CHAPTER 1

Bininj Elder Jimmy Kalarriya talks about emus with Peter Biless Nabarlambarl and Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja at Manmoyi Outstation

Manmoyi is located on the middle reaches of the Mann River on the margins of the Arnhem Land plateau. Although he has lived at Manmoyi and neighbouring outstations for most of his life, Jimmy Kalarriya is a member of the Wurrbbarnbulu or ‘emu’ clan whose estate is located much further south, deep in the rock country of the plateau. A group of six neighbouring clans — Bularlhdda, Kardbam, Wakmarranj, Warrayngu, Burnungku and Kamal — are part of a clan ‘company’ who jointly own the story of emu and her origins. Peter Biless Nabarlambarl is from the neighbouring Kamarrkawarn Outstation upstream on the Mann River, and Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja is a Kardbam clansman whose country is Mankorlod, on a tributary of the Cadell River in Kuninjku and Dangbon language country.

At the time this discussion was recorded, Kalarriya was busy making a painting of the famous ‘greedy emu’ story which is well known throughout western and southern Arnhem Land (see Part II). The men talk about emus and their family life, the male and female ‘living together husband and wife’, and the way people have always interacted with emus.
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Dabbarrabolk barri-ngeybuni ngurrurdu. | The name the old people used for emu was ‘ngurrurdu’. |
| Don Nakadilinj Namundjja | Yo ngurrurdu. | Yes, ‘ngurrurdu’. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlambarl | Yo, us mob we say ‘alwanjdjuk’. | Yes, we say ‘alwanjdjuk’. |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ngad kunu. | Yes, us here [on the Arnhem Land plateau]. |
| | Dja Kundjehmi, anekke reeri. | And in Kundjehmi it’s the same. |
| | Alwanjdjuk. | [They say] ‘Alwanjdjuk’. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlambarl | Yo, same way. | Yes, the same way. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlambarl | Ngurrurdu. | [The word for emu is] ‘ngurrurdu’. |
| Don Nakadilinj Namundjja | Ngurrurdu same. | Same word [in Dalabon] ‘ngurrurdu’. |
Jimmy Kalarriya painting the greedy emu story.
PART I • TALKING ABOUT EMUS

Peter Biless Nabarlamarl

Ngurrurdu Dangbon mob, um wurrbarn that Rembarrnga I think yo Rembarrnga.

In Dalabon, the word is ngurrurdu and in Rembarrnga language I think the word is wurrbarn, yes wurrbarn.

Don Nakadilinj Namunjda

Yo, ngurrurdu karri-djarrkngeybun rowk.

Yes we both say ngurrurdu [in Bininj Kunwok and in Dalabon languages].

Jimmy Kalarriya

Kurih Kunbarlanja kabirri-yime kurdukadjji.

There at Kunbarlanja (in Kunwinjku) they use the word 'kurdukadjji'.

Don Nakadilinj Namunjda

Karrikad.

To the west.

Peter Biless Nabarlamarl

Kudjekbinj mob and Mamardawerre.

[People from] Kudjekbinj and Mamardawerre.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ngali bininj-ni ngalu ngurrurdu borled . . . borledkerrinj all this mob, [points to painting] nahni birri-dolkang kungol, ngalih wanjh ngale birri-bawong kukurik ka-wake.

This emu was once a human being and . . . all these figures [points to an image being painted, see photo] they were humans who changed into animals. They flew up into the sky and they left the emu on the ground to walk around. They were humans who changed into animals. They flew up into the sky and they left the emu on the ground to walk around.

Mm, Bulanjajan.

Mm, she was Bulanjajan [subsection, a skin name].

Peter Biless Nabarlamarl

Birri-kang kun-red kurdukadjji, Malworn kurdukadjji Kudjekbinj Mamardawerre, all that kun-red . . .

The people from places who use the word ‘kurdukadjji’ for the emu, are from Malworn, Kudjekbinj and Mamardawerre, all those places . . .

Yo, kurdukadjji they call im.

Yes, they call emu ‘kurdukadjji’.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Kondah-kih ngurrudu.

Yes, from this place we call her ‘ngurrudu’.

Malarrk warridj wurrbarn.

