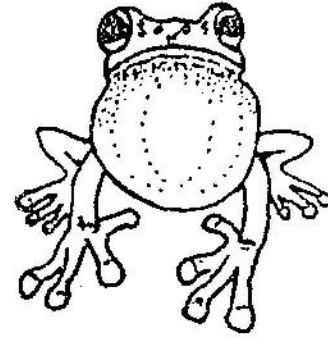


FROG CALL No 7

Newsletter of the
FROG & TADPOLE STUDY GROUP:
a special interest group of the
AUSTRALIAN HERPETOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC.



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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 20th July 1993 time: 7.30 for 8pm
NEW VENUE! Peppermint Room, Australian Museum
(cnr. of College and William Streets, Sydney East)
William St. entrance and follow the sign.

THE NEXT MEETING

We will again have much news from members on their recent activities and on progress with FATS group projects. We have a good video up our sleeve, by Graeme Watson on frogs of the wet/dry tropics of northern Australia. This is the video we would have seen at the last meeting, had we not spent so much time talking to each other!

Yes, there will again be refreshments and welcoming smiles for all the friends you may wish to bring with you. Do however turn up at our new venue.

DAN'S GIANT RAFFLE

At the July meeting Dan and Annette Wotherspoon's new guest house will be raffled away, or at least a one day stay for two (during the week) is the prize. It is the idyllic Rose Lindsay Cottage at Faulconbridge in the Blue Mountains, which is deep deep in frog country (not to mention the art culture and early Australian in the very nearby Norman Lindsay Gallery . Many thanks for this marvellous raffle prize, Dan and Annette.

YOUR TWO DOLLAR ENTERTAINMENT!

You will be pleased to be relieved of \$2 at the door at the next and our future meetings, seeing that this covers both the room hire and the refreshments. If we are lucky, it may even cover the postage for those who can attend regularly - we will need to see how that goes.

OUR STAMP COLLECTION

If you live out of town and cannot attend our meetings, all you need to do to stay in touch is to send eight 45c stamps to Jacquie Recsei - with address details enclosed. On her new card system she then keeps track of how your stamps are getting along and she will remind you when you need to send more. The reminder will be a frog stamped on the top of your newsletter. Very simple.

Jacquie Recsei

14 Wallace Close,
Hornsby Heights, 2077.

FATS GROUP STRUCTURE

It was decided that our present informal structure should be kept as it is - on the basis that 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. This should be discussed and reviewed from time to time, though. (Our parent body, the AHS, of which many of you are members, is an incorporated association with formal rules that we also abide by).

LOST AND FOUND

(a) Lost:

Large number of boiled frog lollies from glove box.

(b) Found:

Crinia sloanei and Litoria paraewingi breeding madly near Albury in NSW

Mixophyes balbus in Gloucester National Park.

Litoria chloris eggs - some exploded!

Litoria ewingi on Upper Colo Road - brown, some flattened.

Litoria ewingi in Snowies - mostly green.

Small number of boiled frog lollies in school bag.

A room full of frog people at Karen's 100th anniversary celebration

(of visits to her study site).

Heleioporus australiacus spawn - see below.

THE OWL FROGS' NESTS

So far no Heleioporus australiacus frogs found or even calling but.... 24 eggs just inside the mouth of one of 21 burrow entrances around a clay 'pan'. No rain to speak of much before collection or since. There were many Crinia tads on the bottom of the pan almost through metamorphosis and mostly dried up.

The tads hatched out just after putting them into a tank (5 Crinia tads were in there as well) Several tonnes of lettuce/ boiled rice/ chicken/ and all the Crinia later these charming little black taddies are 80mm long (some are less) and now getting back legs. These guys make a shark feeding frenzy look like a 'Teddy Bears Picnic' All you can see sometimes is a writhing mass of taddy flesh attacking a choice piece of chicken breast fillet. I put some water weed from my pond into the tank and not only do they devour that but also Crinia eggs and any other little gribbles that may be attached. Yes there is something which may reduce Crinia population! Sometime soon I will have 24 hungry little 'Heleiops' to feed. If you see someone missing appendages (arms and legs) you' ll know it was the 'attack of the killer taddy'.

'ON YA, LIM. ORNATUS!

An article by Michael Crossland in Wildlife Australia (Autumn 93) states the following: "Tadpoles of the White-lipped Tree Frog (Litoria infrafrenata), the Northern Dwarf Tree Frog (Litoria bicolor) and the Black-striped Rocket frog (Litoria nigrofrenata) have a very high mortality rate in the presence of Cane Toad eggs.... Desert Tree Frog (Litoria rubella) tadpoles fail to reach metamorphosis in the presence of toad tadpoles; however, in the presence of Ornate Burrowing Frog (Limnodynastes ornatus) tadpoles, it is toad tadpoles that grow slowly and consistently fail to reach metamorphosis."

UPDATE ON LITORIA CHLORIS BREEDING IN NOELINE'S BACKYARD

One lot of about 10 tadpoles that literally overflowed from Noeline's swimming pool all developed abnormalities on the body and hip structures around Metamorphosis. Have other carers had similar experiences? Perhaps there is some interbreeding in this small wild backyard population. Please come along to the next meeting if you can add to this or write to the newsletter editor.

ENDANGERED FROG STUDY

This is the two year study of those NSW coastal frogs that are thought to be at risk. A list of 21 species has now been decided on and grouped into species clusters. Coordinators for these clusters have been nominated. Key sites will need to be identified; options for licensing are being looked at; a US field data format is being adapted; prices of humidity/temperature/pH sensors are being investigated. A Heritage Commission grant covers some of the labour for professional services desk work (not field work), and mileage and supplies. An initial budget has been drawn up and a cheque account established.

