

FROG CALL



NEWSLETTER No. 72
July 2004

THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC
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*You are invited to the FATS AGM
followed by our normal meeting*

6.30 pm for a 7.30 pm start

Friday 6th August 2004

*Australian Museum,
William St Sydney entrance*

Frog ambassador Lothar Voigt

Photo by Holli and Annemarie Hollitzer



MEETING FORMAT for 6th August 2004

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 7.00 pm | Lost frogs are ready to display and collect from the Frog Rescue Service. People to take a numbered ticket. Please bring your FATS membership card and Amphibian Licence. Preference given to those who do not have a frog already. |
| 7.30 pm | Welcome and announcements and AGM |
| 8.00 pm | Main Speaker: "Herpetologist for hire: or a year of wandering in the Virginia Woods". A discussion with photos of amphibians of the Eastern USA - Elvira Lanham |
| 8.40 pm | Martin Harris: The WWF Frog Program. |
| 9.00 pm | Report on the 3 rd National Frog Conference held - July 2004. |
| 9.15 pm | Making sense of Lesueur's Frog- new species described and revised - Arthur White |
| | Mystery Tadpole answers and winners |
| 9.30 pm | 5 Favourite Slides Anyone wishing to speak about their recent frogging trips or experiences is most welcome to tell all. If you have slides or other images that you would like to show, bring them along as well. |
| 9.45 pm | Auction and drawing of door prize |
| 10.00 pm | Tea, coffee and relaxed conversation |

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WHY WE BOTHER

Because many people haven't seen frogs for a long time.
Because many kids have never seen one.
Because we want to tell the public and the media about the plight of frogs.
Because frogs need our help.
Because we can sometimes help people to help frogs and their habitats.
Because we can sometimes make a difference.
Because there is much more to discover about frogs.
And because we are the FATS Group. L.V.



LAST MEETING 4TH JUNE 2004-08-02

The FATS committee are asking all our members to participate in our frog rescue program.

Please distribute:

- * the magnet included the July 2004 mail-out envelope
 - * together with a copy of the accompanying FATS letter from Arthur White
- and give them to a local produce dealer.

There were two excellent entries for the polystyrene enclosure competition. Grant Webster was the winner of a Green Tree Frog, *Litoria caerulea*.

Barbara Bartee from Terry Hills and Dana Ip from St Ives presented case studies of the techniques they used to deal with chytrid outbreaks in their gardens. Lothar Voigt ran a video clip showing the methods used and medication regime to save the frogs. Lothar Voigt described the use of medication for sick frogs.

Martin Harris was introduced. He commenced with World Wildlife Fund WWF in January 2004. He will speak at our August meeting about the National Frog Program and WWF's partnership with Rio Tinto, which finishes in September 2004.

David Nelson spoke about the Jervis Bay field trip. We had excellent weather. We checked out the local beaches, historic buildings, sea eagles and light-house during the day. At night we followed the sandy tracks to inland pools. Eastern long necked turtles, *Pseudophryne bibronii*, *Paracrinia haswelli*, *Limnodynastes dumerilii insularis*, *Litoria peronii*, *Crinia signifera*, *Heleioporus australiacus* and *Litoria jervisiensis* were sighted.

The Jervis Bay field trip film clip produced by Alistair MacDougall was screened. Another brilliant record of FATS field trips. Many thanks to Alistair. All this talent amongst our members! BTW *No frogs were squashed in making this film!*

Remember the August meeting includes the FATS AGM. Don't be shy. Please feel free to nominate for a committee position. The committee can always use an extra person, "fresh blood" and new ideas. MW



THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, Sunday www.sundaytelegraph.com.au July 25, 2004



Photo by Holli and Annetmarie Hollitzer



Daily Telegraph 6 May 2004



Cutting a swathe through Australian wildlife ... cane toads

SAVING FROG WATER

We have all been told how to save water in this drought, at least in the house and in the garden. But how about your frog pond? And do we need more damp shelter areas now, or should we have fewer of them? What should they look like and which frog species should you target? Have your bog gardens, wet rock piles and marginal plant thickets become anti-social or are they now more needed than ever? And how do you reduce those water losses?

Your pond area loses water through evaporation, through transpiration by plants, through capillary action around the edges, through leaks and of course through your partial water changes. How can these best be minimised?

Your pond gains water from the garden hose or watering can, from any direct rainfall, and maybe from run-off although that's tricky. The surrounding area certainly benefits from run-off and rainfall, from any soaker hoses or such like, from ground water that is being drawn up through the soil or that seeps down the hillside somewhere under your garden. And there is rainwater from your roof, and there is grey water – how could you use those?

If your pond is tiny, schemes for making the frogs' water last are little more than a theoretical exercise. But can these same schemes be scaled up for where it matters? How about parklands, wetlands and drought refugia on farms? Where does it begin to really count?

Luckily we are all members of a study group. We ask things, do we not, and then observe. We wonder, or don't we, whether a pond covered in water lilies loses less water than a bare one – and then we drag those two bathtubs over and check it out. We are curious whether we can design a greenhouse or a shade house over a pond that keeps the humidity in but lets the frogs in and out. We look for damp froggy hiding places in nature and think about replicating some at home. And we convince our friends on their farm, or the local council with their stormwater catchment, to provide some shelter planks near the bottom of that almost dry dam, and maybe to put a small solar pump in the dam to keep that thicket of bulrushes alive. And then all we need to do is to see if it made any difference, and if it did, to let others know.

We just need a few ideas to start with. If there were only one thing would you like to see someone try out, which one would it be? Please write that one thing down. Email it to fatsgroupnsw@hotmail.com or send it to FATS (P.O. Box 296, Rockdale 2216) or just give it to a committee member at the August or October meeting.

Maybe we can get a discussion going, and a new *FrogFact* sheet. Before the next drought. L.V.