The north-east Arnhem people [Yolngu] also say ‘wurrbbarn’ for the emu.

Djal ngurrurdu na-rangem ngarriyime ngal-daluk. And yayaw, kilelkile.

We call both the male and female ‘ngurrurdu’. And also the young ones, little ones. They all have the same name.

Don Nakadilinj Namunjda

Ngaleh ngurrurdu yirridjdja.

The emu is yirridjdja moiety.

Jimmy Kalarriya


The emu was Bulanjajan subsection and Wurrbbarn clan. She is associated with a clan confederation called Bakkarda which includes the Burnungku clan.
The emu is associated with many clans including Bakkarda [also called Kardbam], Wurrbbarnbulu, Burnungku, Warrayhngu and Kamal.  

A large group of clans, this ancestral being here [points to picture], a large clan confederation.

It’s been like that from the beginning.

Wurrbarn is the Rembarrnga word [for emu].

That’s the word, Wurrbarn.

Look here, everyone all over knows the word ‘wurrbarn’ [as in the clan name], but it’s only really a Rembarrnga word for emu, they call it ‘Wurrbarn’.

We find emus in open places.

In open bush and around the margins of rock country and near creeks where she goes for water.

Sometimes she climbs up into the rock country.

She travels up gorges, she goes along those . . .

She doesn’t go up into the big rock country, no.

Like not so long ago we saw emus at Badkorol and Malakadjalhno. She walks around in the open bush. Just like in my country, that’s where we see emus [in the Wurrbarn clan estate].
PART I • TALKING ABOUT EMUS

Jimmy Kalarriya

Mm kukolh yika kare
an-barrnhbarrnh karri-ngalke.

Sometimes we find her on those rocky
flats near rivers and up along gorges.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Yo, kayudyudme. Bu ngunkodjnan,
wanjh ka-yudyudme. Bu yi-molknan
wanjh kunu yi-bun.

Yes, she plods around like that. If she
sees you coming she takes off. You have
sneak up without her seeing you if you
want to catch her.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Molkno 'cheating' yi-marneyime djal
ngaleng werrk ngun-nan wanjh.

You have to trick her by sneaking up on
her otherwise she will spot you quickly.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Kune ka-yime, ka-warnamkan
koroko ngun-nang yurrhku
ka-wornnan marrek ngun-nan kaykki,
ka-mimdjamudnahnarren.

It’s like that, if she turns her head to the
side, she’ll see you straight away, but if
she looks straight ahead, all she will see
will be her eyelashes, she won’t see you.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Badbu djal ngaleng werrk ngun-nang,
wanjh ngun-kukbawon.

Yes, but as soon as she has seen you, she
takes off and leaves you behind.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Nani dubbeno karri-ngalke. Dubbeno
mahni, yika mani koyekyek,
ngurrurdj konda ka-wohre bonj konda
karri-ngalke, boyen kakkawarr-ken
nawu yi-bengkan ngari-nang. Nani
dubbeno wakeng ngalu-ken.

Dense bushland here is where we find
her. This thick bush here, like here in
the east, emus wander through there
and that’s where we find them. Just
recently [two months ago] when we were
travelling during a ceremony when we
were camped here [near Manmoyi] we
saw some emus wandering through the
thick bush.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Ka-djale mak nani kare.

They go through here too [at Manmoyi].

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ka-bale kure kunu Mokmek.

They go all the way to Mokmek [a site in
the next clan estate to the south].

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Kadjale Mokmek.

All the way to Mokmek.

Kadjale everywhere.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Kabokkudji, Djamamba bu kare.

She walks around the places Kabokkudji
and Djamamba.

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja

En Norne.

And Norne [also known as
Kabulwarnamyo].

Jimmy Kalarriya

Kare mak kabbal.

She goes to plain country also.

Ka-wohbolkwarlahken ka-re.

