

WADAWURRUNG TRADITIONAL FISHING METHODS



NETS & FISHING LINES

Nets and Fishing lines were used in the rivers and estuaries and were made from bark, grasses and human hair.

Some nets measured up to 30 metres long. Hooks made from shells and a short wooden rod called a Muduk were attached to fishing lines, and buniya (eel) were caught by tying a worm to the end of a fishing line, and quickly throwing the eel up on the river bank once it swallowed the worm.



COOKING

Cooking the catch was common for the Wadawurrung People.

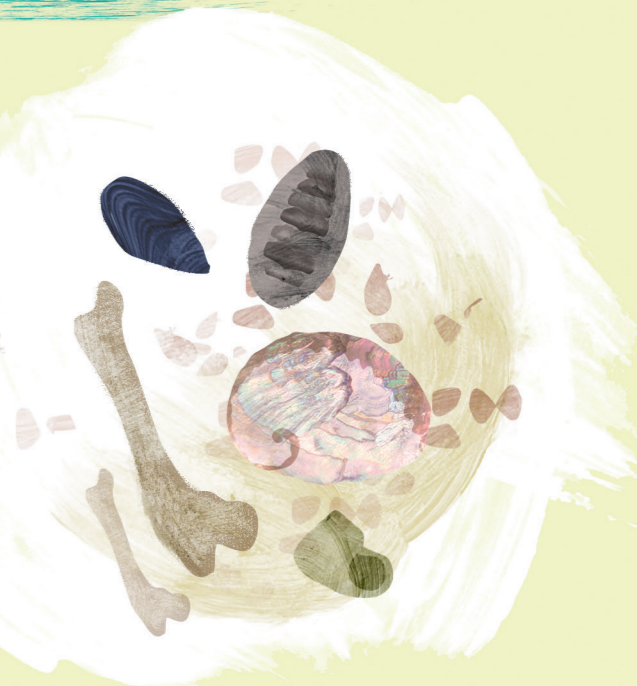
Sometimes the catch was placed directly onto hot coals or in a pit lined with hot stones and other times the catch would be wrapped in green leaves or placed inside a woven basket made from grasses before being placed onto the coals. Many shellfish such as marine snails were eaten raw.



MIDDEN

Middens are made up of the discarded food wastes from many meals in the one location.

Middens were next to rivers, lakes and bays or in the sand dunes by the ocean. Depending on where they were found middens could contain all kinds of kuwiyn (fish), stone tools, shellfish and even fishing hooks. Today middens show us what the different clans ate in the different locations they were camped.



HAND COLLECTION & DIVING

Hand collection and diving were methods used to collect animals such as tjorriiong (rock lobster), barnawarrabil (marine mussel) and barnabil (oyster). Tombine (freshwater mussel) and mayayn (yabby) were collected by feeling for them first with bare feet.



FISH TRAPS

Fish traps were made in rivers, lakes and tidal marine locations. Some were circular in shape extending from the shore line and others straight across rivers and streams. Materials used included stones, branches, sticks, reeds and clay. In flood waters or high tides kuwiyn (fish) and buniya (eel) would swim into the traps and remain inside as the water lowered again, making it easy to collect the kuwiyn (fish) and buniya (eel).



FISHING SPEARS

Fishing spears were made in many sizes and from different materials such as wood, stone and reeds by men. Spear fishing took place in rivers, estuaries and tidal flats. Men sometimes worked in pairs. One would stand waist deep in water with a spear while the other man stood at a higher point looking for fish and calling out where the kuwiyn (fish) were.



CANOES

Canoes were made from the bark of a tree usually not far from water. A stone axe was used to cut out the shape in the bark, which was peeled off in one large piece then dried and shaped over a fire. Often a small clay fire pit was made inside a canoe to cook fish and animals that were caught. The light from the fire pit or a fire stick were used to attract kuwiyn (fish) at night.



TRIBAL TERRITORY

Wadawurrung language groups tribal territory extend from the head waters of the Wirribi-yaluk (Werribee River) to the Port Phillip Bay, down to the Balla-wein (Bellarine Peninsula), along the Surfcoast to the Otway forests, north west to Walart (Winchelsea), north to Larngipigan (Shelford) then west to Derrinalum (Mount Elephant), north along Barringa-yaluk (Fiery Creek) to the Great Dividing Range, encompassing both Ballaarat (Ballarat) and Djilang (Geelong).