FROG RESCUE NEEDS YOU

I am pleased to report that the number of greengrocers and such like who know about our Frog Rescue Service is on the increase, thanks to our fridge magnets. And thanks to you, dear members, who have distributed them. Only yesterday, I picked up a Dainty from Harris Markets in Castle Hill, and I tried to give them a magnet as a keepsake for next time – but they proudly showed us the one they had already. Obviously, you guys have beaten me to it.

So, since we're onto a good thing, let's do some more. Those of you in the Sydney area will find a magnet in this *FrogCall*, together with a covering letter. (We usually can't rescue frogs outside the Sydney area at present.) Please take this magnet and letter to the largest greengrocer in your area, or to a supermarket with a large produce section, or to a large plant nursery. Give both to the manager. (Small shops also get frogs but of course far less often, and we have only a few magnets to go round.)

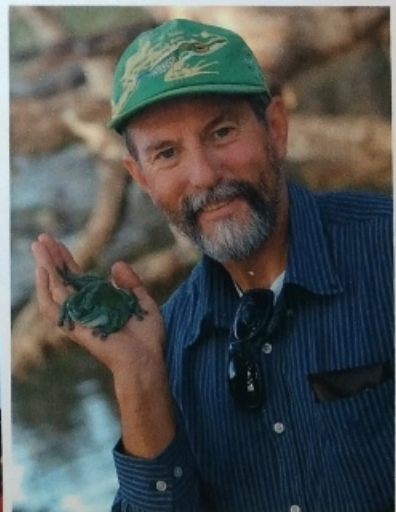
If you feel up to doing more than one shop, photocopy the covering letter first, or get me (lothar@ihug.com.au) to email you another one, and pick up a few more magnets at the next meeting.

Just two more things:

1. I know that magnet would look pretty on your fridge too. Set it to work, though. Take it where it would do some good, where it would rescue another frog or two.
2. If you want to become an occasional frog rescuer, just give us a phone call (Arthur 9599 1161; Lothar 9371 9129 or 0419 249 728). L.V.

Arthur White and visitors at Centennial Park

Photos on page 3 by Holli and Annemarie Hollitzer





Centennial Park - Frogmobile displays - Australian Giant Stick Insects
Photos (above and below right) by Holli and Annemarie Hollitzer

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Open Day at Australian Museum: Sunday, 15 August. Still need helpers. (You can plan your day to see us there and also at Centennial Park! We are splitting up into two crews. And next year maybe 4, then 8...?)

Frogmobile at Centennial Park on the following next Sundays: 15 August, 3 October, 7 November - 11 am - 4 pm. Again by the Duck Pond (near the kiosk and stone shelter pavilion). Free, but bring your picnic. Helpers always welcome. Last time we were there (4 July) we again had around 1500 people coming to see us! But we wrangled them all, with the capable help of the Nelson family, of Punia and of Jessica and her friends Shane and Sasha.

Frogmobile at Wildflower Festival: Last weekend in August (28 and 29 August). Ku-Ring-Gai Wildflower Gardens, Mona Vale Road. Free entry for Frog Explainers. Please ring me on 9371 9129 or 0419 249 728 if you can help.

The Wild Australia Expo at Darling Harbour is on the first weekend in September, Frogmobile and all. On the Saturday is also the concurrent Care of Australian Reptiles and Amphibians (CARA) conference. See their [website www.wildexpo.com.au](http://www.wildexpo.com.au) for enrolment details.

Frogtalk on Radio 2RRR (88.5 FM). Every Friday at 3 pm (15 minutes of sheer FATS Group during a one hour programme on environmental issues). L.V.



With compliments Bernie Laughlan ADI fight

WildAustraliaExpos Pty Ltd www.wildexpo.com.au

Q: "Today we found a Red-Crowned Toadlet drowned in our pool skimmer box. We have lived here in East Blaxland on the edge of bush reserve for 5 years ..."

This is from an email to FATS, asking what to do. Because so many people contact us with frogs, usually ground frog species that can't climb, coming to grief in swimming pools, skimmer boxes or other steep-sided death traps, our answer is given below.

A: It would help if you can frog-proof the skimmer box with fly screen. That should be easy for the lid area, but the water intake to the skimmer gets clogged too easily if there's fly screen across it. But it should work if you stick at least one good length of ag-pipe from the pool into the skimmer box and jam wedges of wood or polystyrene foam into the opening, around the ag-pipe, to secure it in place. Close any remaining holes around the ag-pipe with fly screen or shade cloth. The far end of the ag-pipe should be bunged shut or doubled over, and a weight tied to it.

Having a pile of rocks in your pool might get in your way of course and may not always do the job, depending on how steep the pile is, whether it reaches right to the top and whether frogs insist on paddling in the wrong corner. Try a few floating islands: For each corner, take a lid from a styro broccoli box, cut it in half, put the halves on top of each other, then cut a hole through both halves and stick a flower pot through, to be almost flush with the top. With a sharp knife, angle the island edges to make a ramp, and maybe paint the styro to a less offensive colour. Put a dense marginal plant in the pot; put a wide doubled-up strip of shade cloth through the hole around the pot and secure the top of the strip to the lawn with a tent peg - stops the island from floating away from the pool corner and provides shelter for the frog until it finds its way out. Keep the water level as high as it goes. If the plant gets too big and top-heavy in the wind, replace the 1/2 lids with full-size ones. If you do all this, please let me know how effective it was, in particular whether it appears to help with your RCTs. L.V.





