

# FROG CALL



THE FROG AND TADPOLE  
STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC.

NUMBER 42 - July 1999  
PO Box A2405  
Sydney South NSW 1235

INTERNET HOMEPAGE [http://members.xoom.com/frog\\_group](http://members.xoom.com/frog_group)

THE NEXT MEETING: 7 PM, FRIDAY 6<sup>th</sup> August 1999 for a  
7.30 pm start at the AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM (WILLIAM ST ENTRANCE)

Meetings are held on the first Friday of every even month (February, April, June, August, Oct. and Dec.) at 7 pm for a 7:30 pm start.  
NO MEETINGS ARE HELD ON GOOD FRIDAY SO CHECK FROGCALL FOR ALTERNATE DATES.

## SMITHS LAKE FIELD TRIP

9 to 12 SEPT 99

Join us for 1, 2, 3 or 4

nights at

Smith's Lake

NSW University

field station

right on the lake, for a family

frogging adventure,

dormitory accommodation,

hot showers,

communal kitchen,

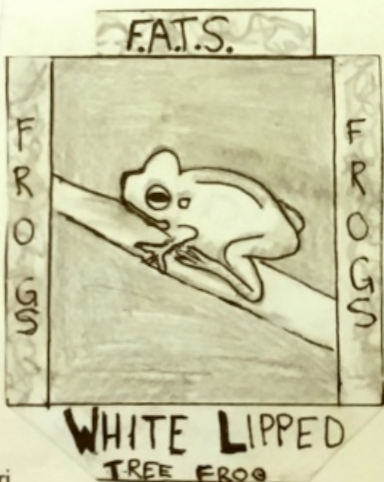
flush toilets,

swimming, and

Seal Rocks beach

20 minutes away.

See notices page 2



from Christopher Spiteri



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## MEETING FORMAT for 6<sup>th</sup> August 1999

7:00pm	FATS Annual General Meeting
7.30pm	Guest speakers: Dani Ondinea will discuss a trial Frog Plant Service Fernando Ravello from NPWS Arthur White "The Wonderful World of Toads"
8:15pm	5 favourite frog slides or 5 minutes
8:40pm	Guessing competition and Auction
9:00pm	Finish for tea, coffee & biscuits

**O**ur AGM and ordinary meeting was opened by Arthur White who read Frank Lemckert's outgoing President's speech. Frank apologised for not being at the AGM but family matters had caught up with him. He thanked FATS members for their support during his time as President and particularly to the Committee for making this time an enjoyable one. His letter included the following comments that FATS

"continues to attract new members and have a high profile at both the community and scientific level. The last two years have seen a very successful display presented by FATS at the Easter Show.

A continued interest by the media should ensure that frogs receive the recognition that is deserved and put pressure on politicians, government agencies and other relevant groups to be aware of frogs as an important part of our environment that needs protection. It also greatly increases our chances of reaching people who want to learn about and help protect and conserve frogs.

Our high profile in frog conservation and education is recognised through the invitations that have been and will be forthcoming for inclusion of FATS members on Recovery Teams. Membership on recovery teams will allow FATS members to become directly involved in frog conservation. It will also give this group a voice in what can be done to protect frogs from extinction and so have everyone involved in the process, not just scientists and bureaucrats.

The work of FATS has meant that it is leading the way in informing the world of the serious threat posed by the Plague Minnow. The result has been its listing as a threatening process so that it can no longer be ignored as a problem. This at least gives us hope that the spread of this fish can be reduced and its impacts on such species as the Golden Bell Frog can be reduced. FATS has a critical role in letting the public know about this fish, what a threat it is and what can and should be done about it.

Now more than ever the issue of the Chytrid fungus is one that FATS has a critical need to address. The increasing incidence of this disease in wild populations has made evident the widespread threat of the Chytrid fungus. Observations by our members can greatly assist scientists and the NPWS in determining its full distribution and the severity of impacts on frog populations.

We need to consider what sort of group we are going to be in the future. We are a large group of people who are interested in all aspects of frogs including finding rare frogs, making backyards suitable habitat or educating the public as to frog conservation. How much effort should we devote to being an organisation that assists in the keeping of pets and distribution of frogs and tadpoles throughout NSW?"



We thank Frank for his involvement on the committee and note that although he has chosen not to continue as President, he will be supporting FATS activities (including articles for our newsletter). The newly elected Frog and Tadpole Study Group committee members of 1999/2000 are listed on the back page of FrogCall.

**R**on Haering from the National Parks and Wildlife Service spoke about current conservation efforts currently being undertaken by the NPWS for frogs. Emphasis is presently being focused on recovery planning as required by the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995. To date, 10 plans are currently being prepared, being implemented or have been exhibited for public comment. These include the Southern and Northern Corroboree Frog, Spotted Tree Frog, *Litoria booroolongensis*, Green and Golden Bell Frog, Peppercod Frog, *Litoria castanea*, and *Mixopyes* complex. In addition, a Declining Frog Working Group has been established to approach frog conservation from a statewide perspective. Current projects include, funding of research into the Chytrid Fungus, on going monitoring of stream dwelling frogs in Northern NSW, preparation of a Cane Toad identification brochure and a identification guide for frogs of the western zone.

A information brochure was disseminated identifying who in the NPWS can best answer any inquiry you may have regarding frogs. See page 12. Concerns discussed at the meeting included whether those sites not requiring urgent plans of management may be considered expendable; the sudden decline of the Spotted Tree Frog; the impact of water flow regulations, trout and the Booroolong Brown Frog, Streamwatch and Frogwatch.

Thank you Ron for informative your presentation.

Arthur White and Ken Griffiths presented great slides including Barred, Red Crowned and Giant Burrowing frogs. Lothar Voigt gave away to FATS members, free benzalkonium chloride solution with instructions, to treat suspected chytrid fungus on captive frogs and sold methylene blue bottles for use in water (as directed) to help prevent fungal infections. The use of Aliveo remedy or betadine diluted by 100 was also discussed. Anne Peaston, Peter Spradbrow and Katherine Wangmann ran our guessing competition which was won by Will Introna who selected a set of beautifully crafted silver frog cuff links from Peek-a Boo Riley St Surry Hills, as his prize. The second lucky winner was Barbra Bohdanowicz. Congratulations to successful auction bidders. MW

## NOTICES

**A** Smiths Lake field trip will be held from Thursday 9/9/99 to Sunday 12/9/99. Contact Arthur White 9599 1161 for details.

Volunteers for the frog rescue program are always required contact Monica Wangmann on 9797 6543.

Any ideas for a FATS logo? Contact us.

Bring recordings of your local unrecognised frog calls to our FATS meetings and have the species identified.

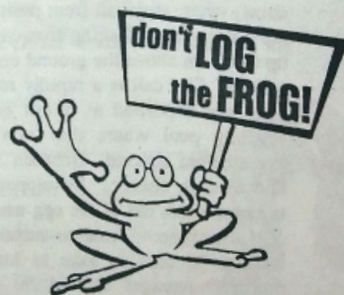
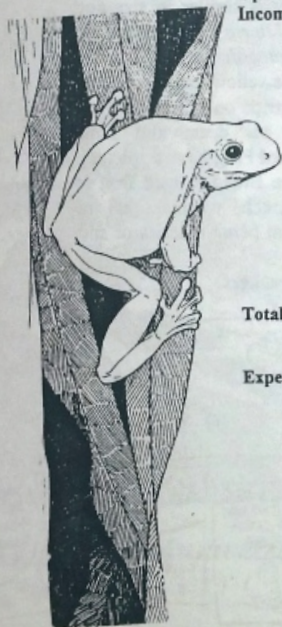
## NEXT MEETING FROG PLANT SERVICE

We have all been guilty of putting plants into our ponds without really knowing what they were or where they were from. Sometimes we get caught out when a "know-it-all" friend points out that the pride of your pond is a noxious weed from Venezuela. So you hastily extract this wretched plant and go looking for something to replace it with. If you are environmentally aware you might go down to your local creek and pinch some plants from the reserve.

Chances are you've collected another exotic pest and are about to spread it even further around the neighbourhood. To help the conscientious frog pond owner Dani Ondina has kindly offered to trial a "Frog Plant Service". In Sydney it is almost impossible to get locally endemic pond plants (especially ones that look good). Dani has started discussions with Randwick Community Nursery to propagate some useful pond plants. These plants will become available for sale at FATS meetings. Dani will talk about how the service will operate at the next FATS meeting. AW

### Frog and Tadpole Study Group of NSW ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 6<sup>th</sup> June 1998 to 7<sup>th</sup> June 1999

Opening Balance		\$ 9031.88
Income:		
Membership	\$10319.50	
Easter Show	\$ 2435.60	
C.D.'s	\$ 900.00	
Tapes	\$ 250.00	
Jewellery	\$ 290.00	
Badges, Kit, Posters etc	\$ 630.05	
End Frog	\$ 191.40	
Frog Donations	\$ 715.00	
Donations	\$ 335.00	
Raffle/Auction	\$ 717.40	
Smith's Lake Trip	\$ 223.00	
Interest	\$ 10.80	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$17022.75</b>	
		<b>\$26054.63</b>
Expenditure:		
Fair Trading	\$ 35.00	
Bank Charges	\$ 121.09	
Insurance	\$ 280.87	
Postage - Frog Call	\$ 836.74	
Postage - End Frog	\$ 27.10	
Postage - sundry	\$ 154.85	
Stationary	\$ 391.94	
Printing - Frog Call	\$ 1208.60	
Printing - End Frog	\$ 548.00	
Printing - Sundry	\$ 851.14	
Herpetofauna	\$ 1050.00	
Frog Call C. D.'s	\$ 886.00	
Calendars & Jewellery	\$ 370.10	
Aust Museum Venue Hire	\$ 400.00	
Post Office Box	\$ 130.00	
Smith's Lake Hire	\$ 168.00	
Frog Tanks	\$ 1454.00	
Frog Food	\$ 218.70	
Easter Show Expenses	\$ 238.00	
Sundry Expenses	\$ 440.94	
Subscriptions & Memberships	\$ 150.00	
Telephone - Mobile	\$ 26.94	
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$ 9988.41</b>	
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>\$16066.22</b>	



With compliments Ken Griffiths



### FROG INFORMATION PROFILE

**Scientific Name:** *Litoria brevipalmata* **Common Name:** Green-thighed Frog

**Distribution:** This frog is found in coastal areas from around Gosford NSW to SE Queensland. It appears to be a lowland species, not having been reliably recorded from altitudes of greater than 400m.

**Physical Description:** Females grow to a little over 40mm in length, males to around 35mm. The back is coloured a mid to dark brown at night, but individuals will become very pale during the day. Individuals have a white or creamy belly. It has a conspicuous black stripe from the nose to past the ear and is distinguished by the vivid yellow-green colour evident in the armpit, groin and flank area. The males may have a more conspicuous yellow-green colouration than the females.

**Breeding Biology (including call):** This species breeds after periods of heavy rainfall (preferably 100mm in a 24 hour period) and has been recorded breeding from September to as late as April (December and January appear to be most favoured). At this time males congregate around temporarily flooded gullies and pools (and occasionally permanent dams) where they call from positions within 1metre of the waters edge. Calling sites can be on the ground or up to 40 cm above the ground on sticks, low shrubs or grasses. The call is a rapidly repeated set of quacks. Eggs are deposited as a raft on the surface of the breeding pool where they may remain for several hours before sinking. Between 300 and 600 eggs are laid in each cluster. Development is rapid and the tadpoles break out of the egg usually within 2 days of egg deposition. Time to metamorphosis can be as little as 35 days or take as long as 120 days, but probably averages around 50 to 60 days. Most importantly in this species, calling occurs for no more than 4 nights after the rainfall event and usually lasts only one or two after which all the frogs disperse. Breeding will usually occur only once a year, but two breeding events have occurred in very wet years. This leaves a very narrow period in which to survey for this species

**Habitat Requirements:** This species is usually located breeding in areas of moist vegetation communities (including rainforest) in the south of its range, but towards Queensland may use more open dry forests. The vegetation communities surrounding the sites can be quite complex. A rainforest understorey is common and introduced species can be prevalent. The presence of *Melaleucas* (paperbarks) may also be indicative as they are often present on boggy grounds that flood easily which mark good breeding sites. Breeding sites are often based around old ox-bow lakes, but any depression that floods can be used, including man-made sites. They appear to prefer larger ephemeral water bodies with sites of at least 10X5 metres being commonly used. Frogs spend the daylight hours hiding in leaf litter or under low vegetation around the breeding site. At night they actively move around the leaf litter and within low vegetation; an observation consistent with the "ground dwelling" body shape of the species. Their diet is unknown, but most likely consists of small invertebrates.

**Similar Species:** This species is similar in size and shape to both Lesueur's Frog (*Litoria lesueuri*) and the Broad-palmed Frog (*Litoria latopalmata*), but can be distinguished from them by the yellow-green colour in the armpits and groin. The stripe on Lesueur's Frog also does not enclose the ear drum and some populations of the Broad-palmed Frog have a splotchy back pattern. The call of the Broad-palmed frog is similar, but of a different pitch, whereas that of Lesueur's Frog is very different being a series of soft purrs.

With compliments Frank Lemckert



# 50th Anniversary Conference on Captive Husbandry and Conservation of Reptiles and Amphibians



The Australian Herpetological Society was founded (as The Australian Reptile Club) in 1949. To mark the 50th anniversary of the Society we will host a three day conference which will take place on 2, 3 & 4 October 1999.

Days 1 and 2 will provide for presentation of papers. Day 3 will take in a visit to the new Australian Reptile Park at Somersby with a BBQ lunch.

Keynote speakers will be:

**Dr Harold Cogger**, formerly of the Australian Museum, a very experienced herpetologist, field researcher and author of *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia*. Now in its 5th edition it is the definitive work on Australian herpetofauna.

**David Barker** of VPI Pythons, a world authority on python care and reproduction, and co-author of the widely acclaimed *Pythons of the World: Volume 1-Australia*. David and his wife Tracy manage the largest collections of pythons in the world and breed many rare and interesting species at their facility in Texas, USA.

A 50th anniversary dinner and post-conference field trips are other likely events.

An invitation is extended to reptile/frog keepers and herpetologists to attend this Conference and to present papers. Papers will be of 15 minutes duration including discussion.

The Organising Committee comprises **Daniel Holloway, Adam Jones, Paul Jones, Brett Peters, Glenn Shea & Gerry Swan**.

If you are interested in attending please complete the following portion of this notice and return it to the Organising Committee by 31 January 1999. Future mailings will only go to those persons who have indicated an interest in attending.

Enquiries phone Daniel Holloway (02) 9544 6492 or email [rego@ozherps.zipworld.com.au](mailto:rego@ozherps.zipworld.com.au)

## 50th Anniversary Conference on Captive Husbandry and Conservation of Reptiles and Amphibians

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for mailings \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in attending the Conference

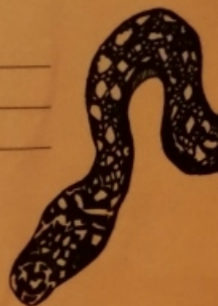
I am interested in presenting a paper

I would be interested in attending a Conference dinner

I would be interested in a possible post-Conference field trip within NSW

What region would interest you most \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to: 50th Anniversary Conference Organising Committee  
PO Box 1099 Sutherland NSW 1499





## HERPETOLOGICAL EDUCATION ON AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES PROJECT

**A**mphibians and reptiles seem to have unique problems in their struggle to co-exist with people since many people express a phobic reaction to the very sight of them. It is yet unclear how mate, culturally pervasive, or extreme this attitude is today. Are attitudes changing? The following simple survey form is an attempt to establish a statistical benchmark on contemporary attitudes towards amphibians and reptiles. The results will be relevant to: a) developing more effective methods in herpetological education in schools; b) developing a means by which the success of herpetological education programmes in schools can be evaluated; c) improving the effectiveness of conservation actions and associated public relations campaigns, and; d) providing a statistical benchmark to which future surveys may be compared in order to monitor shifts in the perceptions of the general public towards amphibians and reptiles.

The Survey: Please do the following and ask everyone to be BRUTALLY HONEST:

1) It is very important that the teacher who presents this survey form to the class and explains how to fill it out does not communicate any personal biases to the students, e.g. nervous giggling, facial expressions, etc. Students may look to the teacher for a clue as to what is the appropriate or "right" answer and the teacher's attitude could thus bias the results.

2) Be sure to see that the grade level, age and sex of the student or teacher are filled in at the bottom of the form. It is important that all of the appropriate categories are checked.

3) After the survey forms are completed for one class, please put that set of forms in a separate envelope marked with the school's name and city. Each set may also be stapled or clipped together.

4) Please have the teaching staff complete the form as well. Remember, the results are anonymous. The names of the teachers or students are not required.

Thank you very much in advance for participating in this survey. It may appear to be an overly simplistic approach, but I assure you that the results will be extremely valuable to understanding the psychological and cultural dimensions of herpetological education. The results will be published in an up-coming book and will be presented at various international conferences.

To save on postage, completed data forms can be forwarded to Ray Nias at the WWF office in Sydney.

## Attention Teachers! SURVEY ON PAGE 7

We are looking for teachers, Years 1-12, to take part in an international survey on student and teacher attitudes towards amphibians and reptiles. Attached are copies of the instruction sheet and survey form. It is quick and simple to fill out the forms and it is providing us with a lot of scientifically useful information. Ideally, we would like to get all of the students and teachers at any particular school to take part, but at the very least we need completed forms from whole classrooms. Each student needs to fill out one survey form, and the more teachers who will take part, the better. Your co-operation will be extremely helpful in our attempt to monitor student attitudes, improve teaching methods, and better understand our approaches to environmental education. Thank you very much for any and all assistance.

Stan A. Orchard, Research Associate, Natural History Section, Royal British Columbia Museum  
Chairman, Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network, National Co-ordinator for Canada and Provincial Co-ordinator for British Columbia, IUCN/SSC Task Force on Declining Amphibian Populations in Canada (DAPCAN),  
1745 Bank Street, Victoria, British Columbia,  
V8R 4V7 Tel/Fax: 250-595-7556  
E-mail: sorchard@islandnet.com



### The Far Side By GARY LARSON



"Throw him in the swamp? You idiot!  
That's the first place they'll look."

With compliments the NSW North Coast Frog Study

# What do you think about these animals?



Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Frogs & Tadpoles



Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Salamanders



Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Lizards



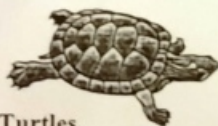
Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Poisonous Snakes



Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Harmless Snakes



Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Turtles



Really Like  Just OK  Really Hate  Don't know  
😊 😐 😞 ?

Alligators and Crocodiles

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female  Student  Teacher

## The Frog by R. E. Estes

And now begins the ever quest  
To hunt for food without a rest.

As from the bottom of the bog  
Comes to the surface one small frog.

A great old oak lies on it's side  
Where once it stood in all it's pride.

The underside, dark, deep and cold,  
Does harbor one Large Mouth so bold.

With silent cunning does he wait  
To be the sealer of some fate.

For every insect, mouse or frog  
Will he see from below this log.

The frog now sit's on lily pad,  
And waits the fly he wish he had.

He's not so old this frog you see,  
For by the count he's only three.

But even so he's learned a lot,  
Like when to swim and when to not.

And though there is no way to know,  
The great old bass waits down below.

He can't afford to take a chance  
And so appears within a trance.

Yet when a gnat flies out of range  
his leap is quick, too late to change.

The splash he makes seems great to him,  
Yet even so he must not swim.



The widening ripples circle out  
And in their silence do they shout

Of a presence who may indeed  
Be tempting for a bass to feed.

And then as stillness comes at last  
To shore he makes so very fast.

His legs give out a powerful kick,  
The fish's tail gives answering flick.

The frog he owes his life to fate;  
The bass was just one second late.

The bass breaks through into the air,  
For one more chance he's not a prayer.

His rise through water was observed;  
The hawk's great dive was not reserved.

Before the air could tear his lung  
He felt the talon that had clung.

And in the soft mud near the shore  
The frightened frog lies still once more.

All day long he'll keep this place  
And venture forth the night to face.

He's learned a lot in this one day,  
But even so does not feel gay.

He must be wise and bide his time,  
Or else he'll end while in his prime.

From the Courier Mail

Swamp



They'll have a fab time in the tub  
with these bath pillows, \$19.95 each  
from Holy Sheet!, 02 9810 3091.  
THE SUN-HERALD — TEMPO  
May 23, 1999

It isn't  
easy  
being  
green.





## FUNDING FROM OSRAM

**C**ocktail party in may at Osram Australia's HQ : 50 guests, soft music, dimmed lights. On the polished boardroom table a tank full of frogs, some rocks and driftwood, some jungle stuff. But almost no business talk - everybody was loving the frogs to bits! And as if they were trained, the frogs were on their best behaviour, calling their little hearts out.

As the evening's special event, the M.D. Klaus Engelhard had a \$20 000 cheque up his sleeve. (Behind his back, actually, it was a large cardboard replica). Made out to Landcare, but as the first year's grant for the FATS Group's "Osram Frogmobile Trailer". For the camera, Landcare's C.E.O. Brian Scarsbrick and I found ourselves tugging at the cheque from different corners. I hope I didn't look too desperate. Then it was time for me to pack the frogs up again. One day they'll be back, with their own transport. L.V.

## THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

**H**as produced charts which show the percent of U.S. species which are extinct, on the verge of extinction, and seriously threatened for a number of different taxa. When they do so, freshwater mussels are the frontrunner, followed by crayfish, amphibians, freshwater fishes, various plant groups, tiger beetles, odonates, reptiles, lepidoptera, mammals, and birds (in that order). The total % of species at risk (including those extinct) ranges from about 70% for freshwater mussels, to about 15% for birds, with amphibians running at about 40%. [amp@rana.cr.usgs.gov](mailto:amp@rana.cr.usgs.gov)

## FROG POND WORKSHOP

**O**n Saturday, October at Mosman Council. All day (10 am - 4 pm). Venue: Civic Centre, Mosman Square.

Arranged by Port Jackson Catchment Management Committee. Bookings (\$35 including course notes): ring Sue Hobley on 9818 1997. Content enquiries: ring Lothar Voigt on 9371 9129 to confirm date. L.V.

## FROGS AT NPWS OPEN DAY

**T**his was the first time my frogs and I ever went to North Head Quarantine Station. On 8<sup>th</sup> June, NPWS who run the historic site had their annual Open Day. And open it was - wide open grassland spaces between the barracks where once coughing sailors and sneezing passengers were isolated. The two nearest other stalls were specks in the distance, any others were right over the horizon. So all who came past couldn't fail to check us out (and to bring the posters back which the wind had snatched away). Blowy day, could have made anybody sneeze. But I wasn't going to cough, not in that place. The frogs, they were fine. L.V.

Anyone in Carlingford/ North Rocks area who would like to share transport to the FATS meetings please ring Joan Young 9871 4404.

## INTERNATIONAL AMPHIBIAN DAY

**W**ill be held Saturday October 9 and Sunday October 10, 1999 IAD's Mission:

- To support global conservation of amphibian populations and their habitats.
- To sponsor the International Amphibian Day show, thereby promoting conservation, proper husbandry, legal and ethical commerce, and captive breeding of amphibians.
- To promote international discourse among amphibian enthusiasts.

The MARS Preservation Fund preserves biological diversity through the purchases of critical habitat. Now in our seventh year, we have saved 2,528.5 acres, land that will forever be protected. Telephone (609) 926-5944 (USA) 241 E. Colonial HWY Hamilton, VA 20158 USA Email [fishfolks@worldnet.att.net](mailto:fishfolks@worldnet.att.net)

## GARAGE FOR FROGMOBILE NEEDED

**D**o you live in the Eastern Suburbs and would like a trailer full of frogs in your garage? The Frogmobile trailer will need secure parking. There will be frogs inside, in fancy display cages that are running on automatic - cleaning, lights, heating, cooling etc. I will come to stock the cages with food once a week, and the garage owner would need to do a brief midweek inspection and maybe a feed (but no maintenance). FATS pays for the electricity. In return for the garage, you will have 3 large and 6 small cages with frogs in your home, for your family to enjoy.

The river tank will be 2.4 m long, the rainforest and the rockface cages will be 1.1 m high, with waterfalls, cascading ponds, mistmakers, rainbars and spray jets. When garaged, they will run on timers and standby power only, but you will have an override button to start the spotlights and waterfalls. There will also be a few baby turtles and fish and tadpoles in there. (Yes, and it's designed to be driven around without sloshing! And to clean itself without the mealworms getting wet or the crickets drowning.)

I will start fitting the trailer out in November or December and would use the garage as a workshop for the first few months. As I'm also putting a note for a garage in the local paper, please ring me on 9371 9129 soon. L.V.

## A COMBINATION OF FACTORS

**I**ncluding a decrease in frog populations has led to more confrontation between snakes, spiders and humans. The Australian Reptile Park near Gosford has been under increased pressure to provide snake and funnel web spider venom for Commonwealth Serum Laboratories' antivenom production. The anti venom saves about 300 lives each year. Increased wet weather has encouraged spiders to leave their nest and a declining frog population is unable to keep spider numbers down. Carl Spears

# Green and golden bell frog numbers soaring

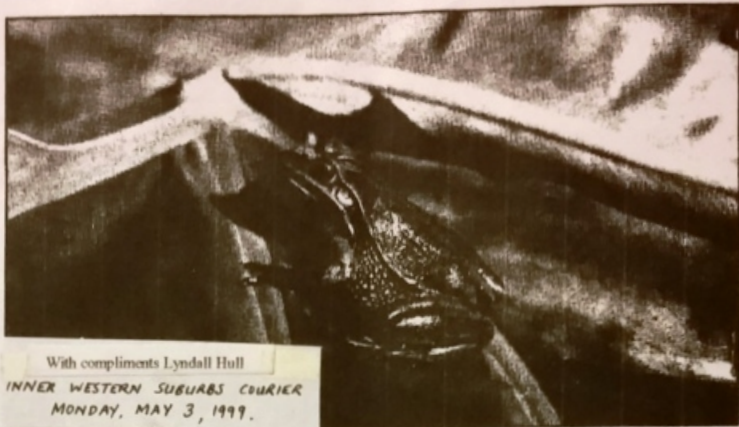
By ANDREW PAPADOTOS

SMALL by nature but big in numbers — that was the result of a survey by the Olympic Co-ordination Authority (OCA) which shows an estimated 980 green and golden bell frogs now call the Olympic site home.

The numbers should please environmentalists and the OCA after it spent almost \$1 million during the past four years on environmental programs for the frogs.

Numbers have doubled since 1995 in Australia's largest development site due in part to a specially designed frog fence which provides a protective barrier between the site and the breeding habitat.

However, even with



With compliments Lyndall Hull  
INNER WESTERN SUBURBS COURIER  
MONDAY, MAY 3, 1999.

**Leap frog:** The green and golden bell frog numbers have swelled at their home near the main Olympic site.

Photo: ROSS WILLIS

the best protection frog numbers are expected to fluctuate between seasons as they are subject to natural predators such as migratory birds.

As a result of the figures, the National Parks and Wildlife Service has given the go-ahead for the creation of further breeding sites next year.

About \$650,000 will be spent constructing a new habitat and enhancing existing breeding areas.

"The OCA is going to great lengths to ensure the ongoing viability of the green and golden bell frog," OCA director general David Richmond said.

At the same time, the OCA is embarking on a water conservation project.

"OCA's demonstrated success in creating new frog habitats at Homebush Bay is expected to lead to further success in these works over the next year and a growing frog population," Mr Richmond said.



CANE TOAD x 1/2

GOULD LEAGUE OF VICTORIA



GOLDEN BELL FROG x 1/2

## Kakadu may not survive cane toad march

KAKADU is a national treasure in danger. It is an area of vast biodiversity and splendour occupying about 20,000sq km. Its ecosystems are rich in flora and fauna. And all are under threat from the cane toad invasion.

Cane toads are right on the doorstep of Kakadu and have the potential to destroy forever these unique and delicate ecosystems.

What is being done to halt this invasion and destruction of the biodiversity within Kakadu?

It seems our governments have put the problem in the too

hard basket, doing nothing and offering platitudes that

change has always happened to Kakadu.

Yes it has, but not the destruction that is being threatened — Kakadu's fragile ecosystems cannot withstand cane toad venom.

If the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and other foreign interests are concerned about Kakadu then they should be lobbying the federal and Territory governments to do all they can to halt this invasion and potential destruction of the pristine wilderness.

PAM NUNN  
Nightcliff, NT



**Dr Michael Archer**, the director of the Australian Museum was reported in the Sun Herald as saying that he wanted more people to consider keeping native animals, including frogs, as pets. Dr Archer said people would feel they had something special and precious and therefore look after it. He said however that people may need special training before taking on the care of a native animal. Dr Archer is a paleontologist and former curator at Queensland Museum.

Currently, it is illegal to keep most native species without a permit. A licence system for frog keepers was recently enacted in NSW. The Sun Herald reported that many pet, wildlife and academic authorities argue for subsidised native animal breeding to repopulate the natural environment. Dr Archer said that if authorities do not teach close interest in animal welfare, the animals will be lost. Authorities would need to train people to look after the animals, but first laws would have to change to allow people to have native animals said Dr Archer. **Carl Spears**

With compliments  
Central Coast Reptile & Frog group



## BUGGED!

There are no flies on Martyn Robinson, who uses an army of creepy-crawly critters to keep pests at bay

### ONE OF A KIND

Photograph by Robin Sellick

14/6/99 WHO

Over a cacophony of froggy chirrups and sloshing water, Martyn Robinson's voice on his answering machine tells callers that he's up to his neck. "The house is full of swamp water," he cries. "There are frogs everywhere, we can't get to the phone." He'll return your call as soon as "we shovel out all the frogs."

That'll never happen. For the Australian Museum naturalist is a loving landlord to all creatures small and slimy, and has turned his North Sydney home into a haven for frogs, slugs, lizards and spiders. Robinson, 43, cossets his "pets" and in return

they devour grime and pests. Result: the house he shares with partner Lynne McNairn gleams.

In the bathroom, an army of garden slugs snack on mould. As a skink scuttles from behind the fridge patrolling for bugs, Robinson says that downstairs there are "three green tree frogs which feast on roaches. Dozens of spiny leaf insects prune the plants." In his rainforest backyard are pitcher plants to ambush Argentine ants, and a beehive. "The bees are stingless and very polite," he says. Their honey tastes like sweet, fresh lemons.

McNairn, 41, is "mostly happy with the bugs and the freezer full of

dead birds and reptiles" the public sends for classification. But she put her foot down when he brought home a huntsman spider to nab flies and it holed up in her sweater.

London-born Robinson migrated with his family to Sydney in 1959. Around Walgrove migrant hostel he found "frogs, leeches ... I didn't develop many other interests after that." At 16 he was working casually for the Australian Museum and in 1982 became a naturalist there. "I don't know anyone who carries in his head as much natural history information," says Densy Clyne, a highly regarded expert in the same field.

"We all like contact with nature. I go one step further," says Robinson, who is proud that his home is a showcase for biodiversity. "Provide what animals require, a place to live, and they'll adapt and make your work less. It's a bit lazy," he smiles, "but it's entertaining."

• JULIE BEUN-CHOWN

"Kids in the street come and ask him about things they find," says partner Lynne McNairn of Martyn Robinson (with spiny leaf insects).

# NATIONAL PARKS WILDLIFE SERVICE

## FROG INFORMATION



### RECOVERY PLANS (in progress)

Green and Golden Bell Frog (*Litoria aurea*)  
 Yellow-spotted Tree Frog (*Litoria castaneus*) &  
 Peppered Frog (*Litoria papuensis*)  
 Stuttering Frog (*Mixophyes balbus*) &  
 Fleay's Frog (*Mixophyes fleayi*) &  
 Giant Barred Frog (*Mixophyes iterata*)  
*Litoria booroolangensis*;  
 Spotted Frog (*Litoria spenceri*);  
 Southern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*);  
 Northern Corroboree Frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*);

### Contact (Phone No.)

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 Michael Murphy (Northern Zone) 6659 8265  
 Nick Sheppard (Northern Zone) 6659 8231  
 Rod Peitsch (Southern Zone) 6298 9732  
 Andrew Claridge (Southern Zone) 62989727  
 Rod Peitsch (Southern Zone) 6298 9732  
 Stephen Clark (Southern Zone) 6298 9731

### THREAT ABATEMENT PLAN

Plague Minnow (*Gambusia holbrooki*)

Graham Wilson (Head Office) 9585 6542

### STATEWIDE CANE TOAD WORK

Port Macquarie Efforts

Andrew Leys (Head Office) 95856651  
 Mark Parsons 6584 2203

### DECLINING FROG WORKING GROUP

Ron Haering (Head Office) 95856426

### NPWS WEB SITE

(to view draft and final recovery plans and frog profile sheets)

WWW.NPWS.COM.AU

## Quoll found way to owner's heart

ONE of them was a western quoll I called Little Man which I kept as a pet in my Perth flat along with my wife's two cats while I worked at the West Australian Museum.

You keep these animals alive, you discover so much about them.

In about 1968, I was keeping a western quoll. I had that animal for about five years. Some people call them marsupial cats but, of course, they are not cats, they are nothing to do with cats, they are an anathema to cats.

That was a beautiful creature, we called him the Little Man, he was about the size of a domestic cat. Everything about this animal was wonderful. Immediately, without any training required, he began to use a kitty litter box.

I had domestic cats at the same time. The cats were boring moggies — basically they slept during the day, they tolerated human attention, they were unpleasant, they sprayed.

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Vacant	Editorial Panel		

## Thank You to all those who contributed to this newsletter

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 (February, April, June, August, Oct. and Dec.) at 7 pm for a 7:30 pm start. **NO MEETINGS ARE HELD ON GOOD FRIDAY SO CHECK NEWSLETTER FOR ALTERNATE DATES.** Visitors are welcome. We are actively involved in monitoring frog populations and in other frog studies, and we produce the newsletter *FROGCALL* and *FROGFACTS* information sheets. All expressions of opinion and information are published on the basis that they are not to be regarded as an official opinion of the Frog and Tadpole Study Group Committee unless expressly so stated.

Australian Museum director Mike Archer tells Stephen Brook why he has kept native pets

When I was given this little ball as a kitten, it would fit inside the palm of my hand. I was allowed to keep it because I was part of the West Australian Museum and I was doing research on it, ordinarily it would be illegal.

In keeping this animal I watched it grow up from a little tiny kitten to a fully grown animal in the space of a year.

The quoll was absolutely stunning. From the first day

that we had it, it was the most animated, bright animal.

It was much more like a dog, wanting attention, coming up and leaping on your lap, playing with your fingers, at night coming up on the bed pulling the covers back and ~~saving~~ basically 'play with me'.

We just called him the Little Man. I can tell you one reason why, but you probably wouldn't be able to print it!

He has the most extraordinary penile apparatus known to mankind.

None of us biologists would have ever understood how extraordinary these animals were. They have almost a double penis arrangement, it's just stunning.

I could have only known that if I had kept this animal in captivity.

THE WEEKEND AUSTRALIAN JULY 10-11, 1999



Pals: Archer and quoll in 1970

