

PM

Claire and Archie love watching the eastern curlews at the mudflats, where the birds come for the winter. When a new development threatens the habitat of the curlews, Claire and Archie know they need evidence of the birds in order to protect them. Can they stop the development in time to save the curlews?



Narrative

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Saving the Curlews

Story by Jill McDougall

Illustrations by Valerie Valdivia



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Chapter 1

A Sign Goes Up



“Let’s go!” I said to Archie excitedly. “Come on, hurry up!”

“Give me a minute, Claire,” Archie mumbled, as he hunted for his bike helmet.

Although my brother Archie is five years older than me, we are good friends. We both really like funny movies, chocolate chip pancakes and birdwatching.

Birdwatching? Yes! That might sound like an unusual hobby for a ten-year-old girl, but let me explain. My home is in a little town called Mud Crab Bay, close to some mudflats. You might think that mudflats don’t sound very, er ... attractive, and they’re not! In fact, the name says it all. Mudflats are flat areas of mud that can only be seen at low tide.



Lots of little crabs hide in the mudflats, and Archie and I like to watch the birds feeding on them. Plus, it's easy to get there on our bikes.



So, why was I telling Archie to hurry up? Great question! The day before, some curlews had arrived on the mudflats! This was the second year we'd seen them, and we knew they were special because we'd looked them up on the internet. They were eastern curlews, and they had flown all the way to Australia from ... dum de dah ... Siberia!

Finally, Archie found his bike helmet, and we rode along the sandy track to the mudflats.

"Someone else is here!" I said, staring at a big green truck in the parking area.

That's when we noticed a man hammering a sign into the ground. It read, "Bay Side Constructions".



“What would anyone want to build out here?” asked Archie, pulling off his helmet.

At that moment, the man’s dog bounded towards us. It was small, brown and full of energy.

“That’s Snapper,” said the man in a friendly voice. “He likes to chase things.”

I silently hoped Snapper didn’t like to chase curlews, but I smiled politely and patted him.

“I’ve got good news for you young people,” the man said. “In a few weeks, these smelly mudflats will be history!”

“History?” asked Archie, his voice breaking a little.

“That’s right!” said the man. “I’m Barry Bragg, and I own Bay Side Constructions. We’re going to build a sea wall to stop the tide from covering the mudflats. Then we’ll put soil on top of the mud.”

I stared at him in amazement. “What’s the good news?” I asked.

Barry Bragg flashed me a massive grin (the kind where you see all the teeth). “I’m going to build a holiday park on this site. Instead of mud, there’ll be lots of holiday cabins.”