Australia's biggest nature Expo
will capture the **wild imagination** of Sydney

Featuring the Sydney **frog and reptile** show
See live crocodiles, giant pythons, lizards,
turtles and amazing frogs

Experience entertaining
and informative
demonstrations
of our
unique
animals

**A
M**
AUSTRALIAN
MUSEUM

See the
Australian Museum's
prehistoric animals

...with a crocodile at

The following article is a corrected re-issue of the one in the last FrogCall, as promised:

FROG MEDICATION

FATS has been selling frog medication at our meetings for several years. It contains two main ingredients, an aquarium fish fungicide ("Aqua-Remedy") which is readily available, and benzalkonium chloride which is not stocked in normal shops. It now appears that Aqua-Remedy works well enough by itself against chytrid fungus, and possibly against other frog skin problems. This has two advantages: It keeps better on its own, and you can get a \$4 bottle from the fish food section at K-Mart that will last you for years.

So, we no longer need to take the green milk bottles to the meetings. But do get that fish fungicide. Here is how I suggest you use it:

As a preventative: Add eight (8) drops of Aqua-Remedy to three (3) litres of water. Put some in a spray can. Lightly spray frogs and cage daily. (Store the solution in the dark.)

If chytrid contact suspected (and for quarantine): Place frogs in a bare plastic tank for one month, with plastic plants and/or plastic hiding place. Spray frogs and entire cage daily; with five (5) drops per litre. Keep frogs warm. Keep the humidity up by partly covering the lid. Also use the same solution as the frogs' bath water every other day:



Big Scrub Rainforest Day 2004

Pour a cupful of this solution in and put the cage on a slope. Next day, pour it out through the closed lid and pour a cupful of tap water in instead. Third day, this solution again. And don't stick your ungloved fingers in, if you also have frogs elsewhere. You can minimise insects drowning if you cover the water surface with thin strips cut from a styro cup (better still, from a black styro tray).

In the meantime, completely sterilise the main frog cage and keep it uncontaminated. Read Frogfacts No. 8.

If sick: Ten (10) drops per litre. Spray twice daily. Also use as bath water, every other day. In addition, give them a Betadine bath on the tap water days, but only for 5 minutes for small frogs or 30 minutes for very large ones. Then back to tap water for the rest of that day. Use Betadine at 25 drops per litre, but the cage has to be well rinsed first.

With this regime, we still lose some very small frogs to chytrid fungus. So please ring me up if you have a frog with suspected chytrid, in case there is an update. L.V.

THE PORTABLE POND

Nomadic but want a frog pond?
No garden, only a patio?
Baby can't swim, but 5 cm deep water seems ok?

Then get a kids' wading pool!

- Lay a black shade cloth across it, put plant pots on it.
- Put some water in, and a few water plants.
- Put lots of plant pots around the outside.
- Pile leaf litter around the outside.
- Make a hole in the side, or push the pool's top down, so that rain can't fill it too high for baby.
- Shade it in summer (e.g. beach umbrella or sailcloth).
- Stick some banana peel partly under a rock or pot, to attract insects.
- Frogs will come by themselves and spawn in your pond. Wait and be patient.
- Put 2 or 3 little fish in to eat mozzie larvae (and to while the waiting time away.) Suggest White Clouds if urban, Pacific Blue-eyes if country.

Or simply get yourself a Frogmobile.
That's portable enough I.V

FEMALE CALL PREFERENCES

Photo by Holli and Annemarie Hollitzer

In Tree-Hole Frogs: Why Are There So Many Unattractive? In tree-hole frogs, *Metaphrynella sundana*, the fundamental call frequency varies widely between males. In field playback experiments, females strongly preferred calls from the lower range of frequencies found in the population. There was no correlation, however, between male size and call frequency, as is normally the case for anurans, so large males were not necessarily more attractive to females. Presence or absence of upper harmonics in the call had no effect on female choice. Tree holes with shallow air columns were more often used by calling frogs, and were presumably more common, than deep holes. Since male *M. sundana* actively exploit the resonant properties of tree holes for mate attraction, and high frequencies match comparatively shallow holes, the benefits of attaining acoustic matching probably select for high-frequency calls. In addition, males with high-frequency calls may be heard from a greater distance in the vicinity of torrent streams. Since the level of such noise in the forest varies in time and space, different frequencies may prove optimal in different contexts, thereby preserving the observed variation within the population. Having an 'unattractive' high-frequency call should be potentially beneficial only when calling males do not congregate, a condition that our data suggest is fulfilled in this system.

B. Lardner, Division of Animal Ecology, Ecology Building, SE-223 62 Lund, Sweden 1 M. b. Lakim is at the Research and Education Division, Kinabalu Conservation Center, Sabah Parks, P.O. Box 10626, 88806 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. Males Animal Behavior Volume 68, Issue 2, August 2004, Pages 265-272 Herpdigest 25/7/04



MILLION HECTARE CROWN LEASE SELL-OFF

The Carr Government is set to convert thousands of important leasehold land to freehold land. We must insist the Carr Government retains the moratorium on crown lease conversions. There is little time left. Please spell out your concerns and write/fax/phone/email to Premier Carr

Perpetual Crown leases have irreplaceable conservation values. Conversion to freehold title will not protect their values and is not in the public interest. Ask that the moratorium on conversion of leases to freehold be retained Write urgently to:

Premier Carr Parliament House Macquarie Street, Sydney Phone: 9228 5239 Fax: 9228 3935

Email: bob.carr@www.nsw.gov.au

Contact your local member if you have more time. Go to www.parliament.nsw.gov.au and click on members then legislative assembly to find out their details.

National Parks Association of NSW 9299 0000

Email: execofficer@npansw.org.au

Website: www.npansw.org.au

Nature Conservation Council of NSW

E-mail: ncc@nccnsw.org.au

Web: <http://www.nccnsw.org.au>

With compliments Matthew Kemplay-Hill

Mary River Magic WWF Wildlife journal Summer 2004



streamside vegetation and feral animals have put them at risk.

The group obtained TSN funding to implement a recovery project, in which they mapped threatened species sightings and confirmed the presence of the threatened cascade tree frog and giant barred frog.