She goes across wide open plains.
CHAPTER 1

Emus and water

| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ka-re ka-djalbongun bu ka-kombukdowen ka-kolung ka-bongun and ka-yawoyhbibun man-berrk. Ka-djuhme... Ngalengman ka-djalduhme ka-bowkmerren ka-barbbarlme ka-yawoyhbibun. Yo, ka-djuhme. Kah-re. | When she is thirsty she goes to drink and then she goes back into the savanna country. She can walk into water. The emu gets into the water, moves around, drops herself up and down, turns around and around and climbs out again. Yes, she swims. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlamarl | Yo, ka-djuhme, ka-bongun weleng ka-bongun ka-bongun ka-muddjuhkerren wanjh... | Yes, she gets into the water and drinks and drinks and then shakes her feathers and... |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ka-welengberrkyame kare. | And then shoots through into the bush and is off. |
| Don Nakadilinj Namunjda | Ka-djuhme ka-barddurrungkuldi. | She gets into the water and goes down on her knees. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlamarl | And half ka-bokan kure... | And she can carry water... |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ya! Kukomolorrk kondah ka-bokan. Ngardjinno kumekke ka-boyo. | That's right! She carries water in her throat here. She has a water-crop which we call ngardjinno. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlamarl | Ka-bongun kume ka-bokarrme. | When she drinks, that's where she stores the water. |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Konda ka-boyo ngardjinno. | The water is here in her water-crop. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlamarl | Kumekke ka-bodi. | That's where the water is. |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ka-barddurrungkuldi ka-bongun ka-boworkmen wanjh bonj konda rowk ka-yimarneboyo wanjh ka-djuhme. Ka-baldjuhme, ka-barbbarlme ka-bowkmerren... | She kneels down, drinks to her fill and then carries some water in her crop. She stays in the water and splashes around here and there... |
| Don Nakadilinj Namunjda | Ngarabbarru! [laughs] | Like a buffalo! |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ya! | That's right! |
| Don Nakadilinj Namunjda | Ngijarru kalkal! [laughs] | Like a buffalo! |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Kondah ka-bokan. | She carries water in her throat here. |
| Peter Biless Nabarlamarl | Kumekke ka-bodi. | That's where the water is. |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Ka-barddurrungkuldi ka-bongun ka-boworkmen wanjh bonj konda rowk ka-yimarneboyo wanjh ka-djuhme. Ka-baldjuhme, ka-barbbarlme ka-bowkmerren... | She kneels down, drinks to her fill and then carries some water in her crop. She stays in the water and splashes around here and there... |
| Don Nakadilinj Namunjda | Ngarabbarru! [laughs] | Like a buffalo! |
| Jimmy Kalarriya | Kah-re. | Off she goes. |
PART I • TALKING ABOUT EMUS

Peter Biless Nabarlambarl

Ka-yo wolewole... ka-kolung, wanjh malamalayi ka-djuhme ka-bidbun wanjh kure ka-re.

She rests in the afternoon... she goes down to a lower area and then in the morning she has a swim and then goes off.

Don Nakadilinj Namunjunga

Kune ka-yime.

Like that.

Peter Biless Nabarlambarl


Ka-rrri wanjh kuberrk.

She sits outside, dries herself out and goes off again. She goes and has a swim for the last time until the next day in the morning when she'll come back again. She never goes to water in the night, no.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Kayo kuberrk.

She stays outside/in the bush [away from the creek].

Benbekad ka-bonguhbongun bonj. Kare kure ku-ruulkngurrid kukalhdume kumekke ka-yo.

She drinks in the day. She goes and rests at the side of a tree.

Ku-kalhdume ka-yo yiman manih kalhno makka an-ngamed Malina tree.

She sleeps at the side of a tree, like at the base of this tree here, this Malina tree.

Kure kun-duilk ka-yo.

She sleeps near trees.

Dulkkedjmadno.

At the base of a tree.


At the bottom of the tree. On the ground. There she can hide herself behind the tree.

Kume ka-yo.

That's where she stays.

Peter Biless Nabarlambarl

Kumekke ka-yo malayi kubuyika ka-yo.

She sleeps there and then the next day in a different place.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ka-madjmang ka-re, travelling.

She takes her swag and travels [joke].

Peter Biless Nabarlambarl

Malayi might be ka-re ku-buyika ka-yo, next day ka-yo kubuyika.

The next day she sleeps in another place and again the next day another place.

