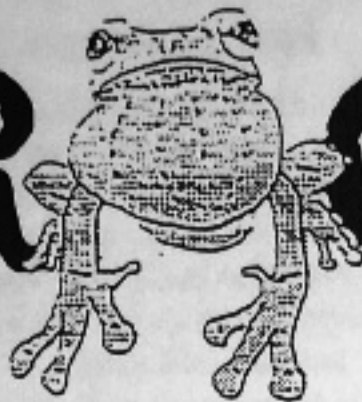


FROG CALL



NEWSLETTER No. 80
December 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



Mr Livermore (see page 3)

that venerable star of the Frogmobile



*You are invited to our next FATS meeting
at 6.30 pm for a 7.30 pm start*

Friday 2nd December 2005

*Follow signs to Building 22, Jamieson Street,
Homebush / Sydney Olympic Park*

MEETING FORMAT for 2nd December 2005

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 6.45 pm | A small number of lost frogs need homes and are ready to collect from the Frog Rescue Service. Please bring your FATS membership card & Amphibian Licence. |
| 7.30 pm | Welcome and announcements |
| 7.45 pm | Main Presenter:-
Lou Petho Unseen footage of "Still Croaking" documentary |
| 8.30 pm | Arthur White:-The Cane Toad muster at Port Macquarie |
| 9.15 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. |
| 9.30pm | Drawing of door prize, guessing competition
Light refreshments and pleasant conversation |

CONTENTS

Last meeting	p2
Main speaker:- Arthur White	p2
Homebush / SOP map	p3
Mr Livermore stars	p3
Frog Week at Bobbin Head	p3
Donations for rescued frogs	p3
Catching Mountain Clouds	p4
ADI St Marys comments needed	p5
O'Reilly's retreat	p5
Frogmobile on tour	p5
The Toad Before Christmas	p6
ARP Christmas party invitation	p7
The smell of a frog	p7
NCC fundraising & grants	p7
Rosebery, Manly and SOFAR expo photos throughout newsletter	p8
Frogstastic calendar \$10	p9
Herpdigest extracts	p10
Field trips, news clippings and committee contacts	p11 & 12

LAST MEETING 14 OCTOBER 2005

Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA) represented by Judy Harrington, Kerry Darcovic and Jenny O'Meara warmly welcomed FATS to our new spacious and well equipped heritage hall at Homebush. FATS are very lucky to have been invited to relocate to the ex naval armoury depot. We will miss the Australian Museum but look forward to regular bi-monthly frog meetings at our new homey meeting place.

As is usual by the end of winter, a large number of lost frogs were available to be adopted by FATS members.

Arthur White introduced FATS to new members. Brief announcements included the frog-talks and Frogmobile visits to SOPA Homebush, FATS fundraising at Bunnings Ashfield, frog-pond workshops at Marrickville, future FATS field trips and the cane toad muster in Port Macquarie.

The "Frog and Reptile Expo" at the Shortland Wetlands Centre, was described by Brad McPherson from the Society Of Frogs And Reptiles (SOFAR). See photos throughout the newsletter. The expo included arts and crafts displays and sales, live animals, vintage cars, honeybee displays and much more.

SOFAR membership is made up of 25% frog enthusiasts, 25% environmental interests and 50% reptile keepers. This newer herpetological group has achieved amazing and diverse success during their very short history.

SOFAR run a frog rescue and quarantine program, hold meetings every second Tuesday of the month except January, have prominent guest speakers. They hold field trips, educational days and workshops, won environmental awards, participated in the re-introduction of the Green and Golden Bell Frog to Newcastle wetlands and assisted with rehabilitation of Scotts Point habitat to name a few of their activities.

Arthur White spoke about the long and precarious history of Green and Golden Bell Frogs at Homebush Bay. In 1991 the Fauna Act was passed and for the first time frogs were legally recognised as fauna. The Green and Golden Bell frog was instantly listed on Schedule 12 as endangered. By 1992 Bell frogs at the Homebush brick-pit became an issue. Most were in Masons Park which was a tip, in an abandoned swimming pool in George Street and on the eastern side of the armament's area in the electricity corridor.

The frogs liked garbage dumps. When the people walked out the frogs walked in.

Several feisty meetings and battles were held over time about the use of the brick pit. The green Olympic games strategy contributed to the decision to protect the frogs. Fauna impact statements, work done by Alan Greer, Graham Pyke and PHD funded student Michelle Christie added to the reasons to protect the frogs. Even radio tracking was a disaster. However, the frogs survived the numerous alternative plans for the site and the outbreak of chytrid (which hasn't affected the Bell frog population size).

Our talented film-maker, Alistair MacDougall screened his Darkes Forest field trip video film clip, which included *Litoria citropa* the Blue Mountains Tree frog.