A popular 'adopt-a-frog' program has spawned further frog surveys by school groups and led to the removal of introduced weeds, native replantings and landholders entering into voluntary conservation agreements to manage these sensitive areas.

Visit WWF Australia's website www.wwf.org.au for more information about TSN's work to protect our most endangered species.

Two inspiring projects in south-east Queensland are demonstrating the success of community collaboration in the conservation of threatened species.

Both projects in the Mary River catchment were funded by community grants from the Threatened Species Network (TSN), a joint project of the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust and WWF Australia.

Australia's largest short-necked turtle, the Mary River turtle, was in dangerously low numbers when it was discovered in the early 1990s. The ongoing problems faced by the turtle include foxes, goannas, wild dogs, pigs and cane toads eating its eggs, nests being trampled by cattle, habitat decline due to vegetation loss and the fact that it had been collected extensively for the pet-shop trade.

With funding from TSN, Greening Australia is conducting a campaign to save the turtle, identifying and protecting nesting banks, and placing screens around 52 individual nests. This includes a concerted campaign to provide information to landholders about how best to protect the nests in the future.

Queensland TSN Coordinator, Keryn Hyslop, said volunteers have already reported an increase in egg and hatchling production (528 juveniles left their nests during the last nesting season) and native fruit-bearing trees planted along waterways will provide a good food source to the turtle.

Not far away, a suite of other threatened animals are reaping the rewards of efforts by the Mary River Catchment Coordinating Committee, in the Kenilworth-Belli area. A number of threatened plants and animals, including the double-eyed fig-parrot, Mary River cod and giant ironwood live in the streamside rainforests of the Gheerulla, Belli and Cedar creeks, but weed infestations, clearing of

barbiegirl



It's not easy being **GREEN!**

- THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO!**
- Foster a frog until it's better.
 - Keep pesticides away from areas a frog may live in.
 - Hold a fundraiser and donate the money to an environmental group.

If you want to help go to www.fats.org.au or check out the Australian Museum.

Each state has different rules about keeping frogs, so make sure you check them first!

A CANE toad is the latest amphibian to have made the trans-Tasman hop to New Zealand.

After a frog was found in a salad on a Qantas flight, it has now emerged that a cane toad stowed away in the shoe of an unsuspecting tourist returning to the North Island town of Masterton.

Ben Molesi flew from Brisbane to New Zealand after a six-month working holiday in Australia.

Once it was realised he had inadvertently taken back a hitchhiker in his luggage, Mr Molesi's family contacted the Department of Conservation and the cane toad was humanely destroyed.

Frogs with attitude are no croaking matter Local Government Focus July 2004

New South Wales Sport and Recreation Minister, Sandra Nori, has praised the Balranald community for using the southern bell frog to attract more tourists to the region.

The Minister inspected Frogs with Attitude at the Visitor Information Centre during a visit to Balranald in June.

"The Balranald community has thought outside the box to position itself as a must see destination for anyone interested in frogs - animals that we sadly don't see enough of in the wild or in our urban settings," she said.

"The southern bell frog is a threatened species but appears in large numbers in the region," Minister Nori said.

"The people of Balranald have shown great initiative to recognise the potential of the southern bell frog to attract visitors to their region.

"During my visit I was told tourists had formed a queue outside the Visitor Information Centre over the Easter holidays.

"That is great news and shows what can be done when the

community gets behind projects like Frogs with Attitude and the work of local panel beater Roy Mann."

Minister Nori praised Balranald businesses for collecting money to help fund some large frog sculptures for the town.

She said Balranald was a great example of how tourism can be used to educate people about conservation.

"Souvenirs like frog tiles, key rings, T-shirts, frog fountains and sculptures encourage people to learn more about animals like the southern

Meat Katherine with her oh-so-lovely green tree frog, **Matey**. They are the best of... erm... mates! The sad thing is that frogs like Matey are in serious trouble. A high rate of land clearing and pollution is destroying their environments and a fungus called *Chytrid* is making them very sick. Frogs are disappearing from our planet at a scary rate. In the past 25 years, eight frog

species have become extinct just in Australia. So awful! Lucky for us, there are people trying to stop it. Superstar Katherine, as part of a conservation society especially for frogs and tadpoles in NSW, is working to save as many from extinction as she can. The group has regular meetings, environmental projects and field trips. Plus Katherine and her family take care of frogs that are and then find them a home. Nice move, Katherine!

32 Barbie Mag

March 04 Barbie Magazine

"...Balranald is not just the gateway to Mungo National Park but an attraction in its own right through the hard work of those who have recognised the value of the southern bell frog to the tourism industry..."



Minister Sandra Nori with one of the frog sculptures.

MYSTERY TADPOLE

Can you identify the mystery tadpole?

Write your answer on an entry form at the FATS meeting. \$1 per entry.

First correct entry drawn wins a prize.

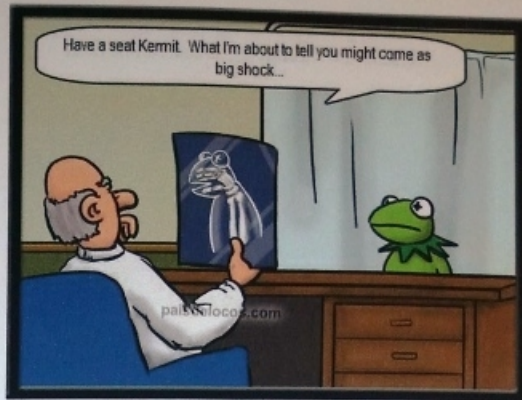
1. Find me from midnorthern NSW to the extreme east of Victoria. Swamps, marshes and ponds of the coastal fringe are my home.
 2. You'll know me if you've frogged at Smiths Lake and Darkes Forest.
 3. I'm the Pooh Bear of taddies --- kind of roly-poly (often found with a honey yellow colour.)
 4. My rounded snout and deeply arched tail fins give me my other nickname, "Bubble Taddy".
 5. I'm a monotypic genus.
 6. I star in "Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia"
- Punia Jeffery**

