

FRCALL

NEWSLETTER No. 79
October 2005

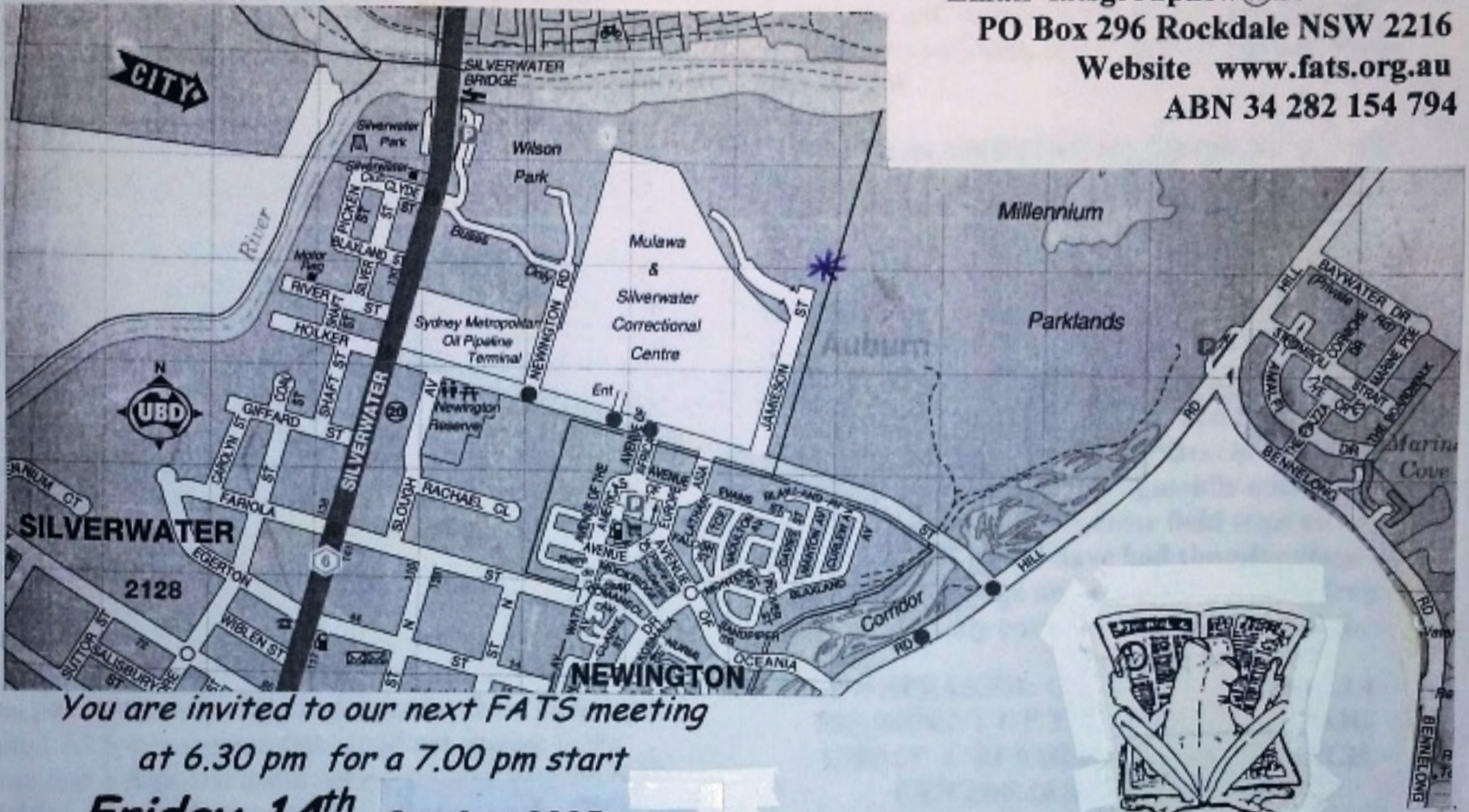
THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC

Email fatsgroupnsw@hotmail.com

PO Box 296 Rockdale NSW 2216

Website www.fats.org.au

ABN 34 282 154 794



You are invited to our next FATS meeting
at 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start

Friday 14th October 2005

* Building 22, Jamieson Street *
Homebush / Sydney Olympic Park



MEETING FORMAT for 14th October 2005

- 7.00 pm Lost frogs need homes - White Lips, *Litoria infrafrenata*
Green Tree Frogs *L. caerulea*, and Banana frogs *L. gracilentia*
are ready to collect from the Frog Rescue Service. Please
bring your FATS membership card & Amphibian Licence.
- 7.30 pm Official welcome by Sydney Olympic Parkland Authority
- 7.45 pm Main Speaker:- Brad McPherson from SOFAR
- 8.30 pm Arthur White:- History of the bell frogs at Homebush
- 9.10 pm Alistair McDougall- Darkes Forest field trip highlights
- 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, bring them along as well.
- 9.45pm Drawing of door prize and light refreshments in the lobby.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2004-2005

FATS continues to be a strong and vibrant organization. Our membership remains healthy and the Society has been involved in many activities throughout the year. To list some of these include various community days and displays, public lectures and workshops, along with our usual services such as the Frog Rescue Service and the Frog HelpLine. The Society has offered a steady stream of field trips throughout the year and these are well patronized. In addition, FrogCall comes out six times a year and is our flag-bearer to the wider membership.