Jimmy Kalarriya

All the way ka-djale.

She keeps going like that all the way.

Peter Biless Nabarlambarl

Wirarrk ka-ngukdeng dabuno... nakka kumekke redbehehngkan ka-yo.

She lays eggs. Only then does she think about staying in a camp [i.e. the same place].

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ka-wabwabme ka-wirarrkurrme kumekke wanjh kun-yed ngalengarre ka-nahnan kure.

She moves all the time and only stops in one place to make a nest to lay eggs and look after them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peter Biless Nabarlambarl</th>
<th>Ka-yo ka-behbun wanjh ka-re.</th>
<th>She stays there, after the eggs hatch, she leaves.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalariiya</td>
<td>Wanjh ka-yawdorrorre.</td>
<td>Then she leads the chicks off with her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless Nabarlambarl</td>
<td>Yayaw wanjh ka-bengkan.</td>
<td>She thinks about the chicks. The chicks follow each other and they all move off together. They follow their mother and she shows them food to eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kabirri-yawmunkadjuhkadjung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kabirri-re wanjh.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kabirri-munkekadjing, kaben-bukkan man-me wanjh kabirri-ngun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja</td>
<td>Kaben-bukkan man-me.</td>
<td>She shows them food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless Nabarlambarl</td>
<td>Kabirri-re wanjh djarre.</td>
<td>They go long distances now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja</td>
<td>Djarre man-me kabirri-yawan.</td>
<td>They look for food in distant places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless Nabarlambarl</td>
<td>Kare kaben-won man-burrurnburrurn kabirri-ngun o njamed makka.</td>
<td>She goes and gives them dodder laurel (Cassytha filiformis) or whatsitsname, northern yellow boxwood (Planchonella arnhemica).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An-djimed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalariiya</td>
<td>An-barlarra ka-ngun.</td>
<td>She eats emu apple fruits (Owenia vernicosa).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless Nabarlambarl</td>
<td>An-balarra.</td>
<td>Emu apple.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An-dudjimi ka-ngun.</td>
<td>Green plum (Buchanania obovata).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja</td>
<td>An-bedde.</td>
<td>Quinine tree (Petalostigma pubescens).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An-bedde.</td>
<td>Quinine tree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless Nabarlambarl</td>
<td>An-lerrelerre, yoh. ●</td>
<td>Yeah, holly-leaved pea-flower. ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11
Emu’s predators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Bininj karri-bun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dja dalkken kabi-bun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj</td>
<td>Yo dalkken kabi-bun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namunjjdja</td>
<td>Yes, dingoes kill emus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Bilens</td>
<td>Yaw nawu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naborlambarl</td>
<td>Ngal-badjan minj kabi-bun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The chicks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>But not the mother [emu].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Kabi-kukbawon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kabi-melme kick ka-yime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She is too fast [literally, she leaves it behind].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She would kick the dingo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj</td>
<td>Ngale yiman yayaw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namunjjdja</td>
<td>To protect the chicks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Ka-radyorrkme kabi-melme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She kicks her leg out to strike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj</td>
<td>Yayaw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namunjjdja</td>
<td>The chicks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Ngalbang ngalkka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>She is dangerous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Dja nayin na-badbuyika.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There’s a different kind of snake too [that attacks emus].</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ngurrurdu karrebalbal. [name of snake, unidentified]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Njamed nak’ njale ka-neyyo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, what’s it’s name again?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Nakadilinj</td>
<td>Namekke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namunjjdja</td>
<td>You got it right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Nayin, karrebalbal, ngurrurdukarrebalbal ngarri-yime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A snake, karrebalbal, ngurrurdu karrebalbal is what we call it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Yiman ka-wukrohrok tiger snake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is similar in appearance to a tiger snake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Yimarnek kabi-ngudjadjung try kabi-baye ngalih bad kabi-kukbawon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yika mak kabi-melmelme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It always tries to follow the emu but she runs away. Sometimes the emu will try to kick the snake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yo nayin Ngurrurdu karrebalbal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, the snake ngurrurdu karrebalbal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ngale yellow wan.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s a yellow one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yellow kangeno bad kukbuyihbuyika, dot dot ka-ri yiman ka-yime njamed nawaran wanjki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yellow belly but with blocks of colour, dotted like the Oenpelli python.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karrebalbal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NGALKU BOLKKIME PIG KAH-NGALME BU BOLKKIME.