BIG SCRUB RAINFOREST DAY 2004

Now in its sixth year Big Scrub Rainforest Day is Australia's largest annual Landcare information and education event. Once the largest expanse of subtropical rainforest in Australia, the Big Scrub covered a roughly circular area where Lismore, Ballina, Byron Bay and Mullumbimby are presently situated. Of the original 75,000 hectares, now less than 1 percent - only 300 ha, of scattered rainforest fragments remain. The remnant areas contain a rich diversity of flora and fauna, supporting more than 300 species of trees and shrubs. At least 28 threatened species of flora and 22 species of fauna occur in these remnants. Their high conservation value is reflected in the inclusion of the thirty-two largest remnants in the Register of the National Estate. The condition of almost all remnants has steadily deteriorated over the years due to the impact of many damaging weed species that spread rapidly throughout the remnant.

Big Scrub Rainforest Day is an inspiring annual gathering and everyone is invited to join the community in celebrating the Big Scrub on Sunday the 5th of September 9am-4pm at Rocky Creek Dam, 15kms Northwest of Lismore (Northern News South Wales). Admission by donation

Anyone from local Landcare groups who would like to assist on the day are encouraged to contact Johanna Kempff, Landcare Coordinator, on (02) 6627 0120. bigscrub@rainforestrescue.org.au or visit the website <http://www.rainforestrescue.org.au/bigscrub.html>



With compliments Ken Griffiths

IMPROVED HEALTH OF NSW RIVERS UNDERMINED IRRIGATORS WIN - RIVERS LOSE

Water Sharing Plans developed under Water Management Act 2000 only returned on average 2-3% of water to river environments across NSW. Amendments to the Act, now before Parliament, further threaten long-term river health.

The Amendment Bill:

1. Gives significant long-term security to irrigators by giving them perpetual rights to water.
2. Does not recognise the need for environmental impact assessment of current licences
3. Removes the mandatory 5 year review of Water Sharing Plans which was pivotal to many agreements made during the planning process
4. Allows the 10 year plans to roll over with limited community review
5. Removes the concurrence and input of the Minister for the Environment
6. Completely ignores the complex needs of riverine habitats.

Our Rivers need 1% of extractive water returned to the environment every year over 10 years or until river health is restored. **ACT NOW!! To Save NSW Rivers: Call or write a letter to your local member radio or newspaper expressing your concerns regarding the amendments. Write to the Minister for Natural Resources, Craig Knowles expressing your concerns. Write to a member of the Upper House c/o of NCC We will deliver your letters for you. Rachael Young, 9279 0955 Email: ryoung@nccnsw.org.au Nature Conservation Council of NSW 9279 2466 ncc@nccnsw.org.au <http://www.nccnsw.org.au> To donate to NCC <http://nccnsw.org.au/support/ecofriends.html>**

Photo by Holli and Annemarie Hollitzer



IRANIAN WOMAN 'GIVES BIRTH TO FROG'

An Iranian newspaper has reported the controversial story of a woman who claims to have given birth to a frog. The Iranian daily Etemaad says the creature is believed to have grown from larva to an adult frog inside her body. While it is unclear how this could have happened, the paper carries quotes from medical experts who say there are human characteristics to the animal. It has been speculated that the woman, who has not been named, unknowingly picked up the larva while she was swimming in a dirty pool. The woman, from the south-eastern city of Iranshahr, is a mother of two children. The "so-called frog", as the newspaper puts it, has yet to undergo precise genetic and anatomic tests. But it quotes clinical biology expert Dr Aminifard as saying: "The similarities are in appearance, the shape of the fingers and the size and shape of the tongue." Medical history recounts stories of people who believed they had frogs - or even lizards or snakes - living and growing in their bodies. One of the most famous was the 17th Century case of Catharina Geisslerin, known as "the toad-vomiting woman" of Germany. When she died in 1662 doctors are said to have performed an autopsy, but found no evidence animals had ever lived inside her body. *BBC Monitoring*, based in Caversham in southern England, selects and translates information from radio, television, press, news agencies and the Internet from 150 countries in more than 70 languages.

With compliments Stan Orchard

SMITHS LAKE CAMP-OUT. OCT 15 -17.

Due to the commercial arrangements we have with venue management, we will now require all field-trip participants to pay **IN FULL, IN ADVANCE**. Bookings will be accepted only when accompanied with payment, and in order of receipt (i.e. first in, first served). This fee will be **NON-REFUNDABLE** except in cases where money is received after the field-trip is fully booked, in which case all monies will be returned. Once accepted, cancellation of the booking will result in **forfeiture of payment**. This booking procedure will also apply to all other venues that impose a non-refundable accommodation charge (e.g. Jervis Bay, Barren Grounds). We trust that all members will understand that this is in the best interests of our society. When sending cheques etc. please ensure you include advice on names, numbers & contact details. Direct all cheques etc. to the Treasurer. For all enquiries relating to this fieldtrip please contact Arthur or Karen White (ph. 9599-1161). **RW** The Daily Telegraph 18 May 2004

INSANITY STREAK



WYBONG CAMP-OUT. OCT. 1-4.