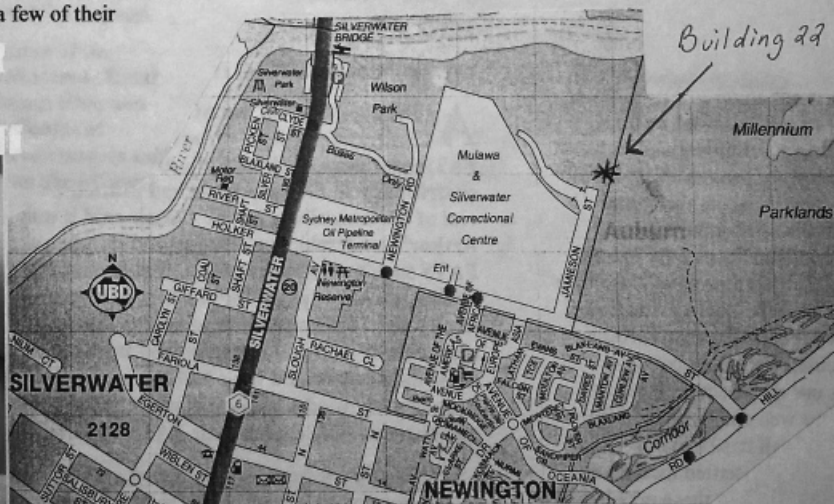
Grant Webster shared his slides and experiences of frogs in Tasmania, including the Green and Gold Frog *Litoria raniformis*, Southern (Eastern) Banjo Frogs *Limnodynastes dumerilii*, Brown Tree Frogs *Litoria ewingi*, *crinias* and the Tasmanian Tree Frog, *Litoria burrowsae*. Of the 11 species known in Tasmania the Webster family saw 7.

Lothar Voigt spoke about the Rosebery Bell frog project and requested volunteers on weekends. Please see page 11 for contact details.

Several members won lucky door prizes. The meeting finished with light refreshments and pleasant conversation. MW

An acclimatising, 10 months after being a metamorphosing.

Rosebery



The first 10 young Bell Frogs getting acclimatised before release.

Rosebery



KU-RING-GAI CHASE NATIONAL PARK 6 NOV.

IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD

FATS HAS MOVED 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 2nd of December, starting at 7.30 pm. Frogs that are available for purchase from the Frog Rescue Service will be available from 6.45 to 7.15 pm. AW

HOW DO YOU GET TO HOMEBUSH? see map

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

MR LIVERMORE STARS see front page

Mr Livermore, that venerable star of the FrogMobile has now achieved international (well national) notoriety. At the recent Frog and Reptile Expo held at the Wetlands Centre at Newcastle, Mr Livermore swept all contenders aside and easily took out the "Best Frog on Show" award.

Lothar Voigt, who accepted the prize (a frog mug) on Mr Livermore's behalf, was overcome with emotion;

"This has been the happiest day of my life" he was heard to say to someone.

There are rumours of movie deals being struck but Mr Livermore has so far refused to comment. There are also reports that an autobiography is imminent, if they can find a publisher who uses waterproof paper. AW

FROG WEEK at Bobbin Head got off to a flying start when about 90 young children and their parents came to the old stone kiosk to hear about local frogs and their environment.

A colourful display of posters and tadpoles and the frog calls of the five featured species supported the talk. After the talk Margarita led the kids in a frog chorus and then assisted by other Chase Alive volunteers told a story about river ecology with the aid of puppets. The entertainment was followed by a stroll around the boardwalk for those interested. WAG

THE NEXT MEETING

At the next meeting there will be several presentations: Lou Petho from Stony Creek Productions will be showing some previously unseen footage from the Bell Frog Documentary "Still Croaking".

Arthur White will be speaking and will discuss the recent cane toad musters at Port Macquarie.

Punia Jeffery will be showing slides and talking about her recent hiking expedition around the coast of south-western Western Australia. Frogs, lizards and wildflowers galore.

There will be a raffle on the night and tea/coffee and biscuits afterwards. AW

RESCUED FROGS

The donations required (to cover quarantine costs) 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.

If you want to collect a frog, you must be a FATS member and you will need to produce your current Amphibian Keepers Licence so that we can legally make the transfer of the frog to your keeping. No licence no frog.

Preference will be given to people who do not already have frogs from the Rescue Service. AW

CATCHING MOUNTAIN CLOUDS

Just got myself a fishing licence! Going fishing. For the frogs. Three things are preying on my mind; and they're all trying to come together now. The Bell Frog pond in Rosebery, the ARP Xmas party and the Peter Rankin Fund.