Within this territory, land-owner communities were made up of 25 clans that were connected through cultural and shared interests, totems, trade and marriage.

European settlement within the region meant that Wadawurrung land and waters were infiltrated. From this the Wadawurrung People were displaced from their land and waters, but descendants of the Wadawurrung People live within modern day society and work toward preserving and reclaiming their culture, land and waters.

The Wadawurrung tribe is part of a union with four other tribes called the Kulin nation. A belief of the Kulin is that Bunjil the eagle is the creator of the land, rivers, lakes, animals, plants, laws and lore, and Waa the crow is the protector of the People.

Wadawurrung People hunted and gathered across their land and waters for many generations, with weather and food availability determining where campsites should be located. This could have been by a yaluk (river) or buluk (lake) for a good kuarka (fishing place) to catch kuwiyn (fish).

Land access to resources was sometimes restricted by the clans. If a river or creek had been fished regularly throughout the fishing season and fish supplies were down, fishing would be limited or stopped by the land-owner clan until fish were given a chance to recover. During this time other resources were utilised for food, ensuring the sustainability of resources for the future.

Remnants of daily life of the Wadawurrung People include shell middens, fish traps, artefact scatters, stone quarries, scar trees, stone arrangements and ochre pits.



WAA

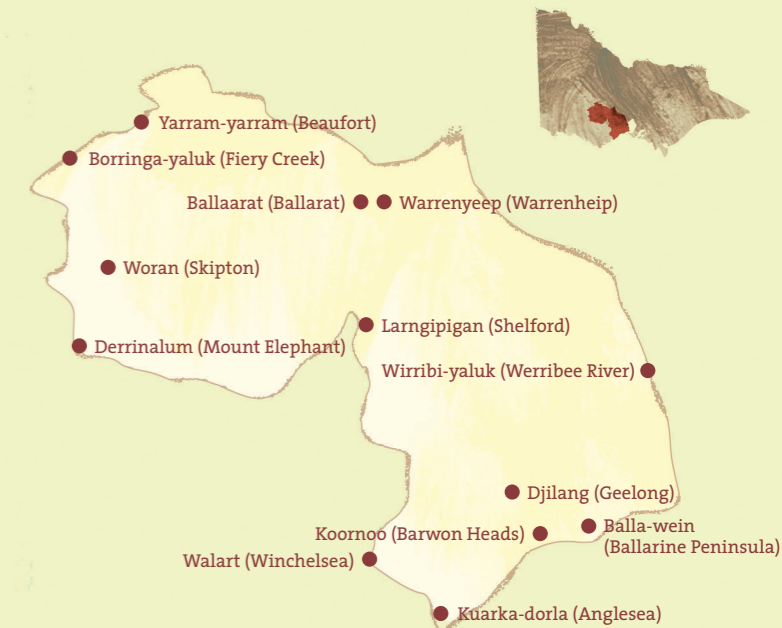


BUNJIL

CLANS OF THE WADAWURRUNG

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Barere barere blaug | 14 Moijerre balug |
| 2 Beerekwart balug | 15 Mear balug |
| 3 Bengalat balug | 16 Monmart |
| 4 Berrejin balug | 17 Neerer balug |
| 5 Borogundidj | 18 Pakeheneek balug |
| 6 Burrumbeet balug | 19 Peerickelmoon balug |
| 7 Carrigum | 20 Tooloora balug |
| 8 Carninje balug | 21 Woodealoke gundidj |
| 9 Corac balug | 22 Wada wurrung balug |
| 10 Corrin corrinjer balug | 23 Wongerrer balug |
| 11 Gerarlture | 24 Worinyaloke balug |
| 12 Marpeang balug | 25 Yaawang |
| 13 Mear balug | |

PLACES OF THE WADAWURRUNG



FISH SPECIES

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| river blackfish | wirripiyn |
| eel | buniya |
| trout galaxias | thurrpurt |
| freshwater mussel | tombine |
| yabby | mayayn |
| bream | kiang purt |
| mullet | dorla |
| crab | wordel |
| rock lobster | tjorriiong |
| marine mussel | barnawarrabil |
| oyster | barnabil |