These many activities are not possible without the generous efforts of many people whom you all know well. Monica Wangmann is our editor of FrogCall and does a sterling job to get the magazine out on time. Robert Wall is out Field Trip co-ordinator and he has turned these activities into a very popular event for FATS members. Lothar Voigt is our Publicity and Display Officer. Lothar, as always commits a huge amount of time into this work and keeps FATS in the news and seen about town. But we also have those who work behind the scenes to keep the Society functional: Wendy Grimm is our ever-efficient Secretary, Karen White our Treasurer and controller of the purse, Andrew Nelson maintains our membership lists and David Nelson looks after our web site (with help from Steve Weir). Alistair MacDougall has been our Chairman for the past year and has settled nicely into the job. Without the help and time that these people put into FATS this organization could not operate in the way that it does and could not provide the services that it does. We are all very grateful to those who help out, including the volunteers who help on displays and at special functions. In this regard Punia Jeffery and Marion Anstis must be acknowledged as regular helpers of the Society.

This year FATS has had to make a monumental decision; we have decided to break our ties with the Australian Museum and move to Homebush. The Museum has been very good to us and the decision to leave was not made lightly. There is always a risk in moving to a new venue and we hope that Homebush provides the secure home of FATS that we need. The next meeting, on Friday 14th of October, will be at Homebush.

This year has also seen FATS face a difficult dilemma. The Frog Mobile has been functional and on the road for a year but its future is uncertain. The Frog Mobile was originally intended for school use as well as for community events. Its use for schools appears unviable and its size and weight makes it a major burden when changing venues or moving to new locations. In addition, the running costs of the Frog Mobile are much higher than anticipated. We are considering several options for the future use of the Frog Mobile.

We have also been involved in a major project with the removal of a swimming pool and construction of a frog pond for Green and Golden Bell Frogs at Rosebery. This work is still in progress. Many people have helped with the pool removal and site preparation. Unfortunately, we have had to maintain the frogs for a lot longer in captivity than expected and this has proven quite expensive.

Finally, I invite all of you present to think about helping FATS to continue to function as an active Society. Please do not think that you have to be a frog "know-all" to help, most of our executive are general members who enjoy FATS, frogs and being useful. AW

REPORT ON MEETING HELD ON 16 / 8 / 2005.

At the conclusion of the AGM, the Chairperson, Alistair MacDougall, discussed FATS president, Arthur White and his contribution to FATS. Arthur had praised the rest of the committee, but as Alistair said it was Arthur's leadership and enthusiasm that made FATS such a wonderful group. Arthur and Karen White, were always among the first to volunteer to pick up frogs, man the frogmobile and frog rescue lines, lead and organise field trips etc... Most members would have had the advantage of Arthur's knowledge and excitement about frogs and that can only enrich their FATS experience.

**MAIN SPEAKER: GERRY MARANTELLI –
PRESIDENT OF THE VICTORIA FROG
GROUP AND AMPHIBIAN RESEARCH
CENTRE (ARC), VICTORIA.**

The Amphibian Research Centre started as a community group and backyard business and now is funded by many organisations including the Australian Research Council and runs a world renown program for captive breeding of threatened frogs. Between the Victoria Frog Group and ARC all frog related programs in Victoria are co-ordinated.

Threatened Frog Research and Chytrid.

The ARC at the back of Gerry's house and is now located at the Werribee sewerage treatment plant and wetlands. They have over 300m² of breeding and display facilities, computer labs and a lecture room. Gerry went on to talk about some of the projects that the ARC is involved in.

They began in 1994 with work on the Spotted Tree Frog *Litoria spenceri* and in 1996 on the Corroboree Frog.

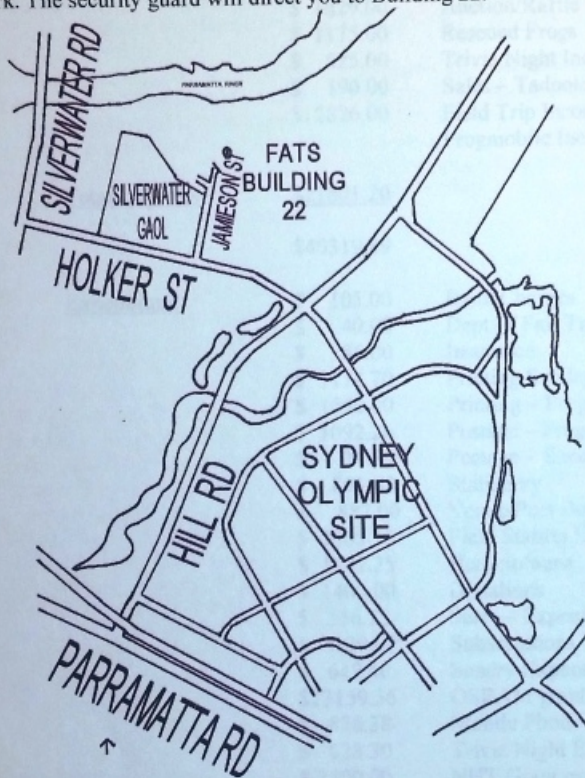
The Spotted Tree Frog is found in Mountainous country in and around fast flowing rivers. In 1994 not much was known so ARC took some in to learn more about this species, which may help to prevent their decline. Continued on page 6

FATS IS MOVING TO HOMEBUSH

The next FATS meeting will be held at Newington, in Building 22 in the RANAD (the old Naval Armory). The meeting is on FRIDAY the 14th of October, starting at 7.30 pm. Frogs that are available for purchase from the Rescue service will be available from 6.45 to 7.15 pm.