First of all, the Rosebery project which is now nearly finished. At this stage, the shallow middle pond is the only one that's planted up – and it's the only one so far with mozzie wrigglers in it. Lots and lots, all of them little tiny baby wrigglers. And it's only had water in it for a week! It urgently needs tadpole-friendly fish.

For the majority of suburban ponds where fish can't get flooded out into the wild, FATS has usually been recommending White Cloud Mountain Minnows if there is a need – often also a council requirement – to control mozzies. We know that Mountain Clouds do the job, and we know that they're reasonably (but not perfectly) tadpole friendly. They can be easily obtained from pet shops; so unlike wild-caught fish they can be got without a licence and without a great expedition effort. And they come free of any *Gambusia* by-catch. Best of all, they breed in garden ponds, need almost no maintenance and have no trouble overwintering in our Sydney climes. But: For one thing, they're not natives. For another, there are now three known places in the wild where they have been found. They may not have firmly established themselves, or they may have joined the foxes. And the lantana and a hundred other things we can do without.

Urban gardeners who want a nature pond often want a native nature pond. They might just find it more pleasing, or they might live at the edge of a bushland and very rightly don't want to risk any non-natives escaping into it. In those cases the Frogwatch Helpline (which is sometimes me, admittedly) usually recommends Pacific Blue-eyes instead of Mountain Clouds – at least where the frog species are common ones and a few more taddies eaten than otherwise would still leave plenty left over. For a Bell Frog pond, I would have concerns though – I have seen Blue-eyes nipping at taddies up to their own size. *(A purist would have some concerns anyway: Blue-eyes from pet shops are likely to be from a different catchment to ours, with the supposed problems of genetic pollution and of bringing in some other catchment's diseases. Blue-eyes you have caught from the wild run the real risk of contamination by Gambusia – the dreaded Plague-Minnow, nee Mosquito Fish – a much bigger problem for tadpoles even if all the fish stay put in your pond.)*

So for the Bell Frog pond it's for want of a better solution back to the exotic Mountain Clouds. But at least they are in good company. That garden, and all the surrounding ones, and the surrounding suburbs, are full of every type of non-native plant imaginable. So are the supermarkets, nurseries and veggie shops. And the pet shops and butcher shops are

full of non-native captive animals (or their body parts). No doubt some are more invasive than others, and maybe with a community effort a few that have not yet bolted into the wild elsewhere could be got rid of in the cities before it's too late. But how could we tell an urban gardener it's wrong to have Mountain Clouds but not wrong to have roses? I think we may need a more specific argument.

Well, maybe that argument might be found at the Central Coast, right downstream from the Australian Reptile Park at Pearl Beach – the major one of the three sites where Mountain Clouds have been found in the wild. A few months ago, the creek had flooded and there was hope that all the Mountain Clouds had been carried out to sea. But then, some more were found, so that didn't work. Two weeks ago, NSW Fisheries released lots of bass fingerlings into the creek, to eat the Mountain Clouds out. On Sunday, 4 December, before the ARP Xmas party, I'm giving the bass a hand. If you'd like to lend a hand as well and join me, we can catch that much more. Please let me know if you can come and meet me there.

If we can catch enough Mountain Clouds, I will only put the males into the Bell Frog ponds. That might give us a couple of years to think up something better to replace them with. And that is where the Peter Rankin Fund might come in.

The Peter Rankin Trust Fund for Herpetology <http://www.amonline.net.au/herpetology/staff/rankin2.htm> is named after a young herpetologist who died on a field trip in New Caledonia. The Australian Museum administers the fund and grants students and other young non-professionals \$500 – 1000 for frog- or reptile projects. One such project could be to find a better fish for suburban frog ponds. The project could be fairly straightforward, but there are quite a few “confounding variables” to consider, so you might want to bounce your thoughts off the FATS committee before you apply for funding.

As an appetiser, the Australian Smelt eats wrigglers but doesn't molest tadpoles at all, other than maybe some newborn ones. But does it breed in garden ponds? Even in small ones? How do you stop them from dying? Would any aquarium shops be prepared to stock them regularly?

And there's a whole load of other fish – tadpole – pond questions that somebody might like to do a project on, and where the answers are badly needed. Ring me up if you like, on the **Frogwatch Helpline 00419 249 728. L.V.**



Rosebery

The steam-sterilised soil arrives from Botanic Gardens. 4

FROGS AT SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

Sydney Olympic Park Authority has announced the forging of a new partnership with the Frog and Tadpole Study Group of NSW to encourage the conservation, appreciation and understanding of frogs at Sydney Olympic Park. A key role for the group will be to assist in the monitoring of the Green and Golden Bell Frog and other protected frog species located in the Park.
<http://www.sustainableinsight.com.au/newsletter/Issue0511.htm>

SAVE THE ST MARYS' ADI SITE

The NSW Planning Department has finally decided after four years to amend Sydney Regional Environmental Plan 30 St Marys (SREP 30) the plan that zones the ADI Site suitable for development and conservation. The original plan approved by Bob Carr in January 2001 only zoned a 630 ha Regional Park, that was increased by John Howard to 900ha later that year, meaning Carr's plan was redundant.