KONDA PIG-YAKNI KORROKO.

KORROKO PIG-YAKNI KAYAKKI.

YO, LALARL KADDUM KAHYIME YIMAN NJAMED WANJKEN MARRAWUDDI WANJH KALAKKALA KA-ROHROK, MAKAKA.

LALARL, NA-KUDJI NAME KA-WIRLARKNGUN.

KA-RRABEBHEKE KUN-DULKYIH KA-MANG KA-RRABUDALHME1, KUN-DENGEYIH.

NGALEKKE.

YO NAWU NABARLEK KA-BUN BADBONG DJUKERRE MAK KA-BUN.

---

1 -dalhme ‘hit’. Yi-ray wardi dalhme. ‘Go away or I’ll hit you.’

Today pigs ruin them, these days pigs have appeared today.

Before there were no pigs here.

Before there were no pigs here, none.

Only the black-breasted buzzard (Hamirostra melanosternon) eats the eggs.

Yes, the black-breasted buzzard, like the wedge-tailed eagle or other raptors, it sees [the eggs] from high above.

The black-breasted buzzard is the only bird that eats the eggs.

It uses a piece of wood with its claw to break open the egg. Like that.

It also can kill nabarlek, short-eared rock wallabies and female black wallaroos.
What emus do during the day

**Jimmy Kalarriya**

Ka-rrri ku-djurle, bu kurrung
ka-kurlahrung wanjh ku-djurle ka-rrri.

They can be found in the shade and during the build-up season they get very hot and stay in the shade.

**Peter Biless**

Nabarlambarl... cold time ka-yime ka-ye ka-bomang, ka-rurrndeng ka-yo.

Ngokkowino wanjh kune ka-yime
ka-kolhungun wanjh ka-boyikan.

When it’s the cool season they go fetch water and rest.

In the afternoon, that’s the time when they go to get water and carry it back.

Reproduction

**Jimmy Kalarriya**

Wurdyaw ka-marnbun narangem.

Kabene-djale ngal-bininj
na-bininj kobeng wanjh wurdyaw
kabene-marnbun.

The male only mates to make chicks.

They stay together male and female in order to mate and make chicks.

**Peter Biless**

Nabarlambarl

Married kabene-yime karrimen.

They are married couples.

**Jimmy Kalarriya**

Ka-rohrok yiman ka-yime ngad Bininj
... ngaldaluk narangem, nawu animal,
ngaldaluk narangem.

Ngal-bininj kobeng, na-bininj kobeng.

Yekke wanjh ka-yawdorrorrke ka-wohre
yawaken ka-wohre kune ka-yime bad
yekke, wurrkeng.

Humans and other animals are the same, the male and the female go together.

**Peter Biless**

Nabarlambarl

Bolkkime wanjh finish [October].

This time now they are finished [egg laying, by October].

**Peter Biless**

Nabarlambarl/

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjija

Koroko yaw bebmeng, Bonj.

The chicks have already hatched by this time. Finish.

**Jimmy Kalarriya**

Already koroko, ka-yawdorraorkeng
wanjh... birri-yawkihkimuk walakki

This time the adults are already leading the chicks around and they are medium size at this time of year [October].

**Peter Biless**

Nabarlambarl

Yekke wanjh kunukka... ka-rrabuyo,
yekke kare.

Dry season, that’s the time... the eggs are laid and hatch in the dry season.
Emu nesting

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ka-djorri namek.  
Kure ka-yime ‘round’.  
Emu makes a nest shape.  
A round shape.

Peter Biless

Nabarlambarl

Kure ka-yime ngurrihni ‘round’ kunih yi-na.  
A round shape as big as the area where you are all sitting.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ku-kurlk kure bad kun-malaworr ka-kurrme kun-djalh, kun-daik, kumekke ka-rrabukukyo.  
It makes the nest on the ground but it puts green leaves, lots of dry leaf matter and grass and that's where it lays its eggs.

