

FROG CALL

The Frog and Tadpole
Study Group
FATS GROUP
Group of NSW Inc

NUMBER 21 - JANUARY 1996

PO Box A2405

Sydney South NSW 2000

THE NEXT MEETING

Friday 2nd February, 7:00 for a 7:30 pm start at the Australian Museum

SPEAKERS:

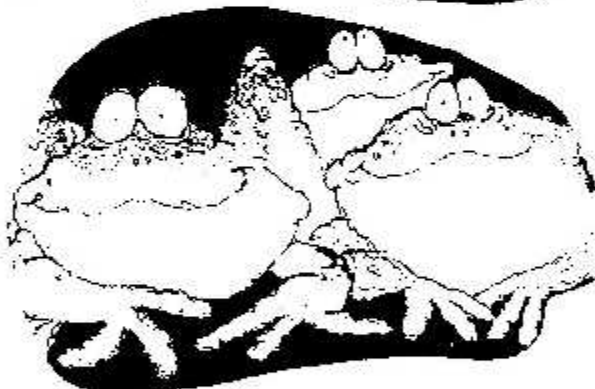
Lothar Voigt Frogs as environmental monitors:
An act of faith or can they be trusted?
(It's about real frogs, and we're all going to get our say!)

Everybody My 5 froggy or taddy slides



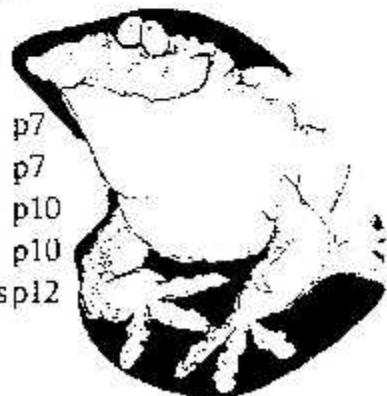
REGULAR FEATURES

News and announcements, field trips, projects, refreshments!
Auction, discussions, arguments, gossip, welcome table!
No \$2 door donation for paid-up members: Bring a visitor!



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THE LAST MEETING (1.12.95)

John Rice treated us to a slide show on a survey of frog populations he and a fellow researcher

did in the Helensburgh region. The main aim, across 12 breeding sites, was to see which species would occur at which types of sites.

We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year at the Australian Museum (William Street entrance) in Sydney. Meetings are held on the first Friday of every even month (Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct., Dec.) at 7 pm. Visitors are welcome. We monitor frog populations and frog studies and produce a newsletter FROG CALL and the FROGFACTS information sheets.

qualitative survey recorded the presence or (assumed) absence at each site; frogs were sound recorded, tads were raised to metamorphosis for identification. Site descriptions included basic topography and water quality. Ten species were found: a further nine which Arthur White recorded there in 1984 were not found. One of the Barred River Frogs (*Mixophyes balbus*) was not recorded there before but now 200 - 300 of their tadpoles were found along a short stretch of creek.

The various species were found at the various breeding sites with little pattern of distribution discernible. One (the Brown-striped Marsh Frog) inhabited all twelve sites, others were spread across the sites seemingly at random - maybe for historical reasons, maybe they have little other choice in a dry year, or perhaps the environmental parameters that were important to them were not compared. (We were reminded that you can't compare more parameters than you have study sites.)

Some other observations: - Frog surveys with pitfall traps are biased towards terrestrial frogs and may miss arboreal and burrowing species. - Too little is known about the dispersal of metamorphs, and about adults outside the breeding season. - High nitrate levels shrivel tads. - Giant Burrowing Frog tads were found in acid water of pH 4.3.

Lothar showed some slides from Frog Week at Taronga Zoo and at the Museum, also from FATS exhibits as part of 'Kids, Creeks & Companies' at Warringah Mall, of Water Week at Darling Harbour and of Streamwatch at Homebush Bay. - Thanks to the Streamwatch people for inviting us to those three events.

Arthur gave us a new Green-and-Golden Bell Frog update, with slides from the Botany and Homebush Bay sites. At Botany, on land reclaimed from the Port Botany facility, four ponds are now built, down to the water table, and are

being planted out. In January, tadpoles from Taronga will go there as a pilot project.

The ICI land also has ponds on it, from "fetid" to "looking OK". It is a 26 ha oasis in an industrial area, is partly affected by a chemical spill from 20 years ago and still has 4 frog and 15 reptile species occurring on it.