This is our chance to again put our submissions to the Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, calling for his draft amendments to be changed so that no development takes place on the remainder of the site. Comments must be received by the 21st of December 2005
<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/asp/drafts.asp>

They have included the Wetland which DIPNR calls the Secret Garden. What a disgrace as only the water is to be Regional Park yet the land either side of it can be developed. Now we have a Regional Park boundary that is even more erratic than it was, a pathetic planning outcome. We still get roads through the Regional Park (they have increased the road widening zone through the RP meaning lots of trees going). The size of the drainage basins have been slightly reduced but we still will see National Estate bushland bulldozed, four entry roads off the Northern Rd, Factories along the Northern Rd, Lend Lease can now ask Penrith Council to put more than one entry road off Ninth Ave Llandilo, bus access roads off Henry Lawson Ave Werrington City (through suburban streets) a slight decrease in the Central precinct filling area (stills looks to be about 60 ha)

Visit our website www.adisite.org and follow links from the homepage to download some letters/submissions to the NSW Planning Minister and the Mayors of Penrith and Blacktown. Copy and paste them into emails. Thanks for your ongoing support, **Geoff Brown** Convenor
ADI Residents Action Group
cwmalis@aapt.net.au 0431 222602

The Frogmobile will be at the Australia Day celebration from 12 noon to 5 pm. The Ridge Sports Complex Ovals 5 & 6 Illawarra Rd Barden Ridge Menai 26 January and Centennial Park 29 January 06

O'REILLY'S RAINFOREST RETREAT

The endangered Fleays Barred Frog will once again be a focus for Frog Week activities (4th - 9th December, 2005) at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, with the search also on for two other unusual species that don't like water quite as much as the majority of their amphibian cousins.

The strong line-up of experts promises a varied program – a good mix of science and fun, according to O'Reilly's. The health of the frog population is widely seen as a barometer of the health of the environment and a global decline in frogs has been noted over the past 15 years – but in the Lamington National Park region at least, some signs are encouraging, with Frog Week consistently produced sightings of around 30 species. Activities Manager Tim O'Reilly 1800 688 722 reservations@oreillys.com.au Amanda Tidmarsh Ph 07 5502 4900 Fax: 07 5502 0988 amanda@oreillys.com.au www.oreillys.com.au

ON TOUR IN THE FROGMOBILE

Once again, a great many thanks to all those lovely helpers without whose assistance the Frogmobile wouldn't be going anywhere. Here are a few shots from Warragah Council at Dee Why (1.6.05) and at Manly Dam (13.11.). Pittwater was with Arthur, Karen, Marion and Monica; Manly Dam with Punia, Anne Peaston and Jim Judd and daughter Georgia.

We also had a great time and an attentive crowd at SOPA (23.10) right next to the Olympic Park railway station, with Wendy, Phillip and Karen Willems.

If you could possibly spare some time as well, we would love to have you with us, as a frog explainer or just as a pair of hands. In fact, we need you very badly. We could take the Frogmobile out much more often, and that helps raise MONEY as well as awareness, if we only had a few more helping souls on board.

It would also purge you of any environmental guilt for days on end! Simply ring 9371 9129 or 0419 249 728 or email lothar@exemail.com.au. Our next Frogmobile dates are 26.1.2006 (Australia Day) at Menai and Sunday, 29.1. 2006 at Centennial Park. L.V.

SOFAR – SO GOOD!



Brad McPherson, President of the Society of Frogs and Reptiles (SOFAR) with the trophy mug won by Arthur and Karen's immensely huge fat Green Tree Frog Mr Livermore.

THE TOAD BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas a night close to Christmas, and all through the
South A warm rain was falling, after long weeks of drouth.

It didn't seem much like a night in December--
'Twas as warm and as humid as I could remember.

With the gathering clouds of a big thunder storm,
Conditions were prime for amphibian swarm.

And I, in my pickup, was driving home late,
Not knowing I'd have an encounter with Fate.

As I rode through the mist, over hills and 'round curves,
My driving was fraught with occasional swerves,

As with vigilant caution I scanned the wet roads,
Taking serious care not to squash any toads.

And every so often I'd come to a stop
(All the while at the risk of being pulled by a cop)

To move off a peeper or pickerel frog
That had hopped on the road in the gathering fog.

And as I drew nearer my home warm and dry,
The raindrops continued to fall from the sky,

When suddenly something did cause me to veer.
It wasn't a possum. It wasn't a deer.

