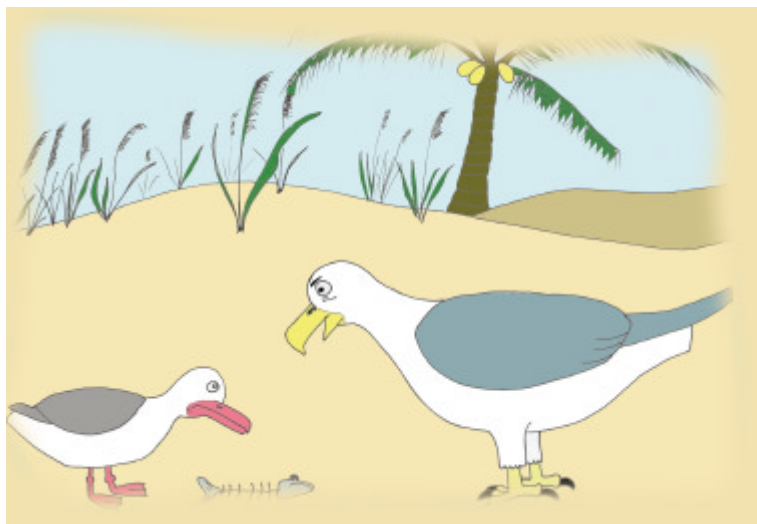


## The Sea Eagle and the Gull



The Sea Eagle and the Gull is a Dreamtime story told by the Bardi people of Cape Leveque, Western Australia. The story, although created for another time is just as relevant today. Thank you to the Bardi community, Bardi Language Workers and One Arm Point School for allowing the use of their story by the Fisheries Action Program Northern Territory.

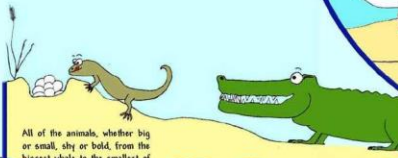
1. A long, long time ago, before there were people, a beautiful island lay in a blue ocean. **The beautiful island was full of animals; snakes, lizards and birdlife and much more.** The sea was full of turtles, sharks, crocodiles, fish, whales and dolphins. All of the animals were happy with the place they lived in called the island their home.
2. All of the animals, whether big or small, shy or bold, from the biggest whale to the smallest of crabs, had a place. On the land lizards ate turtle eggs and crocodiles ate the lizards. In the water big fish ate little fish, sharks ate the big fish, and so it went on, from the biggest to the smallest animal. **There was a balance between all of the animals, with each taking only what they needed.**
3. **The sea eagle would make sure that no one was eating more than his or her share, so there was always enough for everyone.** To keep the balance between the animals, the sea eagle kept a watch full eye on them all. He knew what animals were there and how many, because he was the carer for all creatures, as was his father and his father's father before him.
4. **One day, the sea eagle decided he wanted to go on a holiday** so he asked his friend the gull if he could look after the island for the Eagle while he was away. The gull told the eagle not to worry; he would look after everything. The sea eagle then left the gull in charge and flew away to see his family.
5. The gull watched him go and thought "how exciting I'm in charge now"! The gull, who was not a bad animal really, only a little greedy, started to take a little more than he should. **The gull invited all his friends to the island saying "go ahead take all you can, there's plenty."** The other gulls looked around and thought "it's true, there is plenty of food and no eagle to keep them from taking as much as we want.
6. **Word had got out "take what you can".** Soon all the other animals had forgotten what they had been taught. The crocodile ate and ate. The shark ate and ate. The other birds, whales, dugongs and crabs all took what they could.
7. Weeks past and things were not looking good. The animals discovered that they had nothing left to eat. It was only then that they realised what had happened. **They had taken too much.**
8. When the eagle finally returned, he noticed that something was wrong. **The sea, which was normally full of animals, was bare, everyone had left.** He knew what had happened and went in search of the gull. He soon found the gull, who was looking a little worried. He asked the gull, "what have you been up to". The gull replied "nothing, there is plenty of food, if you know where to look" and he started to pick at a scrap left behind during the feasting.
9. "So", said the eagle, "you haven't learnt your lesson". **"If you are happy to eat rubbish and scraps, you are never allowed to eat fresh fish again, and from now on, you will eat only the scraps left behind by others".**
10. That's why today when you visit the beach, gulls hang around waiting for your leftovers, while the wise sea eagle eats his fresh fish.

# The Sea Eagle and the Gull

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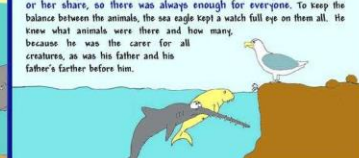
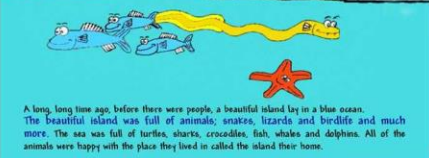
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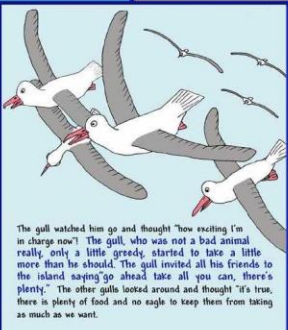
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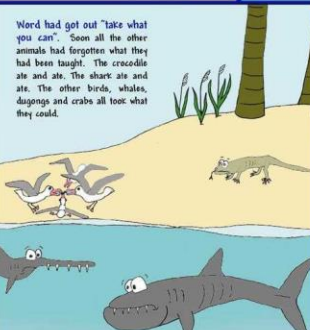
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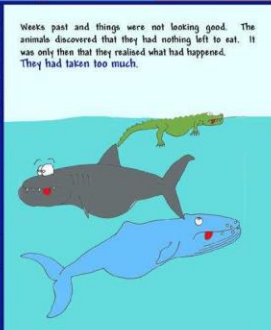
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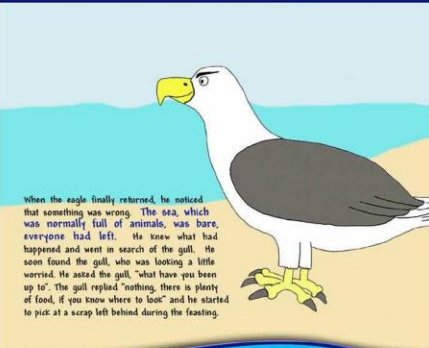
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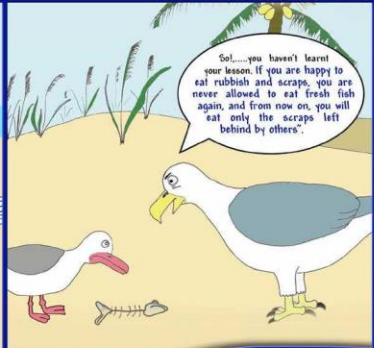
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So!...you haven't learnt your lesson. If you are happy to eat rubbish and scraps, you are never allowed to eat fresh fish again, and from now on, you will eat only the scraps left behind by others."



That's why today when you visit the beach gulls hang around waiting for your leftovers, while the wise sea eagle eats his fresh fish.

The island was sick - what happened?  
 What's the moral of this story?  
 Why do you think the Bardi people told this story?  
 Can you relate to this story - do we do anything similar to the gull?  
 Do we do anything similar to the Sea Eagle? ..... What?



Northern Territory Government