Wybong is located in the Upper Hunter Valley approx. 20 mins from Muswellbrook. Camping will be on private property adjoining the owner's residence. This enormous property ('Envirofund' site) has a substantial mix of habitat types & has already recorded koalas, brush-tailed wallabies & a host of unusual fauna. There are very basic bush showers & rent-a-loo facilities available, but members will need to supply drinking water. There will be BBQ areas & an 'outdoor' kitchen provided -bring your own plates, cutlery & kitchen implements. The Anvil Hill group will kindly supply a BBQ lunch on Saturday & Sunday. Following lunch there will be a guest speaker discussing aspects of the Anvil Hill flora & fauna. There is a range of caravan & motel accommodation in Denman village (5mins) or at Muswellbrook (20mins), but this will need to be booked privately - please, however, let me know if you are coming. (I can assist with some local accommodation details). In nearby Hunter Valley areas there are a number of good wineries (Cruikshank, Yarraman Road & Rosemount are nearby). We hope to look in on the work of a number of specialist groups & may also play host to some of their members as we look for frogs. Our leader this weekend is Danny Wotherspoon. Danny is an accomplished herpetologist & has been involved with this project for some time. We don't know what species to expect, but it should prove an interesting week-end! Bookings essential. Phone Field Trips Coordinator (ph. 9681-5308) for bookings, location details & all other enquiries.

Many thanks to our northern region advisor, Steve Weir, for 'stitching' this one together. We have also heard whispers that Steve has a few more locations & events up his sleeve! Watch this space! **RW**

HERPDIGEST EXTRACTS

Survival Of The Smallest: The human impact may now possibly be seen in "contemporary evolution", says the Christian Science Journal, 5/20. Scientists have found that by taking the largest fish and leaving the smaller ones to mature, taking rams with the largest horns, etc., is actually causing an evolutionary shift towards smaller species. Scientists fear this may eventually drive species that no longer have the capability to survive towards extinction.

A patient in southern China nearly died after being told by his doctor to eat six raw frogs a day in an attempt to cure his troublesome illness. The man from Meizhuo, Guangdong province, followed the prescription for 20 days, gulping down a total of more than 130 frogs to try to cure his cervical vertebra complaints. He eventually fell seriously ill and was told by surgeons the treatment had nearly killed him, according to the Hong Kong edition of The China Daily. The man plans to sue the doctor. 5/22/04 Herpdigest www.herpdigest.org

ENDANGERED SPECIES FOUND BY RESIDENTS

Giant property developer Lend Lease has been left red faced after members of the Australian Defence Industries Residents Action Group (ADI RAG), opposed to Lend Leases development of the 1535 hectare ADI Site at St Marys, took them on a tour of their own property to show them endangered plant species that they had either missed or erroneously mapped during the last ten years of planning development of the site.

ADI RAG has claimed for many years that Lend Lease's biodiversity assessments of the site have been erroneous, failing to record the existence and true location of several endangered species. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, after years of complaints from ADI RAG for failing to investigate its claims against Lend Lease, obtained access for ADI RAG on Friday (July 30) to enter the site to show Lend Lease and NPWS the whereabouts of the endangered species.

Within the four-hour visit ADI RAG took Lend Lease and NPWS to the location of two previously unrecorded populations of the endangered plant *Pimelea spicata* and erroneously mapped populations of the endangered plants *Persoonia nutans*, *Micromyrtus minutiflora* and *Pultenaea parviflora*. Also investigated was the location where ADI RAG discovered Koala scat (Nov 2003), ponds suspected to contain the Green and Golden Bell Frog tadpoles and areas of the site where NPWS had issued licenses to Lend Lease to slash endangered species. Whilst stumbling through the bush other endangered plants unbeknown to all parties were found including *Marsdenia viridiflora* and more *Persoonia nutans*. "One must question the integrity of Lend Leases development when after ten years of studying the biodiversity of the ADI site it takes a residents group only four hours to prove that they have missed and incorrectly mapped five of Australia's most endangered plants." Said, Geoff Brown for ADI RAG.

"We now feel our claims of erroneous biodiversity studies by Lend Lease have been vindicated and it was particularly rewarding that Lend Lease managers and officers from the NPWS Endangered Species Unit were present to witness our discoveries. There was even acknowledgement from NPWS that the ADI Site contains ideal habitat to support Koalas." "We now call on Lend Lease to go back to the drawing board and bring their development plans up to date. What is of major concern is that some of the unrecorded species found are within areas approved for urban development." "This should be a wake up call for both Penrith and Blacktown Council who have supported the accuracy of previous biodiversity assessments of the site. In fact they should, for legal purposes and for their own records, be requesting that a thorough independent scientific assessment of the ADI Site be carried out before any further Precinct Plans or Development Applications are lodged by Lend Lease."

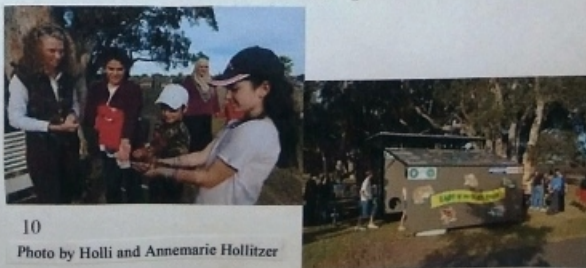
"The discovery of these new species will assist NPWS in implementing recovery plans for the *Pimelea spicata* and *Persoonia nutans*.

