



Melody Finch

By Ian Boyd and Gary Luck

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Eco-fiction/fantasy/adventure

Middle-grade readers (8-12 years old)

Teacher notes and activities

Melody Finch is a story about the hardships of drought in Australia's Murray-Darling Basin as seen through the eyes of its native wildlife. When Melody Klomp turns into a Diamond Firetail Finch, she begins an amazing journey from Charleville in Queensland to the Coorong in South Australia. Along the way, she meets many wonderful birds, frogs, seals and even a platypus. Follow Melody's outback adventure as she enters a magical world where animals work together in an eternal fight for survival.

Themes:

- Drought and water management
- Animal movements
- Managing human-wildlife conflicts
- Invasive animals
- Climate change

Discussion questions and activities:

Before reading

- What do you think will happen in the book based on the cover?
- Research some of the impacts of drought on both people and wildlife in Australia.

After reading

- What do you think the main messages of the book are?
- Why did Nanna Bell have to consider selling her boat?
- Why did Melody choose Ramon as her flying partner? What other examples of animal migration can you think of?
- Why was Melody so upset that King Joh escaped from the truck and into the Menindee Lakes? What other animals have been introduced to Australia and why?
- How might future climate change impact Australia's native wildlife?
- Why was it so important that Ms Jellican and Mr Prickles help Melody move the fish from the drying waterhole to the main river channel?
- What are some of the ways we can waste less water in our homes?
- What type of animal was Buzza? How do bees help us feed ourselves?
- What type of birds were Ghost and Silverclaw? What role do these type of birds play in the ecosystem?

Writing activities

- Write a synopsis of the book for someone who hasn't read it.
- Draw a map of the Murray-Darling Basin and its major rivers and identify where the different characters meet each other.
- Draw your favourite animal from the book and explain where it lives and what it eats.
- Think of a management plan that would help the fishermen and the seals of the Coorong co-exist.