Homebush Bay has ponds being built for the resident Bell Frog population. The ponds will be of different types, some ephemeral etc., to see which are best for them and to then modify the other ponds. Scattered around are Arthur's numbered habitat boards. To check what's underneath, he simply puts a metal collar around the board and lifts it up. Now that many Bell Frogs at the site have transponders, he only needs to wave his antenna over the board without disturbing them. - Bell Frogs have again been calling at the brick pit site, and at the nearby Newington Armaments Depot, since early November.

Karen organised a collection for a charity, which was the wish of Shane Gow (his obituary was printed in the last issue). And she organised the sale of David Stewart's new tapes of frog calls - \$15 each for (a) Greater Sydney Basin, (b) North Eastern NSW, (c) Brisbane & SE Queensland - more tapes available at the next meeting if you missed out!

Deborah handed out the last newsletter (which Lothar didn't get done in time to send out before the meeting), she gave us an update on the grim frog licensing situation and she handed out sets of what-to-do cards for mailing out.

David Tyrrell donated a Robinson field guide he had just won (for having found two good study sites) to the raffle. Others brought in their prized possessions for the auction, and together we managed to raise \$151; a new record again!

For the next meeting, Deborah has already donated her Multimedia CD-ROM on Reptiles and Frogs as a prize!

L.V.



FATS GROUP FIELD TRIPS - FEBRUARY TO MARCH 1996

Saturday, 10th of February - Survey of **Royal National Park** in conjunction with NPWS. This trip is to help the NPWS in their biodiversity survey of Royal and Heathcote National Parks and will hopefully form part of an ongoing joint project. The greatest hope will be to locate a Barred River Frog. Contact - Frank Lemckert (02) 872 0159 (W) or (02) 487 4345 (H).

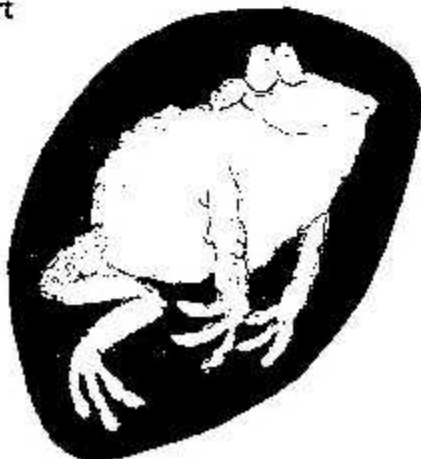
Saturday, 17th of February - a survey of the **Brooklyn Dam** area to be led by Karen Thumm on (02) 482 1017. This will be a relatively comfortable look at frogs in a variety of habitats associated with the dam. Of most interest will be a hunt for the Red-crowned Toadlet and Giant Burrowing Frog.

Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd of March - Basin Camping Reserve in **Olney State Forest** led by Frank Lemckert. A return to a favourite frog spot. The idea will be to camp in the well appointed camping area (barbecues and composting toilets) and to have a look at the diverse frog fauna of the area. Frogging can be as easy or as difficult as people would like, and a good range of other wildlife is guaranteed to be seen. It is also a good place for the kids. Stay for as little or as long as you'd like. Olney trips are always lots of fun.

16th of March - **Darkes Forest** area led by Arthur White (02) 599 1161. Arthur will provide a guided tour of one of his old stamping grounds.

Please contact noted people for details.

Frank Lemckert



FIELD TRIP REPORT - SECOND HEATHCOTE EXCURSION

On the 2nd of December another group of intrepid FATS anurophiles journeyed to the wilds of the Karloo Pool Track in search of something froggy. Recent rains had swollen the "little" stream into the largest flow I had ever seen and made reaching some points of the main stream an interesting adventure (it would have helped if I had remembered in which direction to go!). Fortunately the frogs were kind to us and 3 groups of Red-crowned Toadlets were located. This included a new group of 5 or so males calling at a site from which they were known in 1986 and 1987, but which had been burned out in the late 1980s, and had not been recorded there since. It was nice to see them recolonising an old area and shows what they can do if fires aren't too frequent. The Giant Burrowing Frog tadpoles were still there, including an almost metamorphosed froglet (Ken Griffiths got a few good photos of it and I'll be looking forward to seeing them at the next meeting). There were lots of the good old Common Eastern Froglets and their eggs present, some water dragons, large crayfish and freshwater shrimps and we even saw a pretty Leaf Green Tree Frog (a first in that area for me). All in all, everyone appeared to have a good time and the drinks and biscuits provided by my parents ended off a very nice evening. Next time it will be the wild (well, swampy) side of Heathcote.