NPWS have also agreed to introduce a biological control to control a weed, which competes with *Pimelea spicata*. They have also stated that a survey for Koalas will be conducted." ADI Residents Action Group 2 August 2004 contact Geoff Brown 0431 222602 or Imogen Yang 0415 102984

FORMICINE ANTS:

A remarkable diversity of bioactive lipophilic alkaloids is present in the skin of poison frogs and toads worldwide. Originally discovered in neotropical dendrobatid frogs, these alkaloids are now known from mantellid frogs of Madagascar, certain myobatrachid frogs of Australia, and certain bufonid toads of South America. Presumably serving as a passive chemical defense, these alkaloids appear to be sequestered from a variety of alkaloid-containing arthropods. The pumiliotoxins represent a major, widespread, group of alkaloids that are found in virtually all anurans that are chemically defended by the presence of lipophilic alkaloids. Identifying an arthropod source for these alkaloids has been a considerable challenge for chemical ecologists. However, an extensive collection of neotropical forest arthropods has now revealed a putative arthropod source of the pumiliotoxins. Here we report on the presence of pumiliotoxins in formicine ants of the genera *Brachymyrmex* and *Paratrechina*, as well as the presence of these ants in the stomach contents of the microsymbiotic pumiliotoxin-containing dendrobatid frog, *Dendrobates pumilio*. These pumiliotoxins are major alkaloids in *D. pumilio*, and *Brachymyrmex* and *Paratrechina* ants now represent the only known dietary sources of these toxic alkaloids. These findings further support the significance of ant-specialization and alkaloid sequestration in the evolution of bright warning coloration in poison frogs and toads.

www.herpdigest.org An Arthropod Source For The Pumiliotoxin Alkaloids Of Dendrobatid Poison Frogs (Or A Possible Source For The Poisons Found in Dendrobates) (Abstract Only) Proceedings Of The National Academy Of Science Of The USA [May 25, 2004 vol. 101 no. 21 8045-8050 Ralph A. Saporito *, H. Martin Garraffo , Maureen A. Donnelly *, Adam L. Edwards *, John T. Longino and John W. Daly , Department of Biological Sciences, Florida International University, Miami, FL 33199; Laboratory of Bioorganic Chemistry, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services, Bethesda, MD 20892; and Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA 98505 Contributed by John W. Daly, April 5, 2004



SCIENTISTS RECOGNISED FOR FROG DISCOVERIES

After five years of research, two scientists from Newcastle University have been recognised for their discovery of two new frog species in north-east New South Wales. Dr Michael Mahoney and former honours student Ross Knowles have had to wait until the results of their complex genetic tests were published by the Australian Museum to make the announcement. Dr Mahoney says one of the frogs, *Philoria pughii*, has been named in honour of dedicated environmentalist Dailan Pugh. "It's a good deep, earthy red with yellow and orange around the side and groin and on top of the head," he said. "It really is a spectacular looking frog. Most people have never seen it because it spends most of its time buried underground and it's not until you dig it up and wash it that you see just how spectacular it really is."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s1120936.htm>



TWO NEW SPECIES OF FROG DISCOVERED

Scientists from the University of Newcastle and the South Australian Museum have used molecular genetic technology to discover two new species of frog from the rainforests of northeastern NSW. Co-discoverer, Dr. Michael Mahoney from the Faculty of Science and Information Technology says, "Remarkably after over 200 years of western scientific endeavour in Australia, species of frogs are still being discovered at a rate of two or three a year." "At a time when many species of frogs are declining around the world, the discovery of two new species reminds us of how little we know about the rich biodiversity of our forests. The importance of conserving our natural habitats, is that we are still to discover much of our natural heritage."

Why is it that these frogs remained undiscovered until now?

Dr. Mahoney says, "They live in mud under the leaf litter at the headwaters of rainforest streams and the small number of locations on the higher mountains of the Great Dividing Range means that their habitat has been infrequently visited by herpetologists. They are only 4cm in length and their tadpoles live in nest chambers underground, so it is not until the tadpole transforms into a frog that it leaves the nest. Also unlike most frogs, the mating call is very soft, and can only be detected when very near to a nesting site."

Why are these frogs special?

"These frogs are members of a group that are linked to Australia's evolutionary past with an ancestry that can be

traced to a time when Australia was combined with Antarctic and South America in the southern supercontinent Gondwana. They provide another example of the uniqueness of our fauna and why we should treasure it," said Dr. Mahoney.

The new species are named *Philoria richmondensis* and *Philoria pughii*. One is named after the mountain range in which it is found – the Richmond Range – and the other after a prominent environmentalist Dailan Pugh. They were named by the discoverers Dr. Michael Mahoney and former honours student Ross Knowles. "To our knowledge, this is the first time that a frog in Australia has been named in honour of an environmental activist. We named the frog after Dailan Pugh in recognition of the many years that he worked to conserve rainforest and other forest habitats in NSW. He is directly responsible for actions that have saved some of the sites where the new frogs are found." **For information and interviews contact Dr. Michael Mahoney on 02 4921 6014.**

**For media enquiries contact: Callaghan Campus
Phone: +61 2 4921 6856**

NSW LEGISLATION

The Water Management Act: The irrigators have won perpetual water licences (changed from 15 years), entrenching the totally inadequate environmental water provisions for most of the State's inland rivers and making the taxpayer buy back water. The cost to return our rivers to health will be unaffordable at many billions of dollars. Similarly, corporatising the state's water infrastructure and giving the new corporation the power to sell its assets has not raised an eyebrow. There is little doubt that this is the first significant step towards privatisation of our dams and pipelines.

Major changes to the **Threatened Species Conservation Act** have been postponed until September due to concerns with an early draft. Apart from seriously undermining the existing provisions, the government also proposes to remove third party appeal rights, i.e. your right to challenge the approval of an activity/development that may significantly impact on threatened species. Regulations for the **Native Vegetation Act** have been deferred until Sept. **extracts from The Greens E brief (Ian Cohen)**

INTERNATIONAL HERPETOLOGICAL EVENTS

- * The 2005 Joint Meeting Of Ichthyologists And Herpetologists July 6-11, 2005, Tampa, Florida
- * 28th International Herpetological Symposium August 10 - 13, 2004, Daytona Beach, Florida USA
- * Seventh Herpetological Association of Africa Symposium Bayworld, Port Elizabeth, October 7-9, 2004
- * 12th Annual Asstn. Of Reptile And Amphibian Veterinarians Conference April 2005, Tucson, Arizona
- * World Congress of Herpetology on June 20-24, 2005 Stellenbosch, South Africa **Herpdigest 22/6/04**





FIELD TRIPS.