An unusual creature moved onto the road--
It was dressed all in red, but it hopped like a toad!

I slammed on my brakes and stared into the night,
And I knew in a moment that something weren't right,

For there on the pavement before me there sat
A toad that was wearing a Santa Claus hat!

I shook my head thrice and looked back at the road.
It wasn't, it couldn't, it must be a toad!

It had a toad's face, and it had a toad's belly
That shook when it hopped, like Ambystoma jelly.

It was larger than normal, and had an odd look,
Like nothing I'd noticed in any toad book.

My heart began pounding-I'd nearly squashed flat
This "Christmas Toad" wearing the Santa Claus hat!

I looked at the Toad, and he looked back at me,
Then he took a short hop, then another, then three.

And afraid that he might disappear in the night,
I pulled off on the shoulder and grabbed my flashlight.

I leapt from my truck and ran after the Toad,
Who by this time had made his way off of the road.

He headed off into a fairly thick wood,
So I plunged in as well (though I couldn't see good).

Straight on the Toad hopped, through the darkness
before us, Toward a slightly unusual spring peeper chorus

And I thought that perhaps this was all just a dream
As I followed the Toad with my dim flashlight beam.

But I saw him ahead and continued to follow

As he headed on down toward a dark little hollow.

And I thought I could hear, as I followed along,
The Christmas Toad humming a Christmas Toad song.

And through the wet trees I pursued like a fool,
'Til I came all at once to a huge woodland pool.

And around the pool's edges (it gave me the creepers!)
Rang a "Jingle Bells" chorus of hundreds of peepers.

And almost I thought I'd been played for a joke,
Then the Toad reached the edge of the pool-and he spoke!

"Merry Christmas, my friends!" the Toad suddenly cried
(And abruptly the jingle bell frog chorus died).

"I bring you good tidings, your spirits to lift,
And for all you amphibians, here is a gift!"

And with that he reached into his huge vocal sac
And he pulled out a scepter of red, green, and black.

He waved it around like a magic toad wand,
And things started happening all over that pond!

SNIP Full version available from Frogcall editor
wangmann@tig.com.au 0418 992 766 Monica

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

The following was posted on the PARC listserv by a Cynthia Meketa. In December 1999, this was written by J. C. Beane for Valeria Kay Rice (a toad lover). I couldn't think of any better holiday message for a herper. I would also like to meet or talk to J. C. Beane and Valeria Kay Rice. So if anyone has any leads please email me. Happy Holidays To All Allen Salzberg asalzberg@herpdigest.org



The Sydney Olympic Park Authority has joined forces with the Frog and Tadpole Study Group of NSW (FATS) to help conserve endangered frogs living in the park.

The new group, formed just in time for Frog Week this week, will focus on monitoring the green and golden bell frog. The frog and tadpole study groups' first joint initiative was held over the weekend when a Frogmobile visited the Boulevard Markets. The frog fun will continue at the park on November 6, with a range of indoor and outdoor amphibious activities.

A highlight of the day will be a talk, at 2pm, by Arthur White, a frog expert, who will display frog species that can be found in the Sydney area.

CHRISTMAS PARTY INVITATION

The Australian Reptile Park has invited all FATS Group members to the annual herpetological societies' Xmas party, to be held on Sunday, 4th December. It is free to all members and begins at roughly 11 a.m. Just bring your membership card, and bring your own drinks and a maybe a bit for your barbie. How to get there:-



These parties are always good fun, not to mention the fantastic setting and the animals and all the other colourful characters you will meet. And let's not forget: tickets are normally \$20 and family ones \$52. It's the Park's Christmas present to the FATS Group. You can even combine this trip with another one in the same area. See the following article on Mountain Clouds. L.V.

Manly



FROGBITS AND TADPIECES NCC FUND-RAISING FORUM

The NCC Community Support Officer for the Sydney Metro Catchment Management Authority is currently planning community support activities for 2006. As part of this planning process a needs analysis aimed at NCC member groups is being carried out to determine how the NCC can support you in 2006! NCC's 'Fundraising Forum for Community Environment Groups' in Sydney is on Tuesday 6th December, 2005. Please feel free to contact Marnie for further information. **Marnie Kikken Community Support Officer (Community Development) Sydney Metro CMA 02 9279 2466 Fax: 02 9279 2499 Email: mkikken@nccnsw.org.au**

GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS 2005

Applications for grants under the Australian Government's GVEHO program are now open. Volunteer groups that undertake on ground works can apply for funding to assist with salaries and salary on-costs, for executive and administrative staff; office accommodation rental; electricity, gas, phone and other similar charges; essential office supplies and equipment; staff and volunteer training; photocopying and printing costs; and travel costs incurred on behalf of the organisation.

