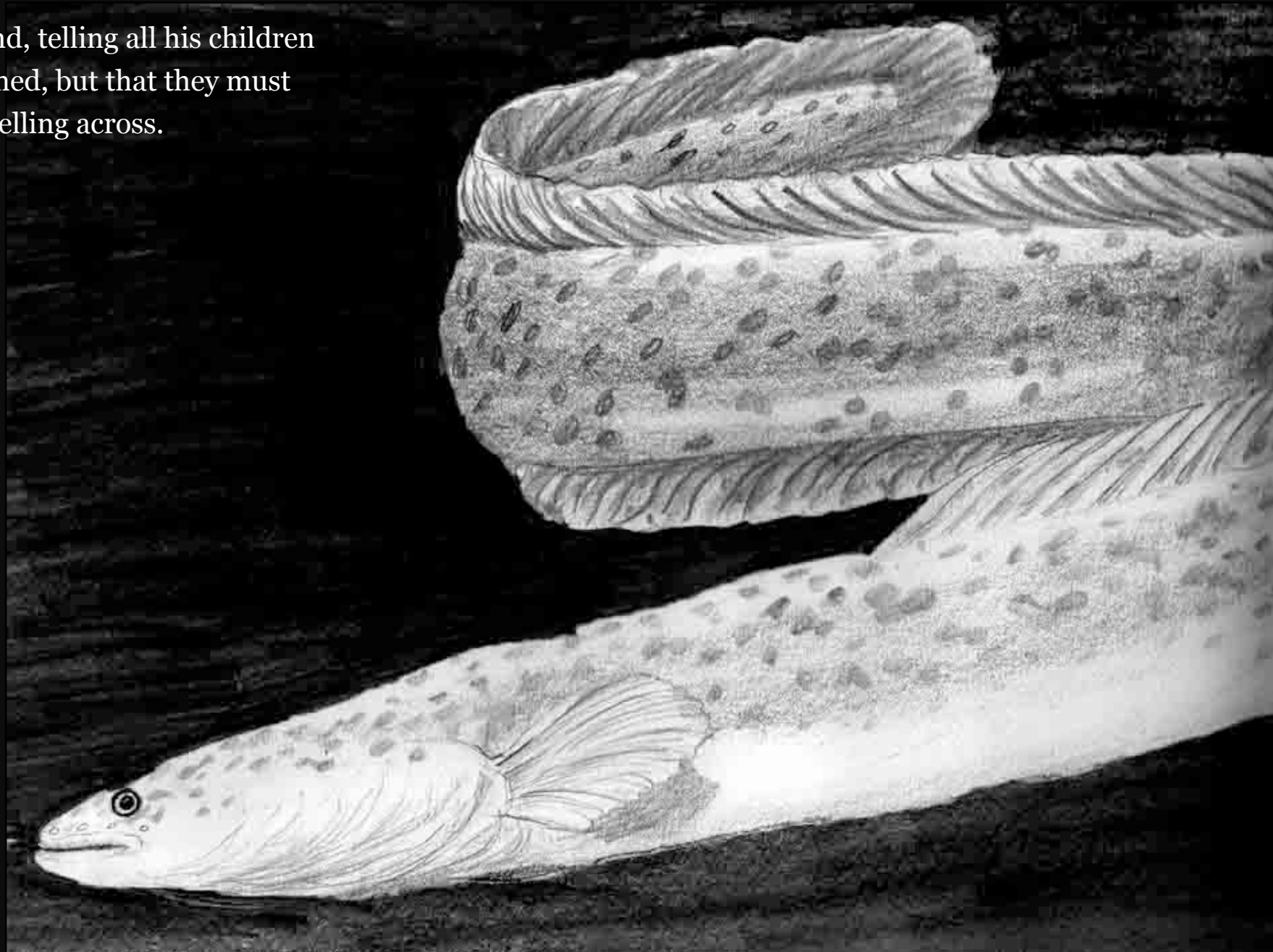


Parra'doowee was satisfied. "That is fair." He agreed.