Ka-djirrkkan kure kun-dengeyi, ka-djirrkkan kuhre wanjh buljdjarn-kah ka-wirlarrkkurrme.  
She pushes the material with her feet, keeps building it up and lays the eggs in the middle. She leaves that egg there and then she sits over it with her chest, near her heart. Then the last egg to be laid, she looks after that one carefully [by sitting over it].

Don Nakadilinj

Namundja

Last one namekke.  
That's the last one.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Djal na-djalwern.  
She will lay many [eggs].

Peter Biless

Nabarlambarl

Maybe ten or twelve.  
Maybe ten or twelve.

Kungerre, yika kukalh, man-berrk.  
In a bushy thicket, sometimes at the base of a tree near the roots in the savanna country.

Don Nakadilinj

Namundja

Man-berrk.  
Open bushland.

Kune ka-yime.  
Like that.

Jimmy Kalarriya

Sort of blue, all in blue.  
Sort of blue, all in blue.

In the wet season they keep wandering, they never tire of walking around, stopping off here and there all the time, they are constantly looking for dodder laurel berries or holly-leaved pea-flowers to eat. Quinine tree fruit, owenia fruits (emu apples) . . . all kinds of food . . . she sleeps at night, but she never stops wandering, the emu.

An-bedjdja ka-ngun an-barlarra ka-ngun . . . all kind . . . kukak ka-yo bad ngal-wirewern ngali ngalu ka-wohre.  
She is always searching for food. Looking for green plums, all kinds of fruit, black plums.

An-me ka-yawan.  
An-dudjmi ka-yawan all kind ka-yawan an-mankundalh.  
2 wirlewewhern ‘to wander around everywhere’, wirle ‘wander’
Darius Maralingurra at Kabulwarnamyo with emu eggs.
Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja

Man-wak.

Blue tongue fruits (*Melastoma polyanthum*).

Jimmy Kalarriya

An-wak ka-ngun, an-djalke an-kurlahbang mehmeno ka-ngun.

She eats blue tongue fruits, wild grapes (*Ampelocissus acetosa*) and flowers of the herb *Austrodolichos errabundus*.

An-kurlahbang.

Bush carrot herbs.

Mehmeno.

The flowers.

Kono.

Flowers.

Kurralk ngarri-yime ka-ngun an-djalke.

In long grassy places, we say she eats wild grapes.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

An-ngalemerrk.

The twining perennial herb *Cynanchum pedunculatum*.

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja

An-lerrelerre.

Holly-leaved pea flower.

Jimmy Kalarriya

An-korrwan ka-ngun.

She eats white currants (*Flueggea virosa*).

Ka-ngun . . an-burrurnburrurn.

She eats dodder laurel berries.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

An-djurlukkumarlba.

Kangaroo blood berries (*Antidesma ghaesembilla*).

Nga-nang makka an-djungkurk.

I've seen them eat gardenia fruits/flowers (*Gardenia fucata*).

Jimmy Kalarriya

Ngale ka-balyudme ngali.

She plods around constantly.

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja

Man-bunbarr.

The cooking herb *Corynotheca lateriflora*.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Njamed anyuku must be ka-ngun nakka ku-wardde.

It would probably eat rock country black currant (*Antidesma parvifolium*), which grows in the stone country.

Jimmy Kalarriya

An-djurlukkun ka-ngun.

It eats kangaroo blood berries.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Makka kundalk warridj wanjh manngale ka-ngeyyo?

There's a grass too that it eats, what's it called again?

An-balindjja.

Scrub vitex (*Vitex acuminata*) [not the grass].

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

An-balindjja ka-ngun.

Scrub vitex.

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja

Yo man-bang wanjh. karri-ngun orait bad an-bang.