How Do You Get to Homebush? (MAP BELOW)

If you are driving and coming from the south, east or west, use Parramatta Road. Turn into HILL Road at Homebush and travel along Hill Road until the intersection with HOLKER STREET. Turn left into Holker St, and then turn right into JAMIESON STREET. Drive to the end of Jamieson St, stop at boom gate and park. The security guard will direct you to Building 22.



If you are coming from the north, travel along Silverwater Rd, cross the Parramatta River; turn left into HOLKER STREET, Drive past the Silverwater Correction Centre and turn left into JAMIESON STREET. Drive to the end of Jamieson St, stop at boom gate and park. The security guard will direct you to Building 22.

If you are coming by train, there is a train leaving LIDCOMBE Station at 6.50 pm, this train proceeds to OLYMPIC PARK Station (arriving at 6.55 pm). If you would like to be picked up at Olympic Park Station, ring 0419-249-728. Please ring, otherwise we may not have enough car space for you, and it is a long walk to the meeting venue from the station. AW

THE NEXT MEETING

At the next meeting, we will be officially welcomed to Homebush by a representative of the Sydney Olympic Parkland Authority (SOPA). There will be lucky door prizes on the night and tea/coffee and biscuits afterwards.

There will be two speakers: Brad McPherson from SOFAR who will be talking about the upcoming Frog and Reptile Exhibition on the 20th of November at the Wetlands Centre (Shortlands, Newcastle). Arthur White will also be speaking and will present an overview of the "History of Green and Golden Bell Frogs in the Homebush Bay area".

Finally, Alistair McDougall will be showing some highlights from the recent frog trip to Darkes Forest. AW

OTHER HAPPENINGS AT HOMEBUSH

23rd of October: The FrogMobile will be at the Visitors center.

29th of October: FATS are running a sausage sizzle at Bunnings at Auburn. Come along a have a snag and see some frogs at the same time.

6th of November: Arthur White will be speaking at the Visitors Centre on "The Frogs of the Homebush Bay Area"

RESCUED FROGS

A number of people have asked about the price of rescue frogs. FATS does not make money out of the Frog Rescue Service, we try to keep it a revenue-neutral service. Many of the frogs that we have in quarantine are there for a minimum of two months, some much, much longer. The frogs have to be fed and treated during this time and this costs money. The prices for frogs is:

LARGE FROGS : \$ 50 each

MEDIUM SIZED FROGS \$ 30 each.

SMALL FROGS: \$ 20 each.

There are no discounts or reductions if you are fortunate to get more than one frog. AW



Financial Report:

Statement of Income and Expenditure for the financial year 1st July 2004- 30th June 2005 was tabled by K. White (Treasurer) and questions were invited.

01/07/03 – 30/06/04

01/07/04 – 30/06/05

Opening balance	\$18518.29		\$ 8717.99
<u>Income</u>	\$ 154.05	Interest	\$ 364.96
	\$ 5342.55	Matured IBD's	\$ 5000.00
	\$ 7640.00	Membership	\$ 6477.00
	\$ 52.00	Sundry Income	\$ 694.00
	\$ 1025.00	Donations	\$ 645.00
	\$ 620.00	Grants	
	\$ 623.00	Sales	\$ 443.00
	\$ 1629.00	Auction/Raffle	\$ 443.00
	\$ 1175.00	Rescued Frogs	\$ 2333.00
	\$ 525.00	Trivia Night Income	
	\$ 190.00	Sales – Tadpole Book	\$ 150.00
	\$ 2826.00	Field Trip Income	\$ 1209.00
		Frogmobile Income	\$ 1602.00
<u>Total Deposits</u>	<u>\$21801.20</u>		<u>\$19469.96</u>
	\$40319.89		\$28187.95
<u>Expenditure</u>	\$ 105.00	Bank Charges	\$ 10.00
	\$ 40.00	Dept of Fair Trading	\$ 41.00
	\$ 785.00	Insurance	\$ 720.00
	\$ 1174.70	Printing Sundry	\$ 932.53
	\$ 1550.00	Printing – FrogCall	\$ 1664.00
	\$ 1092.26	Postage – FrogCall	\$ 1028.17
	\$ 34.50	Postage – Sundry	\$ 307.71
	\$ 893.65	Stationery	\$ 492.83
	\$ 887.00	Venue/Post Box Hire	\$ 89.00
	\$ 3065.15	Field Station Expenditure	\$ 1089.00
	\$ 1482.25	Herpetofauna	\$ 1212.75
	\$ 1400.00	Donations	
	\$ 356.75	Sales – Expenditure	\$ 85.00
	\$ 120.00	Subscriptions	\$ 130.00
	\$ 649.40	Sundry Expenses	\$ 1875.43
	\$13159.56	OSRAM grant expenditure	
	\$ 878.38	Mobile Phone	\$ 497.26
	\$ 528.30	Trivia Night Expenses	
	\$ 3400.00	NHT Grant expenditure	
		Frogmobile expenses	\$ 2530.83
<u>Total Payments</u>	<u>\$31601.90</u>		<u>\$12706.31</u>
<u>Closing Balance</u>	\$ 8717.99		\$15481.64

TOTAL FATS ASSETS

Cash in Bank	\$15481.64
Investments	\$17114.65

The Zoological Society of London is to build a new centre for the conservation of frogs, toad and other amphibians.

