

Woltatti – transcript

Fire is lore for country. Wisdom of the fire was carried by few people in the tribal clans. A knowledge of stars, clouds, winds and animal movement was needed for right fire to burn and where to begin the burn. Woltatti is a star which indicates the time of this cultural practice.

The hot northerly winds blow, thunder and lightning storms, fire stick burn off time. Summer camps along the coast. Wolta, the bush turkey, begins breeding if the rains have been good. The bush turkey was a much sought after food source.

Kurka, the kangaroo rat, was a main source of food during Woltatti. They were smoked out of their burrows in the ground. Sometimes we had to crawl over their mound to listen for their sound underground and dig them out.

Waterholes would begin to dry up during Woltatti. Kunggurla, the fresh water tabby, would have to move from waterhole to waterhole across the ground. They would be picked up off the ground, cooked on the coals of the fire and eaten.

Waitko and Kaya, the fresh water fish of the river, were an important food source during Woltatti. Nets were used to catch fish in the pools of the river. These fish were also indicators to show that the water was clean enough to drink.