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available over the three year funding period. However, grants of higher amounts will be considered in exceptional circumstances and where there is a demonstrated need. In the case of multi-year grants, funding will be provided in 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Guidelines and

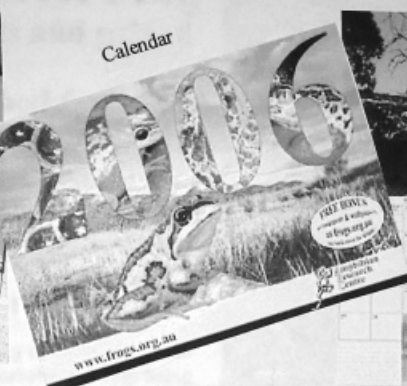
application forms for the GVEHO program are available at <http://www.deh.gov.au/programs/gveho>, by email gveho@deh.gov.au or by telephone 02 6274 2422. Applications close at 5pm on 2 December 2005.

THE SMELL OF FROGS – MICHAEL TYLER

As light relief Len Fisher draws our attention to the subject of this year's IgNobel Prize in Biology (if you aren't already aware of it).

IGNOBEL PRIZE IN BIOLOGY: Benjamin Smith of the University of Adelaide, Australia and the University of Toronto, Canada and the Firmenich perfume company, Geneva, Switzerland, and ChemComm Enterprises, Archamps, France; Craig Williams of James Cook University and the University of South Australia; Michael Tyler of the University of Adelaide; Brian Williams of the University of Adelaide; and Yoji Hayasaka of the Australian Wine Research Institute; for painstakingly smelling and cataloguing the peculiar odours produced by 131 different species of frogs when the frogs were feeling stressed. Ben Smith and Craig Williams attended the ig nobel ceremony:

Len Fisher, won the IgNobel prize (for physics, I think!) a couple of years ago for a study of the behaviour of biscuits after being dunked in tea has forwarded this item on (via Alan Lane). Len won it the year before Karl Kruszelnicki won it for a study into why bellybutton fluff is always blue! Serious stuff! Good to see Michael Tyler is in there mixing with the big guys in the international field of scientists specialising in frog odours! **Regards Alan Lane**



SOFAR1: Part of the annual frog and reptile expo, at the Shortland Wetlands Centre near Newcastle on 20.11.2005. A great expo, well done, folks!



Punia and Robert testing the concrete slab.



A rescued baby, 3 months after metamorphosis.



SOFAR2: A tank with Green and Golden Bell Frogs, just like the ones that live just outside in the famous Ramsar wetlands.

The first working bee, straight into the mud.



John and the old pool, minutes before it fell apart (with some working bee help).



Manly



The storage pond, settling pond, low pond and bog garden. Nearly finished.

Help Save Australia's Rarest Frog

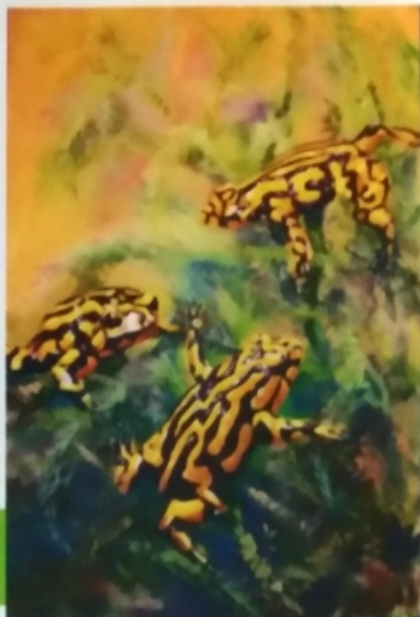
Help yourself to free frogtastic gifts and prizes!

Your \$10 donation will provide food for one baby Corroboree Frog for 6 months!

And you will get to enjoy frogs for 12 months with your free gift - a

Frogtastic 2006 Calendar and Screensaver!

All money collected will assist baby Corroboree Frogs being raised at the ARC for release to the wild at the end of 2006.



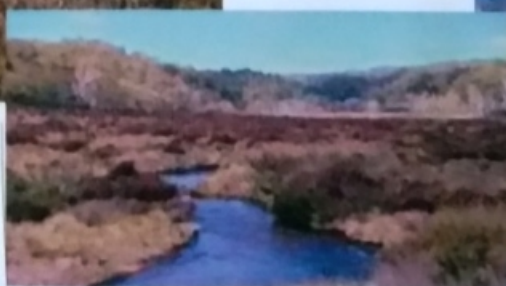
Promotional Prizes!

Each 2006 Frogtastic Calendar contains your specially coded ticket allowing you to enter the draw for a share in nearly \$5000 in prizes!

You could win an original oil painting by Jim Van Geet (above) silk screen wall hanging by Damien Mellotte (left) or even a trip to Corroboree Country (below) spending two days with some of Australia's leading frog scientists looking for Corroboree Frogs.

For all the prize details go to:

www.frogs.org.au



Calendars will be for sale at the FATS meeting on Friday

GLOBAL PLAN TO RESCUE AMPHIBIANS (Over \$400 Million Needed) extract

The price of saving the world's frogs, toads and salamanders from oblivion will top \$400m (£220m) over five years. This is the estimated cost of a global action plan drawn up during an expert summit in Washington DC, and backed by the UN's biodiversity agency IUCN. The money would pay for the protection of habitats, for disease prevention and captive-breeding projects, and for the ability to respond to emergencies. About a third of all amphibian species are at a high risk of extinction.

According to the Global Amphibian Assessment, a vast and authoritative study which reported its findings last year, almost a third of the 5,743 known species are at risk of extinction; up to 122 have disappeared within the last 25 years.

The action plan emerging from this meeting lists six major reasons behind the decline:

- habitat loss and degradation
- climate change
- chemical contamination
- infectious disease, notably chytridiomycosis
- invasive species
- over-harvesting

So widespread and so devastating is *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, the fungus responsible, that one of the main recommendations emerging in the action plan is that extensive captive-breeding programmes should be established for amphibians at particular risk. The plan envisages that, ultimately, around 1,000 species could be preserved in this way, with specialist facilities established on every continent.

The action plan sees captive breeding as a bridge to a better era when chytridiomycosis can be beaten and the amphibians returned to the wild.Part of the US\$404m would be spent on investigating ways of dealing with *Batrachochytrium*. Ideas include researching why some species are immune, which could lead to drugs or even a vaccine, though that is considered to be a long way off. Another idea is developing fungal resistance in captive populations through cross-breeding before returning them to the wild. **By Richard Black**

Environment Correspondent 19/09/05
BBC News website, Washington DC

LETHAL AMPHIBIAN FUNGUS 'IN UK' (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) extract

A fungus that is deadly to many species of amphibians has been found in wild animals in the UK for the first time. Chytrid fungus is a major contributor to the decline of amphibian populations around the world and may have already made one species extinct. Its presence was detected in American bullfrogs that had set up home in two small lakes in South-East England.. Scientists are now trying to

establish whether the fungal disease has spread to native amphibian species. ...There was a significant trade in the animals during the 1980s and 1990s, when they were sought after as pets. The European Commission banned their import in 1997 due to fears that the frogs, which have voracious appetites and are not choosy eaters, would destroy native wildlife.

By Paul Rincon, BBC News science reporter

HUMAN PREGNANCY TEST LINK TO FROG FALL (chytridiomycosis spread) extract

A disease threatening amphibians worldwide may have spread because of the use of frogs in pregnancy tests. The theory is being debated at a summit in Washington DC where scientists hope to produce an action plan to conserve frogs, toads and salamanders.

In the 1930s, African frogs were exported for use in human pregnancy tests and it is suggested they may have carried a fungal disease with them. The spread of chytridiomycosis is now a major cause of amphibian decline.

The link to pregnancy testing was proposed last year by a group of researchers led by Professor Rick Speare, of James Cook University in Townsville, Australia. They examined specimens of a South African clawed frog, *Xenopus laevis*, in museums in southern Africa. They found evidence of *Batrachochytrium* in specimens dating back to 1938. They also showed that the incidence of fungal disease in *Xenopus* in southern Africa had not changed since 1938. This suggests that frog and fungus had co-existed for a long period, with *Xenopus* developing the ability to resist infection. Thousands of *Xenopus* were exported from Africa each year, potentially carrying *Batrachochytrium* with them, and - perhaps through occasional escapes - delivering it to the habitats of other continents, where it could inflict major damage on amphibian species that were more vulnerable.

The origin and transmission of *Batrachochytrium* are key topics at the summit here, which will conclude on Monday with the release of an action plan aimed at stemming the global decline in amphibians, which sees more than 1,800 species facing extinction. The causes include habitat loss, deforestation, climate change and pollution; but fungal disease is clearly a major and perplexing threat. Understanding how some amphibians become immune to fungal infection could be a starting-point for the development of treatments or even vaccines. Many delegates emphasised the importance of putting amphibian decline in the context of broader environmental change and its impact on human societies. "I would be optimistic if people started doing something about the underlying issues such as climate change and pollution," said Professor Tim Halliday, international director of the Declining Amphibians Task Force. "But there's no sign that these things are changing." **By Richard Black, Environment Correspondent, BBC News website, Washington DC.**

