

FROG CALL

NEWSLETTER No. 86
December 2006

THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC
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You are invited to our next FATS meeting
at 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start

Friday 1st December 2006

Follow signs to Building 22
Jamieson Street
off Holker Street
Sydney Olympic Park

Corroboree tadpole *Pseudophryne corroboree* photo from Marion Anstis' comprehensive book "Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia"

Join the Frogmobile helpers 11am to 4pm Sunday 28 January 2007, at Centennial Park's duck pond. Meet new people. Learn new skills. Help our frogs, whilst having fun. No previous experience required. Call Lothar on 0419 249 728 See page 9

MEETING FORMAT for 1st December 2006

- 6.30 pm Adult White Lip, Gracilenta, Fallax and Peron juvenile lost frogs need homes and are ready to collect from the Rescue Service. Please bring your FATS membership card and Amphibian Licence.
- 7.00 pm Welcome and announcements.
- 7.30 pm Main Speakers: Henry Cook will be talking about the Herpetofauna of the Kimberlys.
Lothar Voigt will be speaking about building frog ponds.
- 8.15pm 5 Favourite Slides. Tell us about your recent frogging trips or experiences. If you have slides or other images, bring them along as well. Door prize and guessing competition, followed by light refreshments and pleasant conversation.

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FATS MEETING OCTOBER 2006

In late 2005 the Victorian Amphibian Research Centre held a fund raiser for research to save the Southern Corroboree Frogs *Pseudophryne corroboree*. The magnificent frog calendar for 2006 were sold for \$10 and FATS purchased about 15 in December, raising \$150 for the Corroboree Frog project.



Prizes included a trip to Corroboree Frog country to see the endangered frogs at some of the 15 remaining sites. John and Susan Stephens from the Australian Plant Society Latrobe Valley Group and Bill (my husband) and I were the winners of the “all expenses paid” field trip.

In March 2006 our guides for this fabulous weekend field trip were Gerry Marantelli from the Victorian Frog Group and Amphibian Research Centre (ARC) and Dave Hunter from the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation. They invited us to Kosciuszko National Park. (Dave Hunter had given a presentation to FATS at our August meeting.)

The trip by car from Sydney took 6.5 hours. Bill and I arrived at about 5pm on Saturday afternoon. The winding roads and scenery of Kosciuszko National Park were spectacular with diverse flora and fauna such as wild horses, emus, kangaroos, wombats, copperhead snakes and many varieties of insects and birds.

Monica Wangmann with female Mountain Grasshopper



We had just arrived, when Dave caught a female Mountain Grasshopper *Acripeza reticulata*. Her beautiful vivid red and blue colours were spectacular. Gerry photographed it. When I came home I tried to identify it but there were no pictures even similar on the web or in my field guides. Martyn Robinson from the Australian Museum said that the photo was exceptionally good and that there were very few decent photos of female Mountain Grasshoppers available. I'm hoping that the photos will end up in the ARC web page so that it might be internationally accessible to others.

The scientific cabin, on a hill, was of unexpected comfort, with a large dormitory, huge windows overlooking the expansive landscape, separate bathroom, shower, flush toilet and eat in kitchen.

On Saturday night we drove to local pond to see endangered Alpine Tree Frogs *Litoria verreauxii alpina*. The pond area was extremely dry but we were lucky enough to find three metamorphs. Their population size is known to be decreasing.

Suspected threatening processes include:

- Direct human impact / urbanisation / tourism
- Inappropriate catchment management, including degraded water quality
- Exotic predators (e.g. trout, Gambusia)
- UV-B
- Disease/pathogens (e.g. chytrid fungus, viruses)
- Global warming and other climate changes
- Habitat modification (e.g. vegetation clearing, invasive weeds)



Alpine Tree Frog metamorph *Litoria verreauxii alpina*

On Sunday, thanks to our guides, we visited a mountain fire tower which has restricted access. Whilst enjoying a sumptuous picnic lunch, surrounded by spectacular views of the Jagungal Park, we experienced a butterfly congregation also known as mountain-topping, an important social event in the life cycle of many butterflies. (See page



John and Susan Stephens, Australian Plant Society on the fire tower, Jagungal Wilderness March 2006.