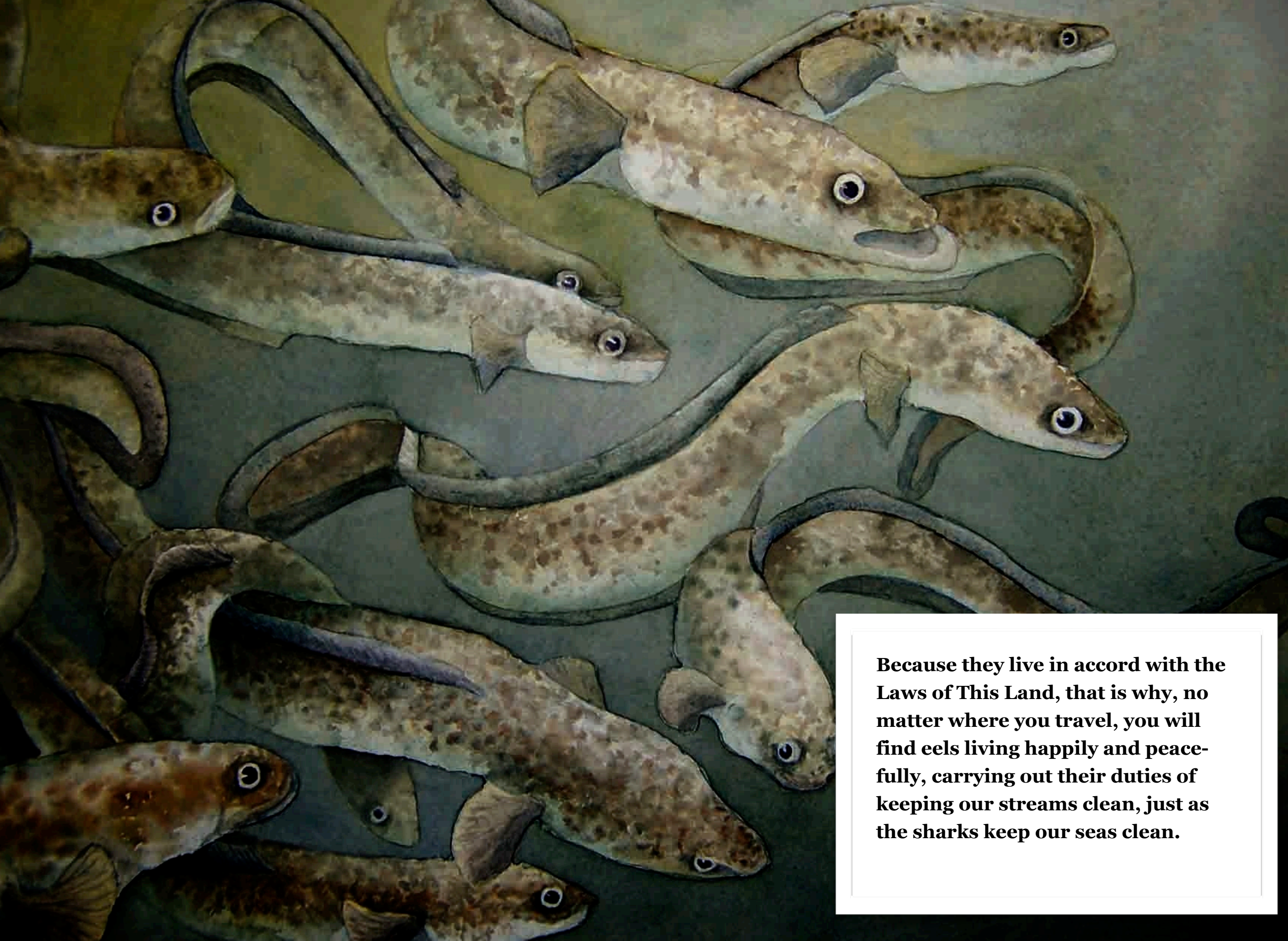
After Parra'doowee had taken his farewells Boo'ambillyee turned to those of her children who had been nearby when they heard her song, and she told them of her agreement with the Great Eel Spirit.

She warned them that should they break these new laws she would, herself, eat the lawbreakers, even though they be her own children. The Shark children knew that Boo'ambillyee would, indeed do just that, and swam quickly off to tell all the other sea creatures.

Parra'doowee travelled far and wide across This Land, telling all his children that they were now able to travel wherever they wished, but that they must obey the laws of People whose country they are travelling across.







**Because they live in accord with the Laws of This Land, that is why, no matter where you travel, you will find eels living happily and peacefully, carrying out their duties of keeping our streams clean, just as the sharks keep our seas clean.**



# Boo'ambillyee

Great Shark Spirit;  
Grey Nurse Shark

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## Related Glossary Terms

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# Boomatjaril

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Chapter 1 - Boo'ambillyee

# Boora'birra

Sow and Pigs Reef, Port Jackson, Sydney NSW

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# Parra'doowee

Great Eel Spirit;

Long finned eel, *Anguilla australis*

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