The £2.2m (US\$4m) project will include a public exhibit at London Zoo, laboratories for disease research, and captive breeding facilities. Scientists involved say it will be the first integrated amphibian conservation centre in the world. Amphibians are possibly the most threatened animals on Earth, with a third of species at risk of extinction.

Fungal attack

One of the scientists involved is Andrew Cunningham, head of wildlife epidemiology at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), whose team announced the fatal disease chytridiomycosis in British amphibians.

"That discovery certainly brings it home that this is a serious issue, a global issue, not confined to far-flung tropical places," Dr Cunningham told the BBC News website. "In Spain, the midwife toad is declining really fast, going extinct in fact, because of chytridiomycosis; and the disease has the potential to do the same thing in Britain. "We know that the common toad is killed by chytridiomycosis, because we've seen that in Spain, and it also kills the natterjack toad, one of our threatened species."

Like many other groups of animals, amphibians are threatened by human encroachment onto their territories, by pollution, climate change and hunting. The emergence in the last few decades of chytridiomycosis, an often fatal fungal disease, is the additional factor which has led to the current crisis, which sees almost a third of the 5,743 known amphibian species heading towards oblivion. There is no cure, no means of preventing its spread, and no way of protecting animals against its deadly embrace.

Wider understanding

In September, a summit of conservation experts in Washington concluded that captive breeding programmes should be established as a matter of urgency for some of the most endangered species. One of the key components of the ZSL project will be to run these breeding programmes, both at Whipsnade Zoo, which it owns, and abroad. "We have a building which we may adapt," said Richard Gibson, ZSL's Curator of Herpetology, "but we may possibly do it in shipping containers.

"This is something that's been pioneered in Australia; the containers come ready insulated, you just put in a water and electricity supply. "It's very easy to maintain high standards of hygiene and biosecurity, plus you can ship them around if you need to." Biosecurity is crucial; if parasites jump from one captive species to the next, it would quickly become impossible to re-introduce any of them into the wild, which is the long-term goal. Captive breeding is one part of ZSL's three-pronged plan; the other arms involve a laboratory to research interactions between amphibians and *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, their fungal nemesis, and a public exhibit and information centre at London Zoo, tentatively entitled Frog World.

"I would envisage exhibits demonstrating the range and diversity of amphibians and their habitats," said Richard Gibson, "but I would be keen to have some sort of interactive experience, with people able to peer through a microscope at tadpoles, and experience what it's like to be an embryo. "The problem is that most people don't understand how serious the situation is regarding amphibians - to be honest, many of my colleagues who work with other kinds of animals don't fully understand it either."

World first

ZSL believes that its centre will be the first amphibian unit in the world to combine public awareness, laboratory science, field research and captive breeding. "A good model of what we'll be able to do is what we're already doing with the mountain chicken frog," said Andrew Cunningham.

"It's the national dish of Dominica, and so it was already under threat from hunting before chytridiomycosis came and knocked it on the head. Now, numbers have gone down by 50% in just a few years. "We're running an awareness programme in Dominica. With the Dominican government we're building a pathology and molecular diagnostics lab which will serve the whole Caribbean region, and we're setting up a captive breeding programme in Dominica with satellite programmes at Chester and London zoos." How many species ZSL can include in its Amphibian Research and Conservation Centre depends on how much of the £2.2m it is able to raise. It is already a third of the way there, with money coming from its own coffers and from grant programmes such as the Darwin Initiative, a UK government fund aimed at conserving biodiversity worldwide. The first public view may come in 2007, when ZSL hopes to have Frog World up and running. Forwarded on by Andrew Nelson



Corroboree Frogs.

They began by feeding them to native and exotic species of fish. They found that they had evolved protective chemicals on their skin that made them unpalatable to native fish, but not to exotics. They then looked back at the wild population and found that the remaining populations were in areas that Trout had not reached. Breeding was continued and monitoring of the only known site in NSW commenced. In 1996-97 there was a population crash, but no trout were found there. They removed the last frog from the area "Dirk Diegler" and are currently breeding his offspring at the ARC.

At the same time that they found a crash in the population of Spotted Tree Frogs, many scientists were finding dead frogs throughout Australia. A PhD on frog diseases was commenced through ARC and it soon focused on the chytrid fungal disease. Further research has revealed that chytrid has complex effects, with some frog species, and even different populations respond differently to the disease. Many frogs respond differently to chytrid at different stages of their lifecycle. Some populations seem not to be declining at the same rate. Frogs can now be swabbed for fungus' DNA. Chytrid occurs in keratin – in adult frogs this is in their skin, in tadpoles it occurs in their teeth.

Current research is looking at the effects of temperature on alpine species and the way that this interacts with the spread of chytrid. Also examining resilience of the common froglet *Crinia signifera* compared to those species that are susceptible to chytrid.