EXEMPTED SPECIES

in response to a letter from FATS G NP&WS wrote that they don't envisage more than 15 frog species to become exempted, i.e. able to be held without a licence. We will continue to offer input where possible.

FROGWEEK

So far request for Frogweek funding has fallen on deaf ears but Dan and Shane have not given up. The date is 1st - 7th Nov 1993 Shane is having a stint in hospital and we wish him well.

ADELAIDE CONGRESS

The 2nd World Congress for Herpetology (\$395) now has a Theme Day added to it on 29th Dec 1993. This day is of particular interest to FATS members. For billeting and further details write to the Theme Coordinator - see Herpetofauna for details or come to the next FATS meeting.

AN OLD SAYING

Unfortunately, it has again become fashionable to describe anything of little value as being "not worth a tadpole's spiracle" (As if a spiracle were only good for putting one's foot through !) Rarely does one find an enlightened person speaking up to say, "You mean perhaps, not worth a mantid's potheca?"

Come to think of it, what is a taddy's spiracle good for ? Many would give their left spiracle for an answer (any answer) to a question of such vexing perplexity. And if that were not enough, your answer will also be published in the next issue. All you need to do is send it to this newsletter.

QUEENSLAND CALLING

Earlier this year, RANA (Restoring Australian Native Amphibians) started up. It joins two other groups in the Brisbane area: the Native Frog Restoration Group and the Brisbane Frog Club. Congratulations and best wishes. RANA!

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS FOR SALE IN PESHOPS

The laws governing keeping of native pets are very strict in NSW and all frog and reptiles are protected except for a few exempt reptiles (and we are still working on exempting some frogs) and it is illegal even to collect tadpole eggs.

How jealous was Shane on a recent trip to Victoria to see a pet shop with a sign "Turtles for Sale". Inside was a huge tank with some sort of Licence number from a fauna authority on the corner, containing many **Eastern Snake-neck Tortoises** of varying sizes. (\$45) Brochures explaining how to keep Tortoise were on the tank but referred to a different species. Not only that, but at the back of the shop was a tank with 6 small **carpet pythons** (\$300) Shane asked the shopkeeper about the snakes and his comment was that the "carpet python was the most commonly kept snake" !!!???? perhaps a slightly worrying comment.

The tank under the pythons held newts and 4 eggs (maybe turtle eggs). If this was NSW our Authorities would have thrown a wobbly at this. another thought is where did all these reptiles come from?

THE LAST MEETING

The highlight was Harald's slide show of **Spotted Tree Frogs** and their tadpoles. He took Herp. Techniques Course to Bogong Creek in the Snowies to visit them. The frogs appear to prefer it a bit warmer than what they were getting. Below 10 deg. C, they don't come out and the tadpoles like the shallow areas that are not so cold.

Possibly they only breed successfully in fairly dry years when the water is lower and warmer than usual. (13⁰C instead of 10⁰C)

Karen showed slides of different **Pseudophryne** toadlets, many of whom she knows personally.

She was prompted by enquiries from companies writing EIS reports to inform FATS of the knowledge of distribution of **Pseudophryne australis**. It is in the interest of developers to prove they are common.

Obviously there is not enough known about the species. (That can be said about most frog species)

So what do we know about distribution?

90% of the 148 locations known to NPWS and Museums are within 33.00-34.00 Lat and 150.00-151.30 Long.

This is an area of 15,400 km². Subtract inner suburban Sydney and areas west of Sydney around Penrith, Liverpool, Paramatta, where topography is unlikely to be suitable leaving **13,300km²**. **Pseudophryne australis** would appear to be more common in the north of Sydney than the south or west but more surveying is needed to confirm this.

A reproductive recruitment rate of 1.84 was found for a colony in Hornsby Heights. (results from 1 year) Karen considers this to be a high estimate based on the successful metamorphlings emerging from a permanent pool. No metamorphlings came from land nests and depositing eggs directly into water must still be considered the exception to the rule for this species.

Surveying since 1960 is very sparse, only 9 specimens and sightings were recorded in this time. Concerns over **P. bibronii** and **P. corroboree** in recent times should make us aware of **P. australis** so that we can give the relevant bodies an informed opinion.

The lowlight was the video player. Most of us had a go at it, and after getting it to work we didn't use it anyway.

We all had an opinion on feral newts (the Crested Newt is established in the wild in Victoria, and the Japanese Fire-Bellied Newt are in trade) and other introduced species. The one consensus that emerged was that nothing should be released (not even a mantid's ootheca) where it doesn't belong; and in particular, don't release newts.

INTRODUCED AMPHIBIANS

Harald contacted the Federal Authorities about policies and regulations for introduced amphibians. No overseas amphibians can be imported without permission, which is not likely to be granted. (especially in the aquarium trade)

Once species are here and in trade then (e.g. Axolotls, and two small newts there is little they can do, if the species is a relatively recent arrival in trade then it could be confiscated if the introduction was not authorised. So should you see newts, salamanders or overseas frogs in trade that you suspect may be illegal immigrants, make it known fast to your nearest museum, wildlife authority, or quarantine officers. Let's ensure the Cane Toad was our last amphibian mistake!!

A small item in a childrens magazine about keeping axolotls- one of the foods on their recommended menu- tadpoles!