Yes, it's got an unpleasant taste. We can eat it but it's unpleasant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>An-bedde ka-ngun, an-barlarra ka-ngun.</td>
<td>She eats quinine fruit, marble tree fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless</td>
<td>Kunumeleng, bu [inaudible] kunukunumeleng wanjh kudjewk bangkerreng wanjh ka-bangmen manekke man-dawk njalenjale, man-lerrelerre ka-ngun.</td>
<td>In the build up season and the first rains through to the late wet season, then all kinds of fruit are available and those bush cucumber fruit (<em>Cucumis melo</em>) get their hot spicy taste and they also eat holly-leaved pea flowers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless</td>
<td>Yo ka-ngun nakka everything, dry njamed like an-bedje bu ka-merlem ka-nganjboke wanjh ka-ngun man-me manu.</td>
<td>Yes, at that time it eats everything after the dry season and then the spear grass seed pods (<em>Sorghum</em> spp.) get ‘pregnant’ and then come out in full seed, that’s the time for emu food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Kalarriya</td>
<td>Kun-dalk djal mimno ka-ngun. Man-bedje minj ka-ngun . . . larrk. Wardi kabikomdulubun.</td>
<td>She only eats seeds [from some grasses]. But not spear grass seeds, no. Otherwise they would stick in her throat [because of the sharp spikelets on the seeds].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Biless</td>
<td>Djal ngarradj, karnamarr ka-ngun. ●</td>
<td>Only white cockatoos and black cockatoos can eat those. ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Hunting emus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
<pre><code>                 | Birri-djalkuniyirey birri-yami an-kole.                                   |
</code></pre>
<p>|                    |                                                                          |
|                    | Malaworr yi-malakan.                                                    |
|                    |                                                                          |
|                    | Kun-malaworr dorrengh marrek ngun-nan.                                  |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Peter Biless       | Yi-barurren properly way.                                               |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Jimmy Kalarriya    | Yi-re yi-barurren, yi-nan ka-wake o yi-nan ka-boyiwokme yi-djalkunire yi-malakan, yi-yame an-kole yika mako. |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja | Yika kaddum yi-bidbun barnambarl.                            |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Jimmy Kalarriya    | Barnambarl an-kundalh.                                                 |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Don Nakadilinj Namunjdja | Ya man-kundalh.                                                             |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Jimmy Kalarriya    | Korroko nawu old people bad bolikki kayakki.                           |
|                    | Djal man-koleyi birri-yameni.                                           |
|                    | Man-kole birri-yami yorndidj.                                           |
|                    | Dja barrawu djal bonj.                                                  |
| Peter Biless       | Barrawu nakka new one yibekka, nakka nakerrnge.                          |
|                    |                                                                          |
| Jimmy Kalarriya    | Yorndidj birri-yami.                                                   |
| Peter Biless       | Namekke yorndidj birri-yudjihmi.                                       |
| Jimmy Kalarriya    | Nawo korroko.                                                           |</p>
In ancient times, a long time ago. The shovelnose spears appeared only recently [with the availability of metal].

Recently yes.

Maybe when Europeans were down in Sydney and all that country there. But here on the plateau, where we live, there were no Europeans. They were only there at Milingimbi and Elcho Island and . . .

Sometimes emus lay eggs in the grass, sometimes in burnt areas. You can see the eggs.

But if the eggs got burnt, the emu would leave angry and never return.

In dry grass.

If they laid in the dry grass and the nest was burnt, the emu would abandon the nest.

Sometimes the eggs get burnt.

It would abandon the nest and never come back to it.

They just burnt anyway.
CHAPTER 1

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Anyway birri-wurlhkeng, birri-djalwurlhkeyi bonj.

Jimmy Kalarrinya

Kaluk man-djewk djakdungi ka-kolhdebebebe.

They just burnt anyway [without regard to a plan to encourage emus], that’s all.

The new growth comes after rain.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl


They didn’t have a law/rules about burning for emus at that time. They just lived doing whatever. They lit fires whenever they wanted, nobody had any idea about [modern] rules for burning. Today Europeans tell us we should follow their big laws which they have brought [for land management]. These are from Europeans not Aboriginal people, Aboriginal people just lived like this and didn’t worry about anything except tobacco and whatever, a few possessions. They just walked around naked, no clothes a long time ago. They only made coverings from pandanus . . .

Jimmy Kalarrinya

Bolkkime ngurrurdu kudjihkudji.

Today there’s only a few emus around.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Nawu kudjihkudji . . . wern-ni, mulil.

The occasional one . . . but there used to be lots.