Myophyes bulbous

Tadpoles have also been collected for captive breeding and to investigate differences in populations from the north and south of the species' range. Found in escarpments of southern NSW.

THERE was plenty of wild behaviour at the St Thomas Child Care Centre in Rozelle and, for once, it wasn't from the children. The Zoomobile from Taronga Zoo visited some very excited children to tell them about wildlife conservation. The children got to meet Spike the echidna, Strawberry the green tea frog, Henry the gang gang cockatoo, Storm the ringtail possum, Little Spots the diamond python and Sludge the shingleback lizard. Senior education officer David Smith said many people can't access the zoo so they brought it to them. "The Zoomobile is literally a miniature 'zoo on wheels' that comes complete with a fantastic array of Australian native animals, as well as educational displays, costumes and giveaways." Phone the Zoomobile on 9978 4554.

Picture: ARMEN DEUSHIAN



Southern: Occur in Alpine Sphagnum and peat bogs in Kosciusko, now only 100's left.

Northern: 1000's left, this frog is found in similar conditions and was only recently separated.

Corroboree frogs have toxic chemicals in their skin, similar to poison arrow frogs in other parts of the world. Males burrow into the peat/sphagnum and females come along and lay eggs. Skin chemicals may protect eggs, as unattended clutches do not fare as well as those that have a male present. Eggs are then covered by snow and hatch in September, with metamorphosis occurring Oct-Dec.

In 1996, researched marked male nests and removed 1/3 of the eggs from test nests, taking them to the ARC. They found that an increase in water temp meant a reduction in oxygen, and this killed the tadpoles. Females lay a maximum of 30 eggs, but some "super stud" males have almost 500 eggs to attend in their nests. After experiments in Melbourne manipulating oxygen and heat, animals were released. Not surprisingly, survivorship was higher in captivity.

A few years after research began, the field site was completely burnt out, destroying the entire range of the corroboree. It was therefore difficult to assess many of their experiments. There were a few pockets of survival, and although all sites were burnt, only 1/3 of the population of frogs died. They are currently waiting for the habitat to recover. Monitoring occurs by mark and recapture, just using the belly pattern, as they are individually unique.

Banana Frogs

Approximately 70% of banana frogs (those that hitch hike down from northern NSW and Queensland on fruit trucks) are released, a small percentage are rescued and a smaller percentage killed. New treatments for bananas are dissuading frogs from staying with the bananas and should reduce hitch hikers. Victoria Frog Group noticing fewer frogs are being reported, compared to the mid 90's.

To help fund all this research, the ARC breeds frog food and receives government and private sector grants. ARC currently selling Tiddlelink – Water holding frog \$10, with \$5 going to the Spotted Tree Frog research program in NSW. Go to www.frogs.org.au for more information on this and other ARC info. Also an excellent site for information on frogs of Australia, especially Victorian species.

BEARDED DRAGONS REQUEST:

Danny Wotherspoon would like any road kill Bearded Dragons that members find. Please record date found and area. Store in freezer. Danny will meet transport costs. Email thespoons@mountains.net.au

Animals on wheels drive kids wild

The Glebe Thursday 29 September 2005

Ed:- Green Tea frog? We Hope this is not a new drinking trend!

GRANT WEBSTER'S CANADIAN TRIP

There are 25 species of frog in Canada, about 1/10th of the number found in Australia. Grant showed some excellent photos of some of the species he found in each of the locations in Canada that he visited. The most common seen were the large, conspicuous Rana frogs (*Rana catesbeiana* and *R. clamitans*), which were introduced to west coast. They have dominated many of the sites on the west coast and have affected the population sizes of indigenous species. However, one of these, the tree frog, *Hyla regilla* has resisted the effect of these Rana frogs this species was found in Vancouver and is one of only 3 tree frogs that has a "ribbet ribbet" call.

Other species of interest include 2 species of tailed frogs, *Ascaphus truei* and *A. montanus*. The "tail" in an extension of their cloaca and is used by the males to assist with fertilisation in fast-moving water. The tadpoles take 4 years to develop and the minimum lifespan is 15 years. Their closest relative is in New Zealand.

The green and golden bell frog may be on the verge of disappearing from western Sydney.

History shows webbed feet of intrigue

THE green and golden bell frog was the first frog encountered by Captain Cook on arrival at Botany Bay in 1770.

When they First Fleet arrived, the frog thrived in vast numbers right across the area that would become Sydney, but by 1980 the species was in serious decline.

The frog achieved notoriety when about 100 were discovered in an unused brick pit at Sydney

Olympic Park in the leadup to the 2000 Games, halting grand plans for the construction of an inland harbour on Parramatta River.

In 1995, what was thought to be one of the last colonies of endangered green and golden bell frogs in Sydney delayed the construction of a \$290 million residential development at Rosebery, in Sydney's east.

The green and golden bell frog ranges in colour from shiny emerald green, to dull olive, brown or gold.

It has a distinctive croak that starts as a long growl, followed by short grunts.

Robert Humphries, the manager of threatened species at the Environment and Conservation Department said the grunt sounded "like a dog growling".

Frog watch

Have you seen or heard a bell frog? Help save the species. Report sightings or hearings to the Standard (9839 1409) or the Environment and Conservation Department (9585 6678).

It has not been seen on those sites since 1993.

The last reported sightings of the frog in Sydney's west were in and around Ropes Creek at St Marys between 1995 and 1998.

Mr Humphries believes the frog species still inhabits the creek, but described sightings of the creatures as "sporadic" at best.

"The green and golden bell frogs have disappeared from the far western parts and the higher altitudes of Sydney," Mr Humphries said.

"The sightings are almost completely restricted to coastal areas now.

"Ropes Creek at St Marys may be one of the last remaining areas in western Sydney in which the frog exists."

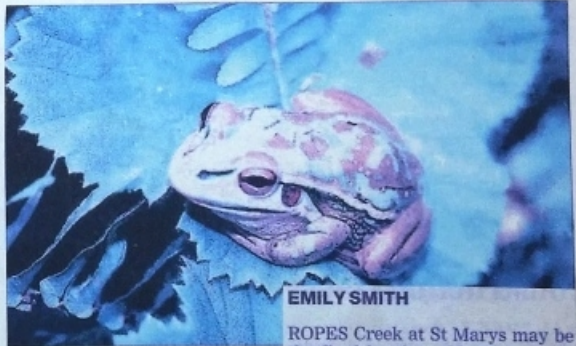
Help is at hand. The species is now listed on the State's endangered list and it is being monitored.

The department is also seeking assistance from the public to help find the creatures so it can implement a recovery plan.

The green and golden bell frog is a coloniser and moves into areas not inhabited by other frog species.

They love muddy water and are often found on industrial sites.

"Ropes Creek obviously provides a suitable habitat. For how long, we don't know," Mr Humphries said.



EMILY SMITH

ROPES Creek at St Marys may be the final bastion of hope in western Sydney for a rare Australian amphibian.

The green and golden bell frog, one of the first Australian creatures recorded by British explorers, is rapidly disappearing from the area as disease, loss of habitat and the introduction of foreign fish take their toll.

Robert Humphries, the manager of threatened species at the Environment and Conservation Department, said the species, which once thrived between Blacktown and Penrith, might now be limited to a handful of specimens at Ropes Creek.

The frog, scientifically named *Litoria aurea*, was observed by Captain James Cook and is recorded in the annals of Australian history.

Not croaked yet



Society of Frogs and Reptiles
4th Annual

Frog & Reptile Expo

AT
THE WETLANDS CENTRE
SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2005

9.00am - 4.30pm

\$7.00 Adult, \$5.00 Student/Pensioner, \$2.00 Children
under 14yrs, \$14.00 Family 2 adults 2 children.

Two reptile shows (Australian Reptile Displays) & Reptiles Galore
Reptile product suppliers, Plants & garden supplies
Displays by environmental & community groups
Guest speakers on the environment, backyard ponds and reptile husbandry
Canoe tours, Dipnetting, market stalls, Children's craft areas
Puppets, Oggy the Froggy, Quality refreshments.

HUNTER
WATER



FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

The Northern Territory's cane toad authorities are warning people to take care when killing the noxious pests after an Adelaide River resident was squirted in the eye with toad poison. At around 5:30am ACST on Wednesday morning, Vivienne Sobek heard a cane toad in her backyard and headed out to catch it.

"I hold them just above the knees, I take them to my execution block with my big steel mallet, I flip them onto their back and bash them once and it's all over, you know, it's quick and clean," she said.

But this time the slippery pest turned itself over and the weapon came down on the toad's poison glands, spraying the liquid into Ms Sobek's eyes, leaving her virtually blind for 10 hours.

Darwin-based organisation FrogWatch says the incident highlights the need to take care when destroying toads.

It recommends putting the pests in a bag in the freezer or at least wearing goggles when hitting them on the head.

Forwarded to Frogcall by Steven Weir

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200509/s1471680.htm>

NCC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This year, the Nature Conservation Council is holding its Annual Conference on the 2nd last weekend 10am Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October, 2005 at the Maiden Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens.

An NCC Member Group is entitled to attend, and depending on your membership status, submit and vote on motions.

Bruce Diekman Office Co-ordinator NCC

www.nccsw.org.au/about

Email bdiekman@nccsw.org.au (02) 9279 2466



Monday 6.30 pm to 9.30pm 28th November at the "FATS" building 22 off Jamieson St. Newington Armoury Sydney Olympic Park. Nibbles and drinks available Free parking entry \$15 credit card facilities available. Bookings essential 9714 7888

The London Wetland Centre is now one of Britain's most important breeding sites. This urban wasteland has been transformed into a bird-lovers' paradise.

The Cumberland Bird Observers Club in association with the Sydney Olympic Park Authority present a lecture "The London Wetland Centre – a dream comes true". The speaker is Hugh Mellor, past Honorary Treasurer of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and past Chairman of the Council of The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

All proceeds go towards the reprinting of the "Wetlands, Discover the Magic" brochure, an Australian Wetlands Information Network initiative coordinated by The Wetlands Centre Australia.

Sir Peter Scott, the internationally acclaimed wildfowl painter and naturalist, was the son of the ill-fated Scott of the Antarctic. In 1946 he set up the world-famous reserve for ducks, geese and swans at Slimbridge in the UK. In 1961 he was a founder of the World Wildlife Fund (as it then was). He died in 1989. Peter Scott always had a vision of a wetland area where people could watch wildlife in an urban environment, and where children could have the educational experience of wildlife in London.

That dream came to fruition in May 2000 with the official opening of the London Wetland Centre (LWC) at Barnes by Sir David Attenborough.

This evening Hugh Mellor, the well known and respected UK businessman, financier and conservationist, who is a past Honorary Treasurer of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and was Chairman of the Council of Peter Scott's charity "The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust" (WWT) during the construction of the LWC, will tell us about the amazing success of this unique facility in its first five years. He will also give us an insight into how, in an imaginative deal, the WWT joined forces with the site's owner Thames Water, and a property developer Berkeley Homes, and Richmond Council, to bring Peter Scott's dream to fruition.

This is a fantastic 'good news' story and will be a presentation not to be missed. **Tony Dymond, President, Cumberland Bird Observers Club Inc. who can be contacted on 9639 7346.**

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Phone: (02) 9628 4448

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email: swnw@bigpond.com

www.australian-natives.com

**Sydney
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Nursery
West**

ABN 86 002 028 150



Native Plant Specialists



Frog that can't jump bounces back

The Australian 19/8/2005 - Journalist:- Natasha Robinson

Picture:- David Crosling "Holding on: One of the southern toadlets found by the frog census in the Melbourne area clings to Gerry Marantelli's finger"

THEY are slimy and unsociable, and only the French think they're tasty. But frogs inspire such affection in humans that a record number of volunteers have taken part in a frog census that has recorded the existence in Melbourne of a tiny and rare species that cannot jump.

The southern toadlet, which is only the size of a human fingernail, was thought to be extinct but has been spotted in this year's frog census by Melbourne Water.

The census also showed that an interstate interloper, the eastern dwarf tree frog, is threatening Victorian native frogs. Researchers have appealed for residents to report any sightings of the unwelcome intruder.

The census was compiled by 900 volunteers who scoured bushland recording frog sounds on hand-held tape recorders.

Biologist Gerry Marantelli from Victoria's Amphibian Research Centre — aka "Frog Man" — sat through hours of the tapes, identifying each frog from its call.

"I listen to them driving along the road in the car and every chance I get," he said.

Mr Marantelli said the southern toadlet was abundant in far-southern South Australia, northern Tasmania and coastal areas of Victoria until about 10 years ago,

when the species began its slide towards extinction.

"It certainly has declined quite considerably, and given that it's a frog that really doesn't occur in a lot of places, the populations that we find are of pretty significant importance," he said.

Rather than being threatened by polluted waterways like many other frogs, it is the drought that is a major cause of the southern toadlet's diminishing numbers.

"It doesn't rely on rivers and creeks, it relies on still water. It lays its eggs on land and relies on a flooding of the eggs or a pool building up in the winter with the rain," Mr Marantelli said.

"The frog only lives for a certain length of time, so if the drought continues beyond the life of the frog and it hasn't been able to breed for that whole period, then the population declines."

Mr Marantelli said a large number of people took an active interest in frog conservation, because frogs have a special place in the Australian psyche.

"A lot of the people I speak to relate their memory as children, how it was beautiful to go to sleep listening to the frogs, and other people recount stories of collecting tadpoles," he said.

"I think the idea of catching a tadpole and watching it turn into a frog in your childhood is a rite of passage."

IMPORTANT NOTICE : HYGIENE PROTOCOLS AND FURTHER FIELDTRIP DETAILS

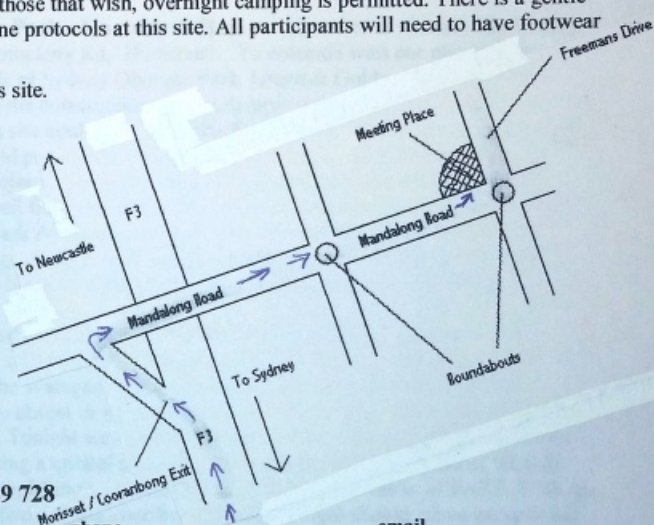
As our members would be aware, our frogs are faced with the serious threat of chytrid fungus. To help prevent the spread of this insidious pathogen, FATS will be introducing a range of hygiene protocols that will be adopted on all fieldtrips. Currently, we are working with various authorities with the aim of developing suitable, standardised hygiene protocols for all fieldworkers. These protocols will eventually be adopted on all FATS fieldtrips. We will publish further details when a uniform policy is in place. In the meantime, we will adopt interim measures on our fieldtrips. We would also urge all members to follow hygiene protocols when undertaking private excursions (particularly when visiting more than one water-body during the evening). Fieldtrip participants should understand that they may experience some inconveniences on fieldtrips (mainly wet shoes). Please remember however, that these small inconveniences will help protect our froglife. Members who regularly attend fieldtrips may wish to seriously consider the purchasing of gumboots. For others, please bring a dry change of shoes & socks for a comfortable drive home. If you have any questions about these new protocols, please phone me. Regards **Robert Wall**

Wentworth Falls. - (Approx 60 mins from Parramatta). Meet at Wentworth Falls railway station carpark (western side). We then drive the short distance to the picnic site. Bring an evening meal (no BBQ facilities) & a fold-up chair. All rubbish to be taken home. For those that wish, overnight camping is permitted. There is a gentle walk down to the site. We need to observe hygiene protocols at this site. All participants will need to have footwear disinfected on site. Your shoes will get wet !!!

Olympic Park. - Hygiene protocols apply at this site. Once again, your shoes will get wet.

Jervis Bay - Accommodation is fully booked at this venue. It may be possible to find accommodation elsewhere & attend evening frogging activities. Call Robert first *before* arranging your accommodation !

The Watagans. - From the start of the F3 at Wahroonga to the Morisset/ Cooranbong Exit (Mandalong Rd.) is 85km / 50 mins. From the exit to the meeting place (corner Mandalong Rd. & Freemans Drive) is 2km / 2 mins. Short convoy (7 mins) to the first site. Meet at 8-00 p.m. See map. We will convoy between several sites.



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INSURANCE DISCLAIMER FATS has public liability insurance for its various public functions. Please be aware that this insurance does not cover FATS members (it covers the public & 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.

FATS meetings commence at 7.30pm and end about 10.30pm, on the first Friday of every EVEN month (February, April, June, August, October and December), at Building 22, RANAD, Jamieson Street, Sydney Olympic Park, (SOP) Homebush Bay, however the next meeting is on Friday, 14th October 2005. We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year. Please check this Frogcall for further FATS meeting information. 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.

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 & advertise 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. Robert Wall ph. 9681-5308

November 12. 4-00p.m. Wentworth Falls / Kings Tableland. Leader : Alan Lane.
Meet in the carpark of Wentworth Falls railway station (western side). Approx 1hr. from Parramatta. Short convoy to site. The geological formations of the Blue Mountains contain a treasurehouse of Australian flora & fauna. The rough, dissected terrain conceals a myriad of cool, damp places – ideal frog habitat. Tonight, Alan will show us just some of the waterfalls, hanging swamps & moister habitats of the Upper Blue Mountains. Alan completed his Masters studying the frog-life of this area. At a recent FATS meeting we heard how his research has raised some paradoxical questions about the frog biology of the Blue Mountains. Tonight he will attempt to shed some light on the enigmatic behaviour of some of these species of the higher, cooler altitudes. (Note: some features of this sandstone terrain are somewhat discussed in Frogfacts Sheet # 7). For those that wish, overnight camping is permitted. See newsletter for further details.

December 3. 8-30p.m. Sydney Olympic Park / Homebush Bay. Leader : Glenn Muir.
Meet in the carpark near the corner of Hill Rd & Bennelong Rd, Homebush. To coincide with our move to Homebush Bay, we will re-acquaint ourselves with the wetlands of Sydney Olympic Park. Green & Golden Bell Frogs found themselves at the centre of a planning furore during the construction of the Olympic venue. Tonight we will check on their progress at this site. We will consider how this site could be a blueprint for many of Sydney's urban development projects. We will also consider how developers could promote, & in indeed benefit from, wildlife-friendly developments. Amongst many other critical frog projects, Glenn has been intimately involved in the long-term monitoring of this rather precious & now-famous Bell frog population. He has been able to secure special access for us tonight. **Please Note :** The Sydney Olympic Park Authority has graciously opened these areas for FATS members for tonight only. In the interests of the frogs, it has placed strict limits on numbers. **BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.** Any member who arrives without a booking will unfortunately not be permitted to participate.

January 10 8-00p.m. The Watagans. Leaders : Brad & Matthew McCaffery / Grant Webster.
Take the freeway. Take the Morisset / Cooranbong exit (approx 85km / 50mins from Wahroonga). See map details inside. There is growing evidence to suggest that The Watagans are becoming an important relicultural refugia for many eastern frog species. Many species, while now absent or in serious decline at many other historically known sites, continue to remain in viable populations here. Tonight we will look at some of these extant populations & we will explore the reasons why this area is fast becoming a critical sanctuary for many threatened species of wildlife. Brad, Matthew & Grant are representative of the astonishing talent emerging up through the ranks of FATS. With an intuitive feel & an already impressive body of fieldwork experience behind them, tonight should prove exceptional frogging. See newsletter for further details.

February 24-26, 2006. Jervis Bay National Park Camp-out Leader : To Be Confirmed.
The coastal heaths, woodlands & littoral vegetation of NSW have become much-threatened ecological communities. This weekend, studying the pristine & spectacular coastline of Jervis Bay, we will look at the wide variety of habitats that occur along undisturbed coastline sites & we will look at some of the frogs that make their home here. We will also discuss the implications of extensive, & often times uncontrolled, coastal development. Against the backdrop of the awesomely beautiful Jervis Bay / Booderee National Park, members will also have the opportunity of swimming, fishing, bushwalking or exploring the nearby Botanical Gardens. **Accommodation at this venue is now fully booked,** there is however, some room left for people wishing to join us on the evening walks. See newsletter for further details. For bookings & enquiries phone Robert ph.9681-5308.

***** 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, a waiver of liability, & an assumption of risk.