Many of the field trip photos and the sound file of Dave Hunter calling the Corroboree Frogs and their feeble responses (it was getting cold) were from John Stephens. When the calls were played at our meeting you could even hear the flies buzzing. What an excellent digital camera John. Thank you so much John and Susan.

Alpine Tree Frog metamorphs



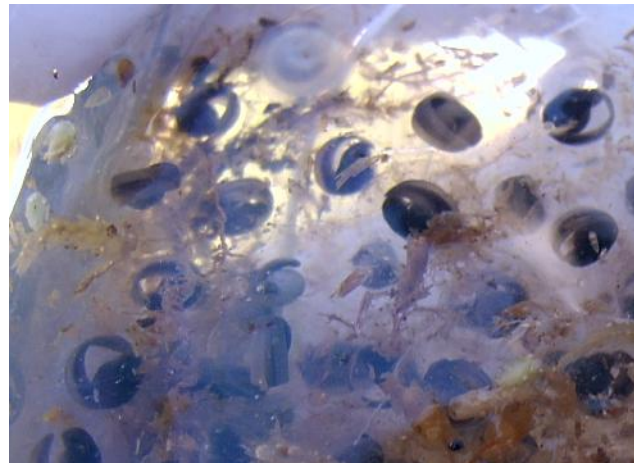
On Sunday afternoon we traveled to three of the 15 known Corroboree Frog sites. At each site our shoes were sprayed to prevent cross infection.

At the first site there were no frogs calling.

At the second site, one frog was calling in response to Dave's calls. It may have been from Gerry's earlier release of tadpoles or frogs two years ago. Dave and Gerry harvested over 100 eggs from one nest. These will be raised into tadpoles and metamorphs and returned to the remaining viable sphagnum moss bog sites.

The rescue program to save this species from imminent extinction is an integrated effort by Federal and State government departments and community groups. Members of this collaborative effort include the Federal CSIRO laboratory in Geelong (you may remember Lee Berger from there and her work on Chytrid), the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation and the Amphibian Research Centre. Gerry Marantelli from the ARC has personally funded a great deal of the rescue costs.

Corroboree Frog spawn rescued March 2006



The third site had one male caller whose nest had been trashed probably by a wombat.

All sites suffer from the invasion of *Crinia signifera*. Most of this species carry chytrid and are locally known as "Typhoid Mary".

Many thanks to Gerry Marantelli, Dave Hunter, Lydia Fucsko, John and Susan Stephens, David Nelson, Katherine Wangmann and Marion Anstis for their help in making the trip so memorable and/or making the presentation possible at the FATS meeting. **Monica Wangmann**

Underbelly of Southern Corroboree Frog



**LOSS AND/OR DEGRADATION OF SITES
USED FOR HILL-TOPPING BY
BUTTERFLIES - KEY THREATENING
PROCESS DECLARATION**

(extracts from the web site)

NSW Scientific Committee - final determination.

The Scientific Committee, established by the Threatened Species Conservation Act, has made a Final Determination to list the "Loss and/or degradation of sites used for hill-topping by butterflies" as a KEY THREATENING PROCESS on Schedule 3 of the Act. Listing of Key Threatening Processes is provided for by Part 2 of the Act.

The Scientific Committee has found that:

1. Hill-topping in butterflies is a very complex behaviour that often facilitates meeting of the sexes (Shields, 1967; Atkins, 1975; Common and Waterhouse, 1981; Baughman and Murphy, 1988; Sands, 1993; New, 1997; Newland, 1997). Hill-tops act as a focus for mating. Many butterfly species, especially in the families Hesperidae, Papilionidae and Lycaenidae appear to be obligatory hill-toppers and tend to congregate on hill or ridge tops that are usually higher than the surrounding countryside. The nature of the sