

FROG CALL

NEWSLETTER No. 68
November 2003

THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC
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you are invited to our Frog meeting

6.30 PM for a 7.30 PM start

FRIDAY 5th December 2003

Australian Museum, William St entrance

Left Lothar Voigt Frogmobile creator at the Frogmobile launch,
Centennial Park in November 2003

Below Arthur White, Prof. Mike Archer, Director of the Australian Museum,
Lothar Voigt FATS ambassador and Simon Marnie of ABC Radio

MEETING FORMAT for 5th December 2003

- 6.30 pm A small number of frogs are ready to collect from the Frog Rescue Service. Please bring your FATS membership card, Amphibian Licence.
- 7.30 pm Welcome and announcements
- 8.00 pm Main Speaker: Arthur White "How can a widespread, rapidly breeding species be endangered? The plight of Green and Golden Bell Frogs"
Alistair MacDougall: Short Video and description of his trip with the research team to Broughton Island to study Green and Golden Bell Frogs.
Lothar Voigt: Captive Care of Your Frog
- 9.30 pm 5 Favourite Slides (Please bring along any froggy slides that you would like to show)
- 9.45 pm Auction and drawing of door prize
- 10.00 pm Tea and Coffee

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The Cairns Frog Hospital represents the first port of call for identifying many frog diseases. Frogs are losing their home to human development. They arrive pale, with lumps, lesions (spread by domestic cats) and numerous other symptoms. Deborah Pergaloti runs the unfunded hospital. It does not have the funds required for the medical treatment and hospitalisation of sick frogs. The FATS fundraising night to assist her, was a big success. Thank you to all those who contributed and bought auction items. Special thanks to David Antor and Arthur White for their significant cash donations.

We draw your attention to the plight of the Australian Museum and its director Professor Mike Archer. Funding cuts over many years have brought the museum to its knees, with no money for essential security upgrades. The museum cares for our Australian Natural Heritage. Our governments are entrusted to take a long term view over the protection of our natural heritage and what is important to our society. We encourage you to write or email your local, state and federal politicians, using your own words. Sample:-

*The Hon Bob Carr, Premier of New South Wales
Dear Premier,*

*The Australian Museum and its present Director,
Professor Mike Archer have important roles in
Australian Society.*

*The Frog and Tadpole Study group of NSW, one of the
largest herpetological societies in the country, holds
activities at least six times a year at the Museum. On
average 150 people attend the museum. Our society,
like others who attend the Museum are not registered
on the Museum's visitor list.*

*Our society is dismayed to see this venerable institution
being financially strangled and apparently
unsupported by State politicians.*

*The Australian Museum is a major repository of
Australia's cultural and natural history. It has been
dynamic in presenting Australia and Australian
Science to the world. The crippling funding cuts can
only make Australia look second rate.*

*Please reconsider the plight of the Australian Museum
and restore this institution to its right place as a
shining beacon in a multi-ethnic and diverse
Australia.*

Your sincerely.....name and address

Thank you to David Stewart for sharing his impressive collection of frog calls with us and for his secrets in recalling frog sounds by focussing on their photos whilst listening to their calls.

Thank you also to Kirsten Parris who presented her six months survey methods and results for the Great Barred Frog *Mixophyes fasciolatus*. (One of the largest surveys in Australia, covering 125,000 square kilometres). She described some of the 124 sites and the unexpected additional experiences of contracting scrub typhus and acquiring ticks. MW

About 40 to 60 Cane Toads, arrive in Sydney each year. They are toxic to cats, dogs and native animals. A Cane Toad mating pair can have 1,000's of eggs in long glutinous spawn strings, each year. This spawn (egg mass) is unlike native frog's spawn. Cane toads should be prevented from establishing colonies in Sydney.

About half the sightings of Cane Toads in Sydney have been identified as native frogs. Anything small and unfamiliar is sometimes stomped on or squashed. Misidentified frogs are usually native brown toadlets, Peron's tree frogs, various brown Burrowing frogs, Marsh frogs and Banjo frogs. Many are threatened species, some close to extinction. Tragically some endangered native frogs are mistaken for Cane Toads and are killed before we can identify them. Australia has over 200 species of native frogs and toadlets. Most are in decline, some are already extinct. The Sydney basin has over 26 species of native frogs.

Flemington is NOT a hot spot for Cane toad arrivals.

Cane Toads are NOT evil or ugly. They are out of their normal habitat (South America) and have no natural enemies in Australia. From our research, most Cane Toad hitch hikers found in Sydney, arrive in mulch, woodchips, bessa bricks and nursery material from Northern NSW and Queensland.

Collections of woodchips, bessa bricks, mulch etc can generate a heat when stockpiled outdoors and is a perfect place for Cane Toads to seek refuge on a cool night up north. Private transport authorities and woodchip companies should be encouraged to examine their practices of keeping landscaping supplies uncovered and outdoors and to see if Cane Toads can be removed or discouraged from hiding in supplies before products transported elsewhere. As Cane Toads can't jump or climb very high, there is an opportunity to raise or fence off stockpiles.

Please pass this message on, if you think you have found a Cane Toad DON'T KILL IT. Place it in a sealed container with air holes, add a little tap water. Use care when handling them as they have toxic glands behind their head. Do not squeeze them. CALL THE FROGWATCH HELP LINE ON 0419 249 728 for an identification. MW



Sun Herald 28 Sept. 2003



WHAT A FROGWEEK WE HAD!

Our Frogweek – the FATS Group’s Frogweek – was all in Centennial Park. (There were other Frogweeks too, of course, staged by councils and community groups, by the Australian Museum, even by a few shops, everywhere and all at the same time, and the FATS Group helped here and there, not content to just get the ball rolling.)

Anyway, there we were at Centennial Park on the 1st and 2nd of November, to show people our frogs, and with us we had the Frogmobile! Launched it. Opened it. And opened it up again, and then some more, until everybody could see how big our concern for frogs has become. They saw Alistair’s giant gorgeous frog photos at the front and back (1.3 metres between the eyeballs – beat that, somebody!). They saw Marion’s dozens of dazzling frog and tadpole photos on the Frogmobile’s side panels, covering 15.5 square metres. When these panels were winched up, behind them was another set of panels, with Martyn’s frog drawings on those.

Behind Martyn’s panels come the inner panels with the cut-outs through which you can see the frog cages. There is still some work left to be done on the cages; the water is not running yet; the tank at the back is a temporary one; the pond in the front drawer is not yet installed; and there’s a list of other things that still need to be done which everyone assured me nobody noticed.

Ceremonial words were spoken by Arthur over the Frogmobile. Mike Archer, the Australian Museum’s Director, gave a gripping speech, praising the FATS Group and praising Osram and ending up handing me an award they had conspired to give me. I must have squirmed with embarrassment; but it helps to know that I share that award with many helpers and supporters who all made the Frogmobile possible. (Their names are on a poster in the Frogmobile’s poster gallery. You will find a copy in this issue.)

Then Simon Marnie from ABC Radio gave a speech. Now, this guy is sooo funny. Seeing him in action how he warms people’s hearts to frogs is quite amazing. One is totally convinced he actually likes them! (He even puts up with me in his studio every few months making frog noises.) And he does give the FATS Group endless publicity. All for a good cause.



The next day’s highlight was a thunderstorm – driving rain and howling, howling gale. Everybody in sight fled under the shelter around the Frogmobile – not a soul was to be seen elsewhere in the park. The souls we had so fortuitously rounded up, we converted of course.

And the FM itself? After some quick adjustments it stood there in the storm rock-steady. I think bad weather is good for it.

If you haven’t seen it yet: It’s going to be at Manly Ocean Care Day on Sunday, 7th December. And we still need a few Frog Explainers for that day: 9371 9129 or 0419 249 728. L.V.



FROGWEEK AT BOBBIN HEAD, Ku-Ring-Gai National Park 2/11/03

Bushfires last year, rain this time!
Frog week was celebrated by FATS Group and Chase Alive volunteers at the Coast Alive Centre near the road bridge at Bobbin Head. The old kiosk was decked out with posters and tanks of tadpoles to attract the families who picnic in the National Park. Kerrie Yates kicked things off with a puppet show that she had put together.

A frog, (made by another volunteer, Wendy Klotz), a platypus and a kangaroo took turns to talk about the water quality of their stream and to try to discover the source of pollution that was worrying them. It was very effective in getting the children involved.

With the aid of posters and taped frog calls I then talked about the life cycle of frogs and described four common Sydney frogs as well as the cane toad. Margarita Clayton and the Chase Alive volunteers achieve a lot with their environmental education program each month and we are grateful that they invite FATS to join them each November. Wendy Grimm



FROGS HAVE 'REGIONAL ACCENTS'

Sound Familiar.... well who would have thought frogs have the same problem! The story? A UK student has been researching whether frogs have regional accents. She analysed recordings of frog croaks using SPSS software to make this amazing discovery.

Frogs have trouble communicating with potential lovers because they all have different accents, according to researchers. The discovery was initially made by PHD student Julia Wycherly whilst she was investigating the origin of European frogs.

A follow-up study conducted by analysts SPSS has found that frogs' mating calls differ depending on where they originate. The researcher who conducted the study, Bernie Simmons concluded that if they couldn't understand each other they were not likely to mate.

This means that thousands of the amphibians are losers in love because they can't communicate with potential mates, reports The Metro. It is hoped that the research will help English Nature play matchmaker in finding breeding partners for Britain's endangered species.

Ananova.com, the national online news site -
http://www.ananova.com/news/story/sm_838315.html
BBC Online - forwarded on by Barbara Bohdanowicz



SMITH'S LAKE FIELD TRIP 26-28 Sept. 2003

We arrived at Smith's Lake after a long and tiring trip from Sydney. We left for the quarry ponds about a half an hour after we arrived there. When we got to the quarry ponds we turned off our lights and listened, for frogs. We heard *Pseudophryne coriacea*, *Uperoleia fusca*, *Litoria fallax* and the laughing call of *Litoria tyleri*.

We started our search at the top quarry pond where we quickly found an amplexing pair of *Litoria tyleri* and many *Litoria fallax*. After a more extensive search we found some *Uperoleia fusca*, *Crinia signifera* and *Limnodynastes peronii*. You can't underestimate the depth of the quarry ponds Grant learnt that lesson when he walked across it and sank.

We walked down to the bottom quarry pond and began to search for the elusive *Pseudophryne coriacea*. A few minutes after we got there Brad saw a giant *L. fallax* which we found out later to be a lone *L. jervisiensis*. We also found an *L. fallax* with a mangled arm. After a while we found a *Pseudophryne coriacea* then Matt found two more. Matt then found a *Crinia signifera* and a *Paracrinia haswelli*. There was quite a disruption as Grant tried to get his waterlogged gumboots off. On the track back we found a very big spider, a scorpion and a thing with lots of legs.

Then we went to the Grandis but a fallen tree blocked the path to the trunk of the tree.

We then went for a drive down Stony Creek Rd. The creek there was incredibly dry and not flowing. But at the second crossing we heard *Litoria phyllochroa* and *Pseudophryne coriacea* calling. We found three adult *L. phyllochroa* (one of them possibly a *Litoria barringtonensis*) and two mini metamorphs. We failed to find anything else except a Northern Leaf-tail Gecko (*S. swainii*) at the bridge.

In the day we played an enjoyable game of cricket and football which most of the group joined in on. People went out to different places Marion and friends went to search for tadpoles at the quarry ponds they found several species. Arthur and friends went to find fish and find fish they did. We went to Seal Rocks and went snorkelling and walked up to the lighthouse.

It was incredibly windy. We went back to the quarry ponds and found: *L. fallax*, *L. jervisiensis*, *Paracrinia haswelli*, *Crinia signifera* and *Limnodynastes peronii*.

On Saturday evening we drove up to the Twin Fire Dams...we listened.. we heard about three *L. revelata* and a couple of *Paracrinia haswelli*, a lot less than what we heard last time. But shortly after arrival we found a *Litoria peronii* and a fair few *L. revelata*, some *L. fallax* and a couple of *L. jervisiensis* (curry frogs). Not as many frogs as what had found last time. This was probably due to the wind. We headed up to the quarry but it was almost completely dry, our search was in vain.

On the final day we went canoeing around the lake. The wind was so strong it made it hard to paddle but we managed. We found a sunken model ship in the lake. After that Arthur asked us to write this report. We would like to thank Arthur and Karen White for leading another GREAT Smith's Lake field trip. **Written by Brad McCaffery, additional material supplied by Grant Webster and Matthew McCaffery. froggydarb@hotmail.com**

Light up your life with frogs!

OSRAM Australia is the sponsor of the OSRAM / FATS Group Frogmobile Osram's commitment to environmental corporate responsibility has enabled the FATS Group's long-held dream to become a reality.

We now have an educational vehicle that will help us to:

- make the public aware of the beauty of frogs and of the plight of many frog species,
- show, where it is known, what can be done to protect frog populations and their habitats,
- learn more about how to keep frogs healthy and breeding,
- raise funds for research into reversing the decline of frogs,
- raise funds for practical frog conservation projects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people and groups have assisted in putting the OSRAM - FATS Group Frogmobile together. Special credit goes to:

The late Klaus Engelhardt (M.D. OSRAM Aust.) for seeing the need.

Brian Scarsbrick (G.M. Landcare) for arranging the means.

NSW Agriculture, NPWS and the FATS Committee for giving the green light.

Leon Yates and Craig Late (Plaztec Trailers) for the meticulous construction.

Centennial Parklands for providing a secure depot.

Marion Anstis, Alistair McDougall, Martyn Robinson, Arthur White and Damian Smart for the great frog photos, drawings and posters.

Kosta Morava, Anthony Stimson, Alice Voigt, Punia Jeffery, Jackie Birch, Monica & Bill Wangmann, Matthew Kemplay-Hill, Barbara Bohdanowicz and Wendy Grimm for help and support in many ways.

Louise Voigt and the many FATS members and others whose encouraging comments and helpful advice kept the project going.

Simon Marnie and James O'Brien (ABC Radio), Mike Archer (Director, Australian Museum) and all those others in the public's eye, for keeping frogs on the agenda.

Gareth Young and the Bannerama staff for taking so much care. Jacki Salkeld for donating captive-bred Magnificent Green Tree Frogs. The many Frog Explainers who are volunteering their time to you. And to Harald Ehmann, who started not only the FATS Group but the whole idea of a Frogmobile way back in 1992.

Lothar Voigt Educational Nature Displays and FATS Group

A special thank you to Lothar Voigt who designed the Frogmobile, prepared concept plans, co-ordinated building the trailer, cages and life support; organised cage construction; frog housing at home base; project management, construction and maintenance phases. MW

SUPPORT FROG CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

You can contribute to frog projects in several ways. It need not cost you much at all.

- Become a member of the FATS Group. Your membership fee helps us take on and support more environmental and educational projects. (And it gives you heaps of interesting things, and even some useful ones.)
- If you are a supplier of goods or services, consider offering a discount to FATS members. It gives our members another reward for supporting frog projects and with over 500 FATS members, it might not be bad for your business either.
- Make a donation, however small, to one of the frog conservation projects. With any major donation, you (or your business) will also be acknowledged on the Frogmobile itself. Please see the Frog Explainer for details.
- You may be able to donate a bit of your time instead. Give us a hand with mailouts. Help doing a frog survey. Give a frog talk to your gardening club. Become a Frog Explainer. We will show you how. LV

MYSTERY TADPOLE

Instead of a mystery frog, we are testing you with a mystery tadpole this month. The five clues are below, and as per usual, you can fill in your entry form at the next meeting for \$1. There is a prize for the winner.

1. I am a large tadpole
2. I have a very long tail with a finely pointed tip which I can waggle very fast
3. I like to feed near the surface of ponds
4. I have very big jaws in my mouth
5. I have a shiny green patch on my snout

Who am I? **MA.**



JOIN O'REILLY'S FOR A RIBBITING EXPERIENCE!

FROG WEEK 14-19 December 2003 O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse Lamington National Park, SEQ

O'Reilly's 9th Annual Frog Week provides the ideal setting for anyone keen to learn more about our lovable amphibians. Due to its range of altitudes and habitats, Lamington National Park plays host to a diverse selection of frogs - 32 species (31 natives) in all, including the cryptic Frog *Adelotus brevis* and the charismatic Red-eyed Green Tree Frog *Litoria chloris*.

Our regular expert leaders; Harry Hines (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service), Ed Meyer (University of Queensland), Naomi Doak (Griffith University) and Dave Stewart (Nature Sound) will be back as keen as ever to expose you to the wonderful world of frogs. Guest speakers include Frank Lemckert (NSW State Forests), exploring the impacts of humans on frogs, Rebecca Cramp (University of Queensland) looking at some recent discoveries about burrowing frogs and Gordon Grigg (University of Queensland) giving us the latest on the impacts of Cane Toads *Bufo marinus* in the Northern Territory.

Frog Week combines presentations with plenty of field trips so that we can all put our new found knowledge into practice. We will also be asking guests to participate in some activities such as collecting data for our research project on the Great Barred Frog *Mixophyes fasciolatus*. It doesn't matter whether you're a novice or experienced 'frogger'. All Australian Geographic members; stay three night and get a fourth night free. This means you can stay for all five nights of Frog Week for 20% less - certainly worth thinking about. You don't have to stay for the duration of frog week, shorter stays are most welcome.

FATS STALL, CARNIVAL OF CULTURES 12 Oct.
Ashfield Park.

Many thanks to Mary Hawkins (The Greens), Bill and Katherine Wangmann (who stayed almost all day despite being unwell), ADI Site St Marys supporters Bernie and Dot Laughlan and family, Alice Carter and Jamie Lawrence. We had non-stop interest in the stall, including new members. Over 40,000 visitors attended the park that day. MW



STUDENT FIGHTS TO HELP SAVE
THE GIANT AFRICAN BULLFROG:

A PhD student at the University of Pretoria is calling for people in the Gauteng area to help her work to save the giant African bullfrog from extinction. This frog, the largest frog in the world, is found only in a small area, stretching from Springs to Rustenberg. The South African Press Association reports, 23 10 03. Forwarded on by Alexahnder



THE MAN BEHIND THE PURPLE FROG

His encounter with a living fossil in the Western Ghats has created a flutter among naturalists. S.D. Biju, a botanist at the Tropical Botanical Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI) in Palode, hardly imagined that the three-inch purple frog he photographed was the last of the species that lived more than 65 million years ago. His find was reported in the latest issue of Nature. "Biju is a botanist and the evolutionary studies of the frog were done in Brussels by Franky Bossuyt," says T.S.Nair, head of the Conservation Biology Department at TBGRI. "Biju has collected information on native frogs and will soon publish a series," he said. The database is expected to shed light on 60-65 new species. Meanwhile, the purple frog has been named *Nasikabatrachus sahyadrensis*, after the Sahyadris in the Western Ghats. India Express News Service, October 19, 2003

FROG CENTRE KEEPS CLOSE EYE ON RARE VISITORS
Lemur Leaf Frog *Phyllomedusa lemur*

There are probably more Costa Rican lemur leaf frogs in the middle of Manchester than there are in Costa Rica. The tiny frog is so rare in its native land that the country's government thought it was extinct until Andrew Gray found a few by accident. Mr Gray runs the vivarium at Manchester Museum, which belongs to Manchester still a The Guardian, by David Ward,

SOFAR FROG & REPTILE EXPO SUCCESS

For those who did not make it to the SOFAR Expo, Brad and the gang from SOFAR put on a great day, and at the ideal site of the wetlands centre. There were far more reptiles on display than either of the two Sydney expo's had. The people were all friendly. The guest speakers, Gerry Swan, Richard Wells and Mark Simpson (Sugarloaf Vets) all gave excellent lectures that everyone appreciated. Brad, thanks for having us there. It was a fun day. And for all those that missed out on going, make an effort next year. It is definitely worth the drive to Newcastle. **Bob, Australian Reptile Displays**

Thanks to all who made our second annual Frog and Reptile Expo a huge success it was mad. Special thanks to Bob Whitey and his off-sider (sorry I forgot your name) for working super hard and putting on one of the best pit displays you would see anywhere. I had comments from many people about the quality of the info and the laughs they had while watching Australian Reptile Displays show Thanks again Bob. Special thanks Brad McDonald from Aust Reptile Enterprises for a fantastic display, Reptiles R Us and Gates of Eden Nature Centre and Richard Wells (Who needs to write a herp related comedy) Gerry Swan and his wife, Mark Simpson, Marion Anstis and Robert Wood. Thanks every one. **Brad McPherson SOFAR President**
bradmc@hunterlink.net.au

FROGS ON PROZAC

The lesson to be learned from frogs on Prozac. It is difficult to resist the temptation to make a joke about the news that Prozac is now in amphibians. **Flash: Frogs found to be less jumpy. But there remains a serious lesson to be garnered from a U.S. Geological Survey study of 139 rivers and streams in 30 states.** When aquatic species are found to contain small amounts of anti-depressants, birth control pills, and other drugs, hormones, steroids and personal care products, species are in danger and natural habitats are being changed in ways that we don't entirely understand.

We do know the source of these chemicals. We are the source. They pass through us into sewage treatment systems, eventually to be discharged as wastewater into rivers and streams. In Sonoma County, the treatment plant operated by the city of Santa Rosa releases wastewater as clean as almost any wastewater discharge in America. But it still contains traces of anti-depressants, birth control pills and other drugs that humankind is using with increasing frequency. As the city embarks on a new round of investigations into water treatment options that will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, these contaminants are a primary concern. So, it turns out, frogs on Prozac aren't so funny after all.

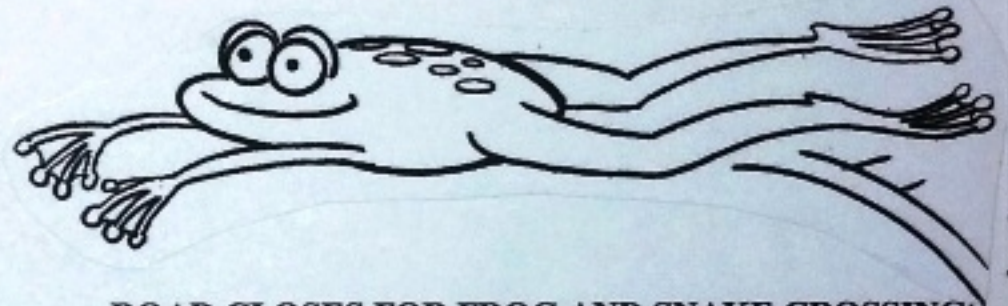
http://www.pressdemocrat.com/opinion/editorials/17ed3_be mpireb.html Kathy and Dave Biggs bigsnest@sonic.net naturepotpourri@yahoo.com Press Democrat Editorial From the Sonoma Wildlife discussion group

A GUIDE TO CREATING VERNAL PONDS

The USDA Forest Service, Izaak Walton League of America and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. are pleased to announce the publication of "A Guide to Creating Vernal Ponds". This easy to understand book contains techniques that the educator, private landowner and public land steward may use to establish ephemeral wetlands. Vernal ponds provide critical habitat to amphibian, reptile, waterfowl, shorebird and bat species throughout North America. The Guide (download available as pdf) and Order Form are available from the "Herp Center" web site <http://herpcenter.ipfw.edu/outreach/VernalPonds/index.htm>

ZOOS TO THE RESCUE

Zoos from all over the U.S. and Canada are joining together contributing thousands of captive-reared Puerto Rican crested tadpoles "to help repopulate a critically endangered toad" says the Lincoln Journal Star, AP 10/23. Only 300 live in the wild, "but that's 100 more than a decade ago," and the latest release brings the number of tadpoles released in the last decade to nearly 100,000. Unfortunately, "fewer than 1% survive - about normal for toads in the wild." Another problem is that only one wild colony exists, down from nine breeding ponds in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands and biologists are looking for additional sites. **Herpdigest**



by Stephen Crowley

ROAD CLOSURES FOR FROG AND SNAKE CROSSINGS

Why did the snake cross the road? On one U.S. Forest Service Lane, it had the whole thing to itself. Federal officials say Road No. 345 is the only government-owned road that closes to vehicle traffic -- twice a year, during migration season -- to protect reptiles and amphibians. As one endangered water snake made its way across the road, slowly slithering to its winter den from the swamp where it spent the summer, state herpetologist Scott Ballard extolled the program's benefits. "Had a car come by just then, that would have been one fewer female green snake," Ballard said as he stepped over the foot-long juvenile and continued his walk along the leaf-covered road. According to Ballard, the relatively warm climate of far southern Illinois beckons species usually found in the deep South like the salmon-and-black colored mud snake and green tree frog -- tiny creatures that hop across the road every few minutes. The U.S. Forest Service first started closing 345, otherwise known as LaRue Road, for a few weeks in the spring and fall nearly 30 years ago. It's been closed since September 1 this year, and is scheduled to reopen on Halloween. The road is also closed every March 15 to May 15 Thursday, **Herpdigest, October 23, 2003, WOLF LAKE, Illinois (AP)**

FROGBITS AND TADPIECES

Websites : www.peacefrogs.com
www.herpdigest.org

FROGLOG is the bi-monthly newsletter of the **Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force**. Articles on any subject relevant to the understanding of amphibian declines should be sent to:

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EVALUATION OF THE USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

The objective of the project is to develop guidelines for the selection (type), configuration, location, monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance of wildlife crossings. Funds available: \$500,000. Contract period: 36 months. **From: Kathryn (Katie) P McDermott Director, Technology Transfer/CTE, NC State University/Box 8601/, Raleigh, NC 27695/(919) 515-8034 phone/(919) 515-8898 fax www.itre.ncsu.edu/cte A National Cooperative Highway Research Program project statement has just been announced: <http://www4.trb.org/trb/crp.nsf/All+Projects/NCHRP+25-27> NCHRP 25-27:**

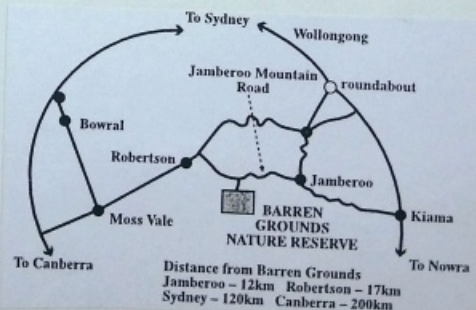
Bernie Laughlan taking part in a display and demonstration outside of Penrith Plaza, a Lend Lease shopping centre. Anthony Stimson brought along some frogs and other animals. ADI supporters protested outside of Penrith Plaza, drawing attention to Lend Lease's involvement in the destruction of the ADI site. They claim that the Green and Gold Bellfrog is on the ADI Site as well as the Cumberland Land Snail and other species.
Bernie laughlan bernieanddot@hotmail.com



WILDLIFE DISCOVERY LEADS TO STUDENT'S ARREST

Customs officers in Sydney have foiled an alleged attempt to export 47 native reptiles – the second case within a week in which Customs has stopped unique and protected fauna from being illegally taken out of Australia. The reptiles, including geckos, lizards, skinks and a snake, were found concealed inside computer hardware and were allegedly destined for the Czech Republic through air freight. Alert air freight workers who had been routinely x-raying cargo referred the packages to Customs officers, who examined three parcels and confirmed they were concealing native wildlife. Customs investigators then searched a residence at Arncliffe in Sydney's southern suburbs and located further reptile specimens, allegedly in preparation for export. The Minister for Justice and Customs, Senator Chris Ellison, congratulated the Customs officers and air freight workers involved in the reptile discovery. The referral by the air freight workers from Jupiter Air Oceania Air Freight

It follows the seizure of 213 reptiles and frogs by Customs officers at Perth Airport on Monday and sends a clear message to wildlife thieves that Australia is determined to quash the illegal trafficking of Australia's unique wildlife," Senator Ellison said. The specimens found in Sydney include 15 Shingleback lizards, 14 Velvet geckos, 11 Southern Spotted geckos, two Figtailed geckos, one Cunningham's skink, one Nobby Dragon, one Coral snake, and three Thick-tailed geckos – a threatened species in Australia. The reptiles are being held at the Veterinary and Quarantine Centre at Taronga Zoo in Sydney. Customs has charged a 25-year-old Czech male national on a student visa with the alleged exportation of live native wildlife specimens. The man has appeared in Sydney's Downing Centre Local Court, where he was remanded in custody to appear in Sydney's Central Local Court next Wednesday, 29 October. Under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, the maximum penalty for the offences is a fine of \$110,000 fine, ten years' jail or both. "These recent seizures, along with fierce ongoing scrutiny by eagle-eyed Customs officers, show that the Australian Government is working hard to ensure that our unique wildlife will be rigorously protected from unscrupulous individuals," Senator Ellison said. **Friday October 24, 2003, Customs Minister media release**



WORTH TESTING OUT?

I received a call about a month ago from a friend out at Richmond who had found a very sick *Lt. caerulea* in the nursery she works at. Her description was "skeletal thin, rubbery feel to the skin, not eating or interested in food, and some pink spots on the skin". I told her it could be Chytrid or a bacterial infection. Either way to use aquarium medication for fungus at the right dosage as a dunk and in the water bowl. I then suggested that she put in another aquarium product called 'Stress Coat' as that replaces to slime coating on injured/stressed fish. I suggested this on a hunch as those 'rubbery feel' diseases, I suspect, cause the death of the frog by loss of the slime coating. Anyway she said it came out of the 'stress coat' bath like a new frog - fed that night - and is now costing her a fortune in crickets & cockroaches. Might be worth testing out on any other sick 'rubbery' frogs you receive. FATS are interested to know if members have used it before.
Martyn Robinson martynr@austmus.gov.au

BOOK HIGHLIGHTS REPTILE HABITAT CONSERVATION

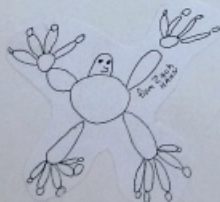
The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has named Queensland's southern brigalow belt a critical hotspot for reptiles. The organisation has launched a book in an attempt to highlight the critical importance of protecting habitat stretching from Rockhampton to the New South Wales border. The book *Reptiles of the Southern Brigalow Belt* is part of a long-term reptile recovery project. WWF Australia's Keryn Hyslop says the belt is home to dozens of threatened reptile species. "The acaskink, which is an amazing Australian species, is a big skink which can get up to half a metre long...you've also got the brigalow scaley foot - a little legless lizard which is only about 30 centimetres long," she said. "There's also the beautiful golden tailed gecko, and believe it or not there are several snakes...the death adder and the dunmore snake. We've done such a good job on these that they are actually threatened species now."

ABC Australia, Wednesday, 10 September 2003

SEED GRANTS FOR 2004

The DAPTF welcomes applications that address any aspect of amphibian declines, but favours joint applications that involve a partnership between herpetologists in developed and developing countries.

Proposals of no more than 4 pages should be addressed to: Tim Halliday, DAPTF International Director, at the address on the back of Froglog, or by e-mail to t.r.halliday@open.ac.uk check conditions



THE CAPE OTWAY CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION ECOLOG

~ realising the dream ~

It was our dreamto create and preserve a safe and natural environment for the indigenous flora and fauna, and to share these with people in order that understanding be gained, the animals and vegetation always protected, and the admiration for them never lost. After two years of hard work we have realised that dream and are proud to announce the opening of The Cape Otway Centre for Conservation Ecology.

In the heart of Cape Otway, sharing a boundary with the Otway National Park, the Centre provides a natural haven for wildlife and offers a unique experience for nature lovers everywhere.

The Centre is cosy and welcoming, offering fantastic accommodation, excellent facilities and wonderful food. Whether travelling with a friend, in a group, or alone, guests will feel welcomed and comfortable. Designed with field naturalists in mind, the Centre includes a library and a well-equipped laboratory which is used for workshops and ongoing research.

Details can be found on the Centre's website: www.capeotwaycentre.com.au or Lizzie or Shayne would welcome your call.

The Cape Otway Centre for Conservation Ecology Pty Ltd 635 Lighthouse Road Cape Otway PO Box 296, Apollo Bay, Victoria 3233 Ph: (03) 5237 9297 Fx: (03) 5237 9299 email: info@capeotwaycentre.com.au

MYSTERIOUS FROG EGGS FOUND IN CONNECTICUT

BERLIN, Conn. - Hurricane Isabel brought unholy high winds and lashing rain to the East Coast. It also dumped something almost biblical on Connecticut.

Primo D'Agata was startled by what he thought was hail smacking on his porch Sept. 19 as the remnants of Isabel moved through the state. But when he went outside to investigate, D'Agata discovered tiny, gelatinous eggs with dark spots in the middle. It had apparently been raining frogs. Since no frogs in Connecticut lay eggs this late in the year, scientists and naturalists speculate they may have come up from North Carolina or another warm location on the winds of Isabel. D'Agata is keeping two small, water-filled glass jars of the eggs to see if any of them will hatch. He said a few seem to have sprouted what look like a tail.
naturepotpourri@yahoo.com

NOTICE TO REMOTE FATS MEMBERS

If you would like to make contact with others in your area please let us know and we will try to assist with contact details. If you are in a remote or country FATS member, would you like to make any of your contact details available to people in your area? Information is not available unless a member indicates their agreement. MW



Mixophyes fasciolatus

THE TOADLET BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas a night close to Christmas, and all through New South
 A warm rain was falling, after long weeks of drought.
 It seemed much like a night in December--
 'Twas as warm and as humid as I could remember.
 With the gathering clouds of a big thunder storm,
 Conditions were prime for amphibian swarm.
 And I, in my ute, was driving home late,
 Not knowing I'd have an encounter with Fate.
 As I rode through the mist, over hills and 'round curves,
 My driving was fraught with occasional swerves,
 As with vigilant caution I scanned the wet roads,
 Taking serious care not to squash frogs and toads.
 And every so often I'd come to a stop
 (All the while at the risk of being pulled by a cop)
 To move off a *caerulea* or big bango frog
 That had hopped on the road in the gathering fog.
 And as I drew nearer my home warm and dry,
 The raindrops continued to fall from the sky,
 When suddenly something did cause me to veer.
 It wasn't a possum. It wasn't a deer.
 An unusual creature moved onto the road--
 It was dressed all in red, but it hopped like a toad!
 I slammed on my brakes and stared into the night,
 And I knew in a moment that something weren't right,
 For there on the pavement before me there sat
 A Holy Cross Toadlet, wearing a Santa Claus hat!
 I shook my head thrice and looked back at the road.
 It wasn't, it couldn't, it must be a toad!
 It had a toadlet's face, and it had a toad's belly
 That shook when it hopped, like Aeroplane jelly.
 It was larger than normal, and had an odd look,
 Like nothing I'd noticed in any frog book.
 My heart began pounding-I'd nearly squashed flat
 This "Crucifix Toadlet" wearing the Santa Claus hat!
 I looked at the Toadlet, and he looked back at me,
 Then he took a short hop, then another, then three.
 And afraid that he might disappear in the night,
 I pulled off on the shoulder and grabbed my flashlight.
 I leapt from my ute and ran after the Toad,
 Who by this time had made his way off the road.

He headed off into a fairly thick wood,
 So I plunged in as well (though I couldn't see good).
 Straight on the Toadlet hopped, through the darkness before us,
 Toward a slightly unusual summer frog chorus.
 And I thought that perhaps this was all just a dream
 As I followed the Toadlet with my dim flashlight beam.
 But I saw him ahead and continued to follow
 As he headed on down toward a dark little hollow.
 And I thought I could hear, as I followed along,
 The Crucifix Toadlet humming a Christmas Toad song.
 And through the wet trees I pursued like a fool,
 'Til I came all at once to a huge forest pool.
 And around the pool's edges (it gave me the creepers!)
 Rang a "Jingle Bells" chorus of hundreds of peepers.
 And almost I thought I'd been played for a joke,
 Then the Toadlet reached the edge of the pool-and he spoke!
 "Merry Christmas, my friends!" the Toadlet suddenly cried
 (And abruptly the jingle bell frog chorus died).
 "I bring you good tidings, your spirits to lift,
 And for all you amphibians, here is a gift!"
 And with that he reached into his huge vocal sac
 And he pulled out a scepter of red, green, and black.
 He waved it around like a magic toadlet wand,
 And things started happening all over that pond!
 In the depths of the pond the Toadlet planted some grasses
 For the *Crinia signifera* to attach their egg masses.
 He whipped up some leaf beds, I watched Toadlet make'em!
 As shelter for larvae *bennettii* (*Notaden*).
 For the Red-crowns and Banjos, he laid out some logs,
 And he tossed out some bugs for the *L. fallax* frogs.
 For Perons tree frogs to cling to, he made some tree pockets;
 Filled the pond with damsels, to feed hungry Rockets.
 For the *aurea* to sing from, he planted some reeds,
 And some hummocks of sphagnum for the *corroborees*
 And thus he proceeded, in his gift-giving mode,
 'Til at last he saw one lone migrant Cane Toad,
 Sitting all by himself at the edge of the pond,
 And the Christmas Toad stopped waving his magic wand.
 "I come to you last," said the Toadlet to his kin.
 "And what might I give you for Christmas, my friend?
 Perhaps some fat beetles, or nice tasty flies?
 "But the old toad just sat there (he looked rather wise).
 And he slowly and pensively lifted his head
 And he looked at the Crucifix Toadlet. Here's what he said:
 "There's only one thing, sir," I heard the toad say,
 "And that's for the humans to all go away.
 For long years untold they've tormented us all,
 Cut many a highway, built many a mall.
 For intelligent creatures, they've acted as fools!
 They've cut all our woods down! They've filled in our pools

They've polluted our waters with oil and pig feces,
They're endangering virtually all other species!

Us Cane Toads just want to return to our first home!
I beg of you, Christmas Toadlet, make all humans gone!

"But the Toadlet just sighed, and he shook his old head.
"I'm afraid I can't do that," he pointedly said.

"We're all part of Nature," I heard the Toad say.
"What happens will happen, and that's Nature's way.

""But we were here first!" *Assa darlingtoni* said
Who was guarding the eggs in his mossy mountain bed.

"That's right!" honked *Cyclorana*.

"We've lived in this State since our birth
For countless long eons--we know what it's worth.

The humans don't have enough sense to enjoy it!
They'd rather exploit it! They'd rather destroy it!"

"They're terrible creatures!" a *dentata* frog said.
"Nothing else will be safe 'til the last human's dead.

"For a long time the Crucifix Toadlet silently sat
With the rain dripping off of his Santa Claus hat.

He sat there so long I thought I'd go insane.
Then at long last the Toadlet spoke once again:

"They may think they are different .." he quietly explained
(And the longer he lectured, the harder it rained),

"But though they act different, they're really the same.
They're still living creatures--still part of The Game.

A frog and her tadpoles, or a man and his wife--
They are all just a part of the great stream of Life.

And if all of the toads and the humans were dead, Life
would still find A way," the old Toadlet said."
And besides," (he seemed almost reluctant to say) "I can
only give gifts--I can't take them away. . .

But I do have one gift that might help you to cope.
"And he pulled from his vocal sac one last thing: Hope.

"Hope," he said, "is the gift that I give to all frogs--
Hope that not all of you will be killed on the roads;

That there'll always be places--the kind that frogs need:
Moist forests to live in, and clean pools to breed.

I will give to all frogs an insatiable drive
To eat, live, and breed, and to try and survive.

And as long as the Earth's here I'm reasonably sure
That amphibians, somewhere, will somehow endure.

"The Cane Toad blinked once--the gift he'd accept,
And into the water he turned and he leapt.

And as the last ripple came up to the shore
The forest frog chorus erupted once more.

And with one final wave of his magic toadlet wand,
The Crucifix Toadlet turned from the ephemeral pond,

And he hopped and he hopped, on back through the wet
wood, And I knew that in moments he'd be gone for good,

And all that I'd seen and heard there on that eve
Would be nothing that anyone else would believe.

But he suddenly turned as he passed on his way
And I thought for a moment he'd have more to say.

He stopped at the foot of a huge Eucalypt tree,
And the Toadlet sat there, and looked straight at me.

Then at once he inflated his great vocal sac
(At the size of which I was quite taken aback),
And he sat there and let out a great, piercing trill
(I had never heard nothing remotely that shrill).

And then out from the woods flying straight at my knees
Flew a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny *Pseudophrynes!*

And the Toadlet hopped in, and he sped out of sight,
Leaving me all alone in the dark, rainy night.

I trudged out of the forest and walked back to my truck,
(The ground was so muddy, I almost got stuck).

And I slowly drove home, and made ready for bed,
With the voice of the Toadlet still in my head.

And later that evening, as sleepless I lay
Thinking over the words that I'd heard the Toadlet say,

It occurred to me that I would always remember
The things I'd observed on that night in December,

And I thought that outside, way up over my roof,
I could hear tiny sleigh bells (though I had no proof).

And I swear I could hear, as I drifted to sleep:
"Merry Christmas to all, and look where you leap!"

From asalzberg@herpdigest.org 26 December 2002 The following was posted on the PARC listserv by a Cynthia Meketa. I am very glad she did. In December 1999, this was written by J. C. Beane for Valeria Kay Rice (a toad lover). I don't know J.C. Beane or Ms. Rice and I hope they don't mind that Ms. Meketa posted it on the PARC listserv. And I also hope they don't mind that I'm about to send it out to the subscribers of HerpDigest. I couldn't think of any better holiday message for a herper. I would also like to meet or talk to J. C. Beane and Valeria Kay Rice. So if anyone has any leads please email at asalzberg@herpdigest.org or asalzberg@nyc.rr.com. (apologies to all for Aussie modifications, Frogcall editor)



Cartoons and sketches in this Frogcall have been provided by Stephen Crowley

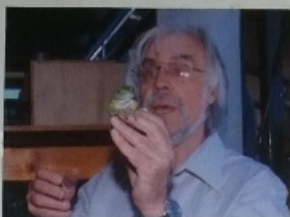
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FIELD TRIPS

Please book your place on field-trips; due to strong demand, numbers are limited (phone 9681-5308). Be sure to leave a contact number. Regardless of prevailing weather conditions, we will continue to schedule all monthly field-trips as planned. It is YOUR responsibility to re-confirm, in the final days, whether the field-trip is proceeding or has been cancelled (ph. 9681-5308).

December 13 8-30p.m. Homebush Bay. Leader : Glenn Muir.
Meet in the carpark near the cnr. of Hill Rd & Bennelong Rd, Homebush. (then short convoy to Homebush Bay site.)
The froglife of Homebush Bay attracted national attention during the planning of the Sydney Olympics. Tonight, we will explore the green spaces set aside by the planning authority. We will evaluate the conservation achievements of possibly the largest urban/recreational project in Australia. Glenn has secured special permission from the Sydney Olympic Park Authority for us to visit this site tonight - such concessions are not granted lightly. Glenn has been involved in monitoring frog populations at this site, so his knowledge & insight should prove invaluable.

January 31 8-30p.m. Darkes Forest Leader : Ken Griffiths.
Take Princess Hwy south, then take Darkes Forest Rd turn-off. Meet 200m from corner.
Sadly, many of our National Parks have become isolated 'islands' of habitat surrounded by an urban or agricultural expanse. Darkes Forest however, represents the northern extremity of a large, continuous wildlife corridor. Tonight, Ken will show us the very positive ramifications this has for the diversity of a region. The author of several books, including "Frogs & Reptiles Of The Sydney Region", Ken will show us not only the froglife but also many of those other elusive denizens of the reptilian world.

February 7 Barren Grounds Nature Reserve - Camp-Out. Leader : Darryl McKay
Situating in the Southern Highlands near the spectacular Illawarra escarpment, Barren Grounds occupies a breathtaking mountain-top position. As well as being an internationally recognised bird observatory, the numerous perched swamps are home to many frog species. Darryl's extensive fieldwork in this region has brought him into contact with many local field naturalists. As well as arranging visits to nearby private properties, Darryl has also secured an invitation by the Reserve's warden for us to stay at the comfortable quarters of the bird observatory. See newsletter article for further details.

In the event of uncertain frogging conditions (e.g. prolonged / severe drought, hazardous and/or torrential rain, bushfires etc.), please phone 9681-5308. Remember Rain is generally ideal for frogging! Children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring enclosed shoes that can get wet (gumboots where specified), torch, warm clothing and raincoat. Please be judicious with the use of insect repellent. - Frogs are very sensitive to chemicals! Your leader is there to help you achieve maximum enjoyment from your frogging experience. - Please observe all directions that he / she may give. Children are welcome, however please remember that young children especially can become very excited and boisterous at their first frogging experience. - Please help ensure that the leader is able to conduct the trip to everyone's satisfaction. Unfortunately, due to current insurance requirements, all field trips are strictly for members only. Newcomers are however, welcome to take out membership before the commencement of the field-trip. This situation has been imposed upon us and we regret any inconvenience.

Barren Grounds Nature Reserve Camp-Out. February 7.
Barren Grounds is a 1.5 to 2 hour drive from Sydney. It is accessed from the Robertson to Jamberoo road. The entrance to the reserve is sign-posted. Members may arrive anytime Saturday. Frogging activities will commence at 8-30p.m, leaving from the field studies centre. Members are free to return to Sydney following frogging activities on Saturday night or stay overnight in the field studies centre. Bring a pillow, linen/blankets or sleeping bag, indoor shoes, food & drink. Cutlery & crockery provided. Hot showers are available. Barren Grounds can become cold & wet quite unexpectedly. On Sunday we will have experienced birdwatchers on hand to show you around the reserve & its prolific birdlife. - Or if you prefer, spend the day visiting nearby falls at Carrington & Morton National Parks. While we are welcomed as guests of the warden this weekend, FATS would like to make a donation of \$20-00 per person for those staying overnight. All contributions will go to the Barren Grounds Bird Observatory. Bookings are essential & please advise whether accommodation is required. For bookings & further information phone 9681-5308. See page 8 for map

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We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year at the Australian Museum, Sydney, William Street entrance. Meetings are held on the first Friday of every EVEN month (February, April, June, August, October and December) at 6.30pm for a 7.30pm start. NO MEETINGS ARE HELD ON GOOD FRIDAY so check each newsletter for alternate dates. Visitors are welcome. We are actively involved in monitoring frog populations and other field studies, 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. Material from Frogcall MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED without the prior consent of the Editor or President of FATS. Permission from FATS and/or author/s must be obtained prior to any commercial use of material. The author/s and source must be fully acknowledged.