September Outing.

Due to the extraordinary opportunity offered by the following Wybong outing, we have decided to hold over our 'September' field trip so that we may include Wybong in this season's programme. We apologise for the unavoidable closeness of dates to the regular Smiths Lake camp-out - we book the Smiths Lake venue many months in advance. We are confident however, that this arrangement will represent a finer selection of field-trips for this season. **RW**

October 1 - 4.

Wybong (Upper Hunter Valley).

Leader : Danny Wotherspoon.

The Anvil Hill Project Watch is a community-based group concerned about the impact of an open-cut mine proposal. They have asked a range of professional & volunteer groups to conduct a wildlife & habitat inventory of the area. This project has active support from NPWS & the Australian Museum. It is hoped that a Voluntary Conservation Agreement will eventually be secured. This weekend we will be joined by specialist groups surveying the local bats, snakes, birds & orchids. Due to its strategic location, this area frequently records species from the Sydney Basin, western slopes, & northern bio-regions. See newsletter article for further details. **RW**

October 15-17.

Smiths Lake.

Leaders : Arthur & Karen White.

This venue needs no introduction to long-time members. At this site we frequently break records for recorded numbers of species. Once again, Arthur will provide expert tuition -along with those often amusing insights & fascinating background of many frog species. A beautiful shoreline, a rich mosaic of habitats & comfortable lodgings makes Smiths Lake a nature-lover's paradise. Come & see why we face continual demands to return to this idyllic venue. Cabin/dormitory accommodation & camping sites available. All kitchen facilities/utensils/crockery supplied. A non-refundable nightly fee of \$12 p.p. per night applies, payable IN ADVANCE. Bookings only accepted with payment. See newsletter article for further details. Phone Arthur & Karen White directly on 9599-1161 for details. Note : Limit of thirty people. **RW**

***** DON'T FORGET our specialist research field trips with Graham Pyke & The Australian Museum. Ideal for all students & serious enthusiasts. Locations at Long Reef, North Avoca & Broughton Island. Contact the Field Trips Co-ordinator 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 ! Please observe all directions that the leader may give. Children are welcome, however please remember that young children especially can become very excited and boisterous at their first frogging experience - parents are asked to help ensure that the leader is able to conduct the trip to everyone's satisfaction. All field trips are strictly for members only. - Newcomers are however, welcome to take out membership before the commencement of the field-trip. All participants accept that there is some inherent risk associated with outdoor fieldtrips & by attending agree to a release of all claims, waiver of liability, & assumption of risk. *****

INSURANCE DISCLAIMER

FATS has public liability insurance for its various public functions.

FATS members should be aware that this insurance does not cover FATS members (it covers the public and indemnifies FATS). We are currently checking with insurance firms to see whether a realistic group policy can be organised to cover FATS volunteers and people who attend field trips.

CONTACTS FROGWATCH HELPLINE 0419 249 728 EMAIL fatsgroupsw@hotmail.com WEBSITE www.fats.org.au

COMMITTEE

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We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year at the Australian Museum, Sydney, William St 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. ALWAYS CONFIRM DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT THE MEETING.



**FATS OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE 1997/98
POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES**

OFFICE BEARERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT

- *chairs all committee meetings
- *spokesperson for the FATS Group
- *presents the views of the FATS Group through appropriate correspondence and representation
- *liaises with other similar organisations
- *councillor to the Australian Affiliation of Herpetological Societies

CHAIRPERSON

- *chairs the bimonthly general meetings of Fats
- *organises time and venue of meetings (contact person)
- *organises speakers for FATS general meetings in consultation with the Committee

TREASURER

- *ensures all money due to FATS is collected
- *receives and receipts all incoming money
- *ensures that all payments authorised by FATS are made
- *provides financial reports at committee meetings and the AGM
- *ensures correct books and accounts are kept showing the financial affairs of the association
- *ensures financial records are audited
- *any other duties for the "treasurer" as outlined in the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984 and the Associations Incorporation Regulation, 1985.

SECRETARY

- *keeps minutes of all proceedings at committee meetings and general meetings
- *keeps minutes of all appointments of office bearers and members of the committee
- *keeps minutes of the names of members of the committee present at a committee meeting or general meeting
- *ensures minutes of proceedings at a meeting are accepted and endorsed in accordance with the rules of association for FATS
- *ensures a register of FATS members is established and maintained, and is accessible to any committee member
- *receives and ensures appropriate distribution and action for all correspondence in
- *ensures correspondence actioned at committee meetings goes out
- *other duties as outlined for the "secretary" in the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984 and the Associations Incorporation Regulation, 1985.

ORDINARY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER

- *responsible for memberships received.
- *responsible for membership enquiries, data base and envelops for mailouts

FIELD TRIP CO-ORDINATOR

- *organises field trip venues and schedule
- *organises appropriate leadership of all FATS Group field trips
- *is the key contact for field trip enquiries

EXHIBITION OFFICER

- *ensures a mobile display is established and maintained for use by FATS
- *Provides access to this exhibition material for use by FATS members
- *co-ordinates volunteers to attend at FATS displays
- *co-ordinates all FATS activities during Frogweek (e.g. Zoo displays, school presentations etc.)
- *co-ordinates all publicity for the group and ensures that it is consistent with the Group Objects as outlined in the Rules of Association for FATS.
- *co-ordinates the publicity needs of the group for Frogweek

EDITORIAL PANEL (3 POSITIONS)

- *responsible for the examination, compilation and editing of material to be published by FATS
- *responsible for the printing and distribution of this material
- *ensures publishing and distribution of the bi-monthly newsletter "Frogcall" by due date
- *attends sub-committee meetings of the editorial panel as necessary to ensure publishing deadlines are met