Kare njale bi-bayeng yoh.
Djal djang-yak, djang minj bale ka-yo?

I wonder what is affecting them.

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjda

Lorlo.

Are there no sacred sites, where are they [where increase ceremonies should be performed]?

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Kare kumekke.

That’s where it must be.

Jimmy Kalarrinya

Maburrinj mak ka-wukkurmeninj [inaudible].

It placed itself there [as Dreaming] at Maburrinj.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl

Badbu djalkurrmerrinj ngayi nga-bengkan I know.

I know it put itself there, I know that.
Djawidda Nadjangorle at the emu stone arrangement.
Jimmy Kalarriya  Ngalengman kurrmerringj. Ngalu
Kurdukadji Dedjbarlkarrhmeng.
Ngarri-djangberhkeng boyen!

She placed herself there. There at
Kurdukadji Dedjbarlkarrhmeng.
We did an increase ritual there recently!

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja
Kaluk ka-bebme kaluk.

Then they will appear.

Jimmy Kalarriya
Lorlo [inaudible] ngalengarre.
Bokarrang, konda walem, Burrumule.

There at Lorlo is her place.
And here in the south at Bokarrang and
Burrumule.
You know that when the old people, the
old generation, when they all passed
away, then so have the emus.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl
Djal namekke dabuno birri-djirdmangi
wanjh darrkidyakminj, if dabuyuwurrunj
en yawwernwoyi yaw. Djal larrk
woybbuki everywhere djal larrk. Yuken
yi-nan yi-kudjihkudji yi-darrkidnan
kudji o yi-re yi-kudji mako-yak
yi-ngalke. Bu mako yi-kan kunukka
mako ngun-yinan kare ka-keleobme.
The eggs have been stolen and there are
no emus then, if the eggs had survived
then there would be lots of chicks. True,
everywhere there are no more emus. But
when you go somewhere by yourself and
you have no gun, that’s the time when
you’ll see one. But if you come with a gun
and she sees you, she’ll run away in fear.

Jimmy Kalarriya
Yika ngal-daluk na-rangem
ka-rrabunahnan.

Sometimes the female, sometimes the
male looks after the eggs.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl
Ngaldaluk kare hunting ka-yawan
man-me na-rangem ka-kabun.
Ngal-daluk ka-kabun ngalengmanwali
nungan nawu na-rangem hunting kare.
Change-change kabene-yime.
The mother goes hunting, looking for food
and the male sits on the eggs. The female
will sit on the eggs and then the male
will go for food. They take turns and swap
over.

Don Nakadilinj
Namunjdja
Ngalmim bininj.

She has the eyes of a human.

Peter Biless
Nabarlambarl
Kaben-djarrkdurrkmirri.

They both work together.

Jimmy Kalarriya
Yurruku ka-wohan marrek ngun-nan
ka-workwarnam ngun-nan.

[When she sits] she stares straight ahead
and she won’t see you . . . but if she looks
sideways, she’ll see you.
She comes to check you out.
‘What has appeared in front of me,’ she
says.
Maybe a long time ago, but today they have learnt about humans, they know whoever it is. Today they are used to seeing humans and so if they see a vehicle coming they take off in fear. Yeah, a long time ago though, they would come and check you out, in the days when there were lots of them. I remember a long time ago. But today with aircraft up in the clouds they know and remember the previous time [they saw a plane]. It’s the same with buffalo, they look up to see the plane and take off frightened . . . same for kangaroos.
After the discussions at Manmoyi, Jimmy Kalarriya travels to Bolkdjam Outstation in the Cadell River region to visit his cousin Jack Nawilil. There they have a conversation about emus in the Kune and Kundedjnjenghmi dialects of Bininj Kunwok. They discuss the social categories and important totemic places associated with emus. Nawilil and Kalarriya tell us more about the lives of emus and their significance to people of certain clans and particular places. We learn more about the confederation of clans who are associated with the traditional story about ngaleh ngurrurdu ‘that [female one] the emu’. Then they talk about a range of other topics, including emu diet, general behaviour, reproduction, predators and population changes, how to cook emu and share the meat, and how to burn the country with emus in mind.