* Please note - if anyone who attends these trips would like to write something about their experience, then please feel free to do so and we will try to include it in the next newsletter. I am always interested in the thoughts of people regarding these trips. Also, if anyone has a suggestion as to somewhere to go for a field trip then please let me know [ring me on (02) 872 0159 or write to FATS] and I'll see what I can do to organise something. This is especially true if you feel your part of the world is being neglected.

F.L.

FROGGING AT SMITHS (9.12.95)

A true version by

Giselle Howard, Grant Howard, Philip Green -
part of an ORGANISED trip to Smiths Lake

It was daytime but the endangered Wallum Froglets (*Crinia tinnula*) were still calling in the swamp behind Smiths Lake Research Station. Eight of us took up the challenge to cross the swamp but we soon became separated into two groups. In Group 1 and in the lead was Arthur "Water Boatman" White as well as Carol and Robyn. The rest of us who formed Group 2 found we were unable to hop from button grass to button grass but rather fell into the waters in between.

As we watched the hat on Arthur's head disappear below the horizon and then climb the distant sand dune on the far side of the swamp, it was decision time for Group 2. One clump of button grass started to look like the next and it was as far to go back as to push on so we decided on the latter. After all, Arthur would no doubt be on the far side waiting because he wanted us all to see the Green-and-Golden Bell Frog areas. OR SO WE THOUGHT!!!

The water varied from ankle to thigh depth, or make that knee to armpit for Tyren (9) and Xavier (5). What champs! These guys kept up the pace despite needing to take twice as many strides as the rest of us. They didn't complain but did eventually long to be back in camp.

Phil was our lead tracker dog once reaching the far side of the swamp and headed up the dune in hot pursuit of the others. Sadly, we lost the scent and there was no Arthur & Co. to be found and no sign posts to the Bell Frog habitat.

So what did we do? We turned around and went back again to camp!!! Only this time trying to skirt the edge of the swamp. In frog terms, we had failed to find the frogs sought after. Arthur, Carol and Robyn did eventually return to camp too, and they were ever-so-proud of their

achievement and that no one else had "made the distance"! We were smug in our scientific discovery not of frogs but that this swamp is merely pot holes held together by button grass. We know, we proved it and lived to tell the tale!

G.H., G.H., P.G.

FROGGING WITH THE KIDS

January 6 was a filthy, wet night. Great for frogging but not great for dragging along 5 kids - ages 3 to 11.

"But Dad / Mr Green..... you promised", echoed 5 kids. (3 were mine, plus another 2 ring-ins.)

"OK, OK, - you win. Get in the car".

In retrospect, I'm sorta glad I kept my word - despite the nasty weather - and took the tribe out froggin' because I logged the greatest number of species I have ever seen in one night: 19 species.

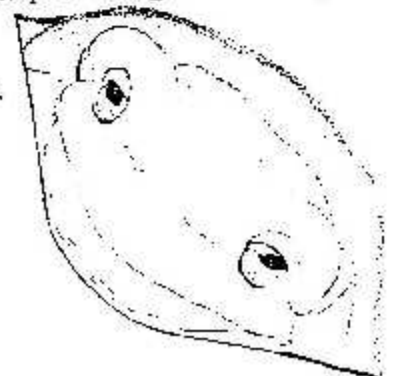
The search area was Ourimbah / Berkeley Vale and here are some of the species encountered: the Green-thighed Frog (*Litoria brevipalmata*) and the Whirring Tree Frog (*Lit. revelata*), the Heath Froglet, the Green Tree Frog, Freycinet's Frog and Fletcher's Frog. On the new tape "Frogs of the Greater Sydney Basin" these frogs are listed under the following categories: At Risk, Rare or Uncommon.

A new Green-thighed Frog site was discovered at Palmdale - we saw 15 individual frogs at one ephemeral pond. An exciting spectacle to behold - even for a seasoned frogger.

On this expedition we had a "first-time frogger" on board. What was the reaction of 10 year old Des to the night of swamp sloshing and finding rare frogs?

"Awesome!" Amen.

P.G.



FLYING FROGS!

It was deep, in the night, New Year's Dawn, Barrington Tops National Park as Philip Green's frogging vehicle negotiated another slippery S-bend on the rain-forest road.

Suddenly an unidentified, flying frog landed - plop, in the middle of the dirt road. Its trajectory had been vertical and from a great height.

The car screeched to a halt as Philip emerged to assess the situation, rubbing his eyes in a typical back-handed frog fashion. "Vertical trajectory? Great height? Flying frogs? Naw - couldn't be."

Owing to New Year's Dawn, most of Australia would have been partying all night but Philip swears upon a stack of "Field Guides to Frogs of Australia" that he hadn't touched a drop of the amber liquid.

Now to the grisly business of identifying the pathetically mangled frog corpse. But behold... it moved - no broken bones; just a Red-eyed Tree Frog, staring pop-eyed at the intruding human.

Maybe the frog had been celebrating too. All the tell-tale signs were there: red eyes and falling out of its tree. The nearest overhead branch from where it could have originated was of an Acacia and 6 m above the road. Youch! Long way to belly-flop.

But this incident awoke dormant childhood memories back at Philip's family home. Green Tree Frogs regularly jumped off the 4 m roof onto a concrete path below. You knew they were doing it from the loud plop as they hit the concrete. These jumps were frequent, deliberate and calculated. Free-falling in the dark! Hey! That could make a new adrenaline-pumping sport for whacko humans!

P.G.



YAP, YAP, YAP, YAP, YAP, YAP, YAP,
YAP, YAP, YAP, YAP, YAP AND YAP

The above represents approximately a four second segment of a male Broad-palmed Frog (*Litoria latopalmata*), trying, ever so enthusiastically, to attract a female consort in the Barrington Tops National Park.

The date was January 1, 1996. Time 1:55 am. Temperature: 19°. Humidity: 93%.

The site was a farm dam with low grass around its perimeter. About six males were participating in the chorus.

I remained at the site for one hour, departing at 2:55 am. During that time there was only one break in the chorus, and that only for 5 seconds.

So, working it out mathematically, approximately three calls per second gives us 180 calls per minute or 10,800 yaps in one hour. Phew! How long the frogs were yapping before and after my visit to the site - I have no idea.

I sure am glad I'm not a courting male *Litoria latopalmata*. The very idea of sitting in the muck with my head stuck up in the air for several hours and carrying on with that ridiculous yapping for maybe 20,000 times, just doesn't turn me on. And the suspense of it all! Waiting for a female to come along and admire your profound ability to yap.

But, on second thoughts, we male *Homo sapiens* don't do it all that differently anyway.

P.G.

FROGFEST AT TINDA CREEK

Tinda Creek runs into Wollemi National Park and into the Colo basin. Near the Putty Road bridge, where it and the adjacent Gibba Swamp are home to teeming numbers of frogs, is the site where a mushroom compost manufacturing plant eventually withdrew its Development Application. This called for celebrating: On the 2nd of

December the Hawkesbury National Parks Association and FATS Group did our joint pilgrimage to the scene of the battle. Duly fortified after our cultured gourmet picnic at a spectacular lookout point at sunset, we began our wallowing ritual, all 20 of us. Karen and family led half the hapless NPAers straight into one part of the swamp, I took the rest into another part; and when we met in the middle their incredulous looks had already given way to the madness of frog fever. Frogs were everywhere; calling, splashing about, landing in slippery mud - and so were we! Eleven species this time (which brings the site tally so far to 15).

Back on the road, we marched off to Gibba Swamp. Keeping up with seasoned bushwalkers is no picnic (so that's why they got that out of the way first), but we were driven on by an incredible din up ahead: Masses of Green Tree Frogs calling full bore, non-stop, all on top of each other (calling, that is). Any split-seconds in between were filled in by Bleating Tree Frogs all bleating their hearts out. No start, no end to that deafening noise, just continuous.

The bushwalkers, still not exhausted, joined in - not so much in calling but in catching, handling, identifying and releasing 10 cm Green Tree Frogs, the first ones most of them had ever seen or touched. - By the time we were back in the cars, our mudpacks had largely peeled off our trousers, and we just had enough strength left to stop at a few (real) watering holes on the way home.

L.V.



WHAT KAREN DID AT ALSTONVILLE

The Christmas holiday break provided some great frogging trips. On 3.1.96 we had 46 mm near Alstonville on the far North Coast of NSW (near Ballina). It was 22° C at 23 hours, so conditions were ideal.

The following sightings were made within a very small area of approx. 6 km diameter. It was a long night, having to stop the car constantly to remove frogs from the road.

Ornate Burrowing Frogs were seen in amplexus as were Dainty Tree Frogs. These were the two most common frogs in the flooded ditches. Very pleasing to see were large Green Tree Frogs, looking like Cane Toads on the road. As Cane Toads are fairly plentiful in the area, I fear that the Green Tree Frogs could be mistaken by the locals at night and used as target practice.

Two other ground frogs apart from the Ornate Burrowing Frog were also calling: the Brown-striped Marsh Frog and the Northern Banjo Frog. The Bleating Tree Frog's painful whine faded into insignificance when combined with all the others. *Litoria tylei*, the Laughing Tree Frog, was heard in the flooded paperbarks, as was *Crinia tinnula*, the Heath Froglet (at one site only), and the Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog was calling from the dams. Remnant rainforest creek lines and gullies usually had large numbers of Red-backed Toadlets calling from them.

The following night we added a couple of new species to the list although it was generally much quieter. It was still drizzling. The Broad-palmed Frog was dominant, Peron's Tree Frog was calling and there was a very dark coloured and very loud *Uperoleia* species which had not been calling the night before. *Crinias* were calling on both nights. I've been told that they were *Crinia signifera*, the Common Eastern Froglet, although they sounded different from the Sydney ones to me. Perhaps it was just the general din making it hard to differentiate.

That makes a total of 16 species of which eight were found in one roadside ditch. Frog paradise. This area has coastal heath, paperbark swamps, remnant rainforest gullies, farm dams and agriculture.

Karen Thumm



A FROG WEEK LETTER FROM AN ALSTONVILLE RESIDENT

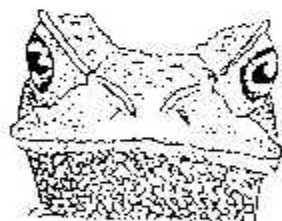
Thought I'd bring you up to date with our Frog Week activities. Allan Manning and I ran a frogging night for the public at Whian Whian State Forest. We had a pretty good roll-up (about 25 people) and I thought it was really successful.

No rain on the night but it was warm and humid, and we managed to pick up nine species:

Great Barred Frogs (<i>Mixophyes fasciolatus</i>) -lots!	
Tusked Frogs	Lesueur's Tree Frogs
Pouched Frogs	Peron's Tree Frogs
Pearson's Tree Frogs	Red-eyed Tree Frogs
Bleating Tree Frogs	Whirring Tree Frogs

All of the above species except the Whirring and Lesueur's Tree Frogs were calling. A pretty good result given the lack of rain, and I'm sure all the participants learned a great deal about frogs. The Big Scrub Environment Centre in Lismore had a frog display during the week and of course Dave Stewart's "Frog Calls of NE NSW" were also made available. I ran a small article in a local newspaper and this also generated a bit of interest.

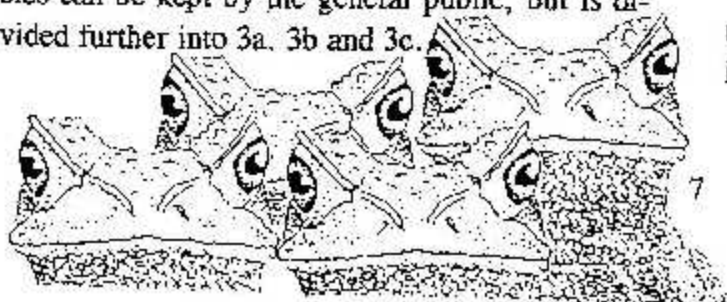
All the best,
Lance Tarvey



NON-INDIGENOUS ANIMALS ACT

NSW Agriculture has introduced new legislation aimed at preventing the establishment of any further exotic pest species into NSW.

Exotic species of mammals, reptiles and amphibians have been placed into one of three categories of security, with birds to follow. There is now category 1 (major threat as pests), category 2 (threat) and category 3 (species requiring control to limit their pest potential). Category 3 species can be kept by the general public, but is divided further into 3a, 3b and 3c.



Owners of species in categories 3a or 3b are required to register and to be licensed with NSW Agriculture, costing \$30 per year and must send in an annual return. Owners of species in category 3c are not required to be licensed.

The only amphibians in category 3 are Cane Toads (3b) and Axolotls (3c). In other words, should you have or want to have Cane Toads, that's ok for \$30 p.a. (so the government's found a way of making money out of them at last!). Axolotls are duty free, same as house mice, rabbits, dogs, cats, sheep and lots of other exotics that we now have to put up with.

Reptile fanciers don't get anything in 3b or 3c; they get 13 terrestrial tortoises, the Bowspit Turtle, the American Alligator, Brown Caiman and Stephen's Island Tuatara under 3a. Any exotic reptiles and amphibians not listed here are in category 1 or 2, where licenses may or may not be issued on a case by case basis. For enquiries ring the Exotic Animals Officer, NSW Agriculture, on (063) 91 3643.

L. V.

HELP! I'M CONFUSED ABOUT PHYLLOCHROA!

During late December 1995, I was on a family holiday in the Gloucester River area, when I stumbled across a small green frog that looked like *Litoria phyllochroa*, the Leaf Green Tree Frog in Martyn Robinson's "Field Guide to Frogs of Australia".

To confirm my identification I played David Stewart's tape "Frog Calls of the Greater Sydney Basin" and listened to *L. phyllochroa*. But it didn't sound anything like the call of this frog. To add total frustration to my confusion, there were other little green frogs calling on the Gloucester River that looked a little bit different to the picture in the book but were making the "proper" *phyllochroa* calls as per the tape! I was rapidly reaching a hair tearing, Valium swallowing condition!

In an attempt to make some sense of my confusion, I enthusiastically started photographing these frogs, tape recording their calls and making copious field notes (these will be presented further below).

Upon my return to civilisation I started thumbing through all my reference books. No joy! I played another tape - David Stewart's "Frog Calls of North East NSW", Field Survey Tape, 1992 edition). Contained therein was a frog called *Litoria barringtonensis*. Yes! This was it! This was the little green frog I had seen and heard on the Gloucester River. It wasn't a *phyllochroa* but a *barringtonensis*.

But alas! No mention of this "*barringtonensis*" in the major reference books. I needed to talk to someone to calm my nerves. Wrist slashing was now a distinct possibility on my immediate agenda!

First call was to Alan Greer, Australian Museum. Bingo! His records showed that a currently undescribed frog, known as *L. barringtonensis*, was taken from the Williams River (Barrington Tops area) in 1957 by S.J. Copeland. Alan also mentioned that Michael Mahony of Newcastle University was involved in research to clarify the status of *barringtonensis*. As of going to print with this issue of *Frogcall*, Mike Mahony is still chasing frogs "somewhere out there" and is unavailable for his valuable comment. Maybe we'll get that in the next issue of *Frogcall*.

It appears that four closely related frogs *Litoria phyllochroa*, *piperata*, *pearsoniana* and *barringtonensis* are currently under review as to the species divisions. Depending on compilation of further research data and whether the scientific analysts are "lumpers or splitters" will determine how many species / subspecies we finally end up with.

If the above isn't complex enough, *Litoria phyllochroa* has another recognised call race that exists south of Sydney. There's work to be done!

Following is a distillation of my field notes from Gloucester River, pertaining to "differences" in colour markings and call behaviour between "*phyllochroa*" and "*barringtonensis*":

During the 5 day holiday, a total of 6 *barringtonensis* / *phyllochroa* sites were identified. Three of these featured populations of *phyllochroa* only, one had *barringtonensis* only and two sites combined both species within 6 m of each other. A total of 26 calling males were visually located, 7 of which were inspected at close range to provide the following differentials:

	<i>barringtonensis</i>	<i>phyllochroa</i>
Call type	Varied from 3 to 5 syllables. Individuals observed NEVER made a <i>phyllochroa</i> call type in addition to the "normal" call.	Varied from 4 to approx. 7 syllables. Individuals observed NEVER made a <i>barringtonensis</i> call type.
Dorsal surface	Very slight sandpaper look. Tiny black spots peppered across back.	Smooth and no spotting.
Under surface of toes / legs	A distinct yellowish flush is apparent.	A distinct flesh colour is observed.
Vocal sac	Granular in texture.	Smooth.
Iris	Warm golden colour all over.	Top half is silver / gold. Bottom half is slightly darker silver / grey.
Sides (armpit to groin)	Distinct darker marbling.	Much lighter to no marbling.

Of the above 7 specimens, 5 conformed to the above criteria exactly. However, two notable disparities occurred.

One *barringtonensis* colour morph continually made a *phyllochroa* call. One *phyllochroa* colour morph was true to its colour and call type, except that it had a few black spots on its dorsal surface, but these were less than the heavier peppering of *barringtonensis*.

So there is some rather confusing cross-over between the two frog types. It is understandable why the decisions as to which frogs should be species or subspecies has been a while in coming.

For anyone interested in chasing *phyllochroa*, they usually hang out next to fast or slow moving streams (small or large). Frequently they call from the spiky Matrush (*Lomandra* spp) that overhangs the sides of streams. If this plant doesn't grow there, the frogs sit on branches, leaves or anything that is suspended up off the water surface. They call from October to March.

Take your tape recorder. Call variation number four, five or six may be waiting to be discovered by you. Also take your Sydney Basin ID tape so that you can make on-the-spot accurate identifications to see whether you have a new *phyllochroa* call. Please, also take your note book and / or camera to show which of the above five variations in colouration are applicable to your *phyllochroa*.

One of the above study sites where both species / races live, intermingled with each other, is described below:

It is a 200 m section of the Gloucester River bounded by remnant wet sclerophyll forest and open grazing land. Clumps of *Lomandra* are sprinkled along the banks. In this section of river, seven males were calling; three were "*phyllochroa*" type and four were "*barringtonensis*" type. They were grouped in two's of the same "species" plus one frog separated by itself. (These 7 males are a group of 7

different males to those in the previous diagnostic description across sites.) This site has been photographed and mapped and the precise call locations have been indicated where all 7 males were calling.

These frogs were closely monitored from 10:50 pm, 31st December (23° C, 80% humidity) to 3:15 am, 1st January (20° C, 86% humidity). Both "species" were often calling simultaneously with their respective call types. None of these males' calls changed throughout that period: Each frog made only one call type. All 7 frogs were initially audibly located and then observed from a distance of 50 cm to ensure accurate identification of diagnostic features.

The following observations are absolutely accurate for the 7 males at this study site:

Four "*barringtonensis*" males exhibited the following morphology / behaviour:

- Similar in appearance to the photograph in Cogger's "Reptiles and Amphibians", p. 149. That picture was taken at Mt Warning, NSW.
- Black spotting on dorsal surface.
- Distinct darker marbling on sides.
- Same call as featured on David Stewart's tape "Frog Calls of N.E. NSW" (Field Survey Tape, 1992). This call is listed as *Litoria barringtonensis*.

Three "*phyllochroa*" males exhibited the following morphology / behaviour:

- Similar in appearance to the photograph in Tyler's "Encyclopedia of Australian Animals: Frogs", p.30. Photo site unidentified.
- Smooth green dorsal surface - no black spotting.
- Light colours on sides - virtually no marbling.
- Same call as featured on Stewart's tape "Frog Calls of the Greater Sydney Basin" (1995). This frog call is listed as *Litoria phyllochroa* - north of Sydney call race.

N.B.: He also lists a south of Sydney call race. So now there are three call types that come under the classification of *phyllochroa* if we include the "barringtonensis" race / species.

What is happening? Are these frogs distinct species? Is this an example of speciation in progress? Do they hybridise? What is their relationship to *Litoria pearsoniana* and *piperata*? How long before the answers are published in reference books so that amateurs don't get thoroughly bamboozled when they are out trying to identify frogs in the field?

P.G.

Well done, Philip, and thanks for your help in keeping the S firmly embedded in FATS Group! (eds.)



FROGBITS & TADPIECES



Tinda Creek is now the site of a sandmining development application.

Imprisoned frog: Cliff Hobden sent in an article from the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin, titled "Sutherland Brickworks" and written by one Mick Derrey. A remarkable passage in the article reads:

"While working in the pit one day a huge amount of shale was blasted away in a solid mass the size of an average house. As it was necessary to insert further charges to break up the huge amount, while preparing the hole for the charge that the men made an amazing discovery. In a cavity in the shale approximately a foot in circumference, was a large white frog about three times the size of an average green frog. It had no eyes, only sockets, and soon died when exposed to the light and air. I often wonder how long this creature had survived in its tomb 50 feet below the surface."

Bell Frogs near Bayswater: The Pacific Power internal magazine "Network" of October 95 has as its lead article an account on the Green-and-

Golden Bell Frogs recently discovered in some artificial ponds near the Bayswater power station. Five adults were found in December 94 and nine others in March 95. In other ponds nearby, which contain mosquito fish, no Bell Frogs were found. An option, says the article, is to construct more ponds that can be drained if they get invaded by mosquito fish. Contact names at Pacific Power were given.

Frog and Reptile Workshop: Blacktown District Community College will run a workshop on the care and study of frogs and reptiles. Two full day Saturdays at the end of March (23.3. and 30.3.96). Ring BDCC on (02) 622 1011.

An Environmental Symposium and trade show for the turf growing and using industry will run in early March in Penrith, complete with FATS speaker and complimentary FATS display table.
L.V.

REPLY FROM NP&WS ON LICENSING OF FROGS AND TADPOLES

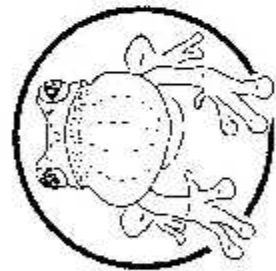
If you still have *Frogcall* No. 18 to hand, you will see our letter of 15.6.95 to Alistair Howard, Executive Director (Operations) with our nine recommendations on licensing. He replied in a letter of 23.11.95, essentially stating that unlicensed collecting of frogs or tadpoles will not be approved but that a proposal for licensed keeping (even that is in doubt) will be put before the Minister in late January. The full letter with its appendices of species is too long to fit into *Frogcall*, but let me quote one important approval contained therein:

"The Service has no objection to the capture, identification and immediate release (at point of capture) of frogs and tadpoles as proposed in your Recommendation 2."

Our reply of 18.12.95 is on the next page. (It followed further meetings with other affected groups which synchronised our responses.)

L.V.





The Frog and Tadpole
FATS GROUP of NSW Inc.
 Group of NSW Inc.
 PO Box 12405
 Sydney South NSW 2000

Mr AUSTIN HOWARD
 Executive Director (Generalists)
 National Parks & Wildlife Service
 PO Box 1967
 Hurstville 2220

18 December 1995

Fax: 585 5555

Re: Licensing Proposal for Frog Species

Dear Mr Howard,

Thank you for your detailed letter of 20 November. The FATS Group has discussed its implications internally and with related groups, and we would like to offer the following comments to your letter:

- Following your advice that there is no prospect at present of gaining approval for unlicensed collecting of frogs or tadpoles, this issue should be left in abeyance at this time. We will therefore not be pursuing our recommendations 1, 3, 4 and 5 (our letter to you of 25 June 1995) further until there is a change in circumstances.
- We understand that the Government's unwillingness to honour its earlier undertaking to allow unlicensed collecting of certain common frog and tadpoles is motivated politically and not scientifically, and that no further scientific evidence would need to be presented by us as it could not be taken into account, while acknowledging this as the present reality, our long-term position remains opposed to requiring licences for non-commercial collecting of common frogs and tadpoles. We believe a strong signal is being given to the public; we believe a displacement activity is being indulged in; we feel that school classes will be inhibited from raising tadpoles and that any children now raising them illegally will not only be "criminals" but also be thought of by the public as contributing to the decline of frogs. We would welcome an opportunity of working together with you on mitigating the counter-productive effects of this unfortunate policy.

We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical presentations each year at the Australian Museum (William Street, Sydney) in Sydney. Meetings are held on the first Friday of every even month (Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct., Dec.) at 7 pm. Visitors are welcome. We focus on frog populations and frog studies and produce a newsletter FROGWATCH and the FATS/FATSIS information sheets.

We see no value in an exempt list where frogs and tadpoles can be kept but not collected without a licence. In the circumstances, we suggest that all frog species nominated for exemption be moved to the Class 1 licence category.

Your categorisation of frog species is otherwise acceptable to us in the interest of a speedy resolution of a licensing system. You may however wish to make three adjustments to accommodate species not mentioned in your list:

Add to Class 3

Litoria littoralis
 Heath Frog, formerly incl. with L. jarvisiensis.

Add to Class 1

Litoria maculosa
 Northern Dwarf Tree Frog, occurs in banana shipments, common.
 Litoria rothii
 Red-eyed Brown Tree Frog, occurs in banana shipments, common.

We note and appreciate your approval to our recommendation 2 - capture, identification and immediate release at point of capture of frogs and tadpoles.

Questions such as proof of experience for certain licences could perhaps best be discussed at a meeting. The FATS Group would be pleased to participate and to contribute.

Sincerely,

Lotina Vingt
 President
 (Tel: 371 9129)



Current member
 FATS Group to
 babies

Endangered Frog
 Study

A study of the habitat, present distribution and population status of 31 species of "risk" frogs in NSW, partly funded through the National Invertebrate Survey Program.

Frog Week

First week every November. Many activities take place to focus public attention and interest in endangered frogs. We encourage much public involvement.