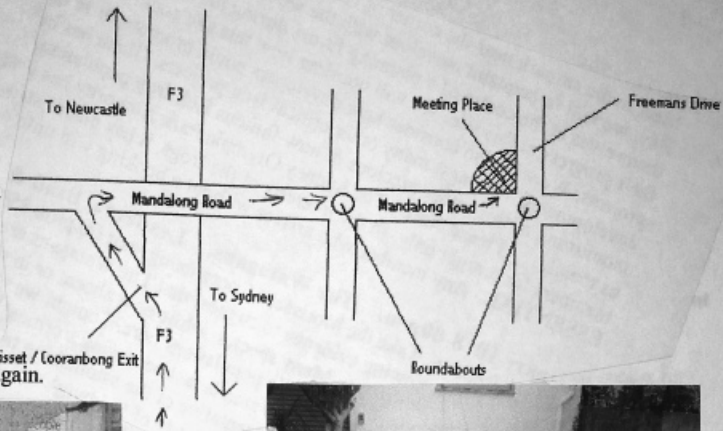
FIELDTRIP – THE WATAGANS

From the start of the F3 at Wahroonga to the Morisset / Cooranbong Exit (Mandalong Rd.) is 85km / 50 mins.

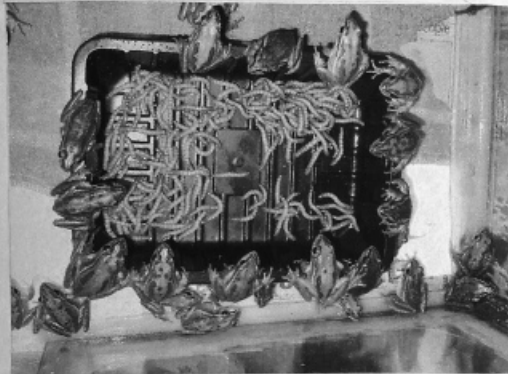
From the exit to the meeting place (corner Mandalong Rd. & Freemans Drive) is 2km / 2 mins.

Short convoy (7 mins) to the first site.

Meet at 8.00 pm. See map opposite. We will convoy between several sites. **RW**



Waiting at the rim until they're hungry again.



Bernard in the middle pond; and almost in the temporary frog house.

Rosebery

The FATS Committee

FROGWATCH HELPLINE

0419 249 728

FATS CONTACTS

	phone	email
Arthur White	President	ph/fax (02) 9599 1161 (h)
Alistair MacDougall	Chairperson	(02) 9398 9885 mob 0411 277 070
Wendy Grimm	Secretary	(02) 9144 5600 (h)
Karen White	Treasurer	ph/fax (02) 9599 1161 (h)
Andrew Nelson	Membership Officer	(02) 9411 6068
Lothar Voigt	Publicity / Exhibition Officer	ph/fax (phone first) (02) 9371 9129(h)
Punia Jeffery	Asst. Publicity / Exhib Officer	(02) 9969 1932 (h)
Robert Wall	Field Trip Co-ordinator	(02) 9681 5308 (h)
Marion Anstis	Quarantine Officer	(02) 9456 1698 (h)
David Nelson	Web Master	(02) 9411 6068 (h)
Monica Wangmann	Editorial Panel	(02) 9797 6543 (h) mob.0418 992 766
Katherine Wangmann	Editorial Panel	(02) 9797 6543 (fax 9797 0603)
		arthur.white@bigpond.com
		al@laava.com.au
		wgrimm@ar.com.au
		awnelson@optushome.com.au
		wangmann@tig.com.au

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 & 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 7.30 pm and end about 9.30 pm, on the FIRST FRIDAY of every EVEN month (February, April, June, August, October and December) at Sydney Olympic Park, building 22, RANAD the old Naval Armoury. Drive from Holker St into Jamieson Street, Homebush or request a pick up by calling 0419 249 728 IN ADVANCE for a pick up from Olympic Park Station at 6.55pm. Always check the meeting date and location in the current Frogcall newsletter. We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year. 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. Phone Robert on ph. 9681-5308.

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.

December 4. 9-00a.m. The Australian Reptile Park, Somersby. Christmas Party.
Our friends at The Australian Reptile Park have once again invited all herpetological groups to their annual Christmas Party. Gates open at 9-00a.m. but you may arrive at anytime. Bring your own food & drink. BBQ facilities are available. This is an excellent opportunity to check out all the latest exhibits. There will be many frog & reptile keepers attending, for those of you that own stock, it is an opportunity to discuss any problems you may be having with your pets. Bookings are not required but you must produce your FATS membership card to gain free entry.

January 14. 8-00p.m. The Watagans. Leaders : Brad & Matthew McCaffery / Grant Webster.
Please note the change of date for this fieldtrip! An incorrect date was posted in the last newsletter. Sorry for any inconvenience caused. Mea culpa, Rob.

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 relictual 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. 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. **This fieldtrip is now fully booked.** For 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 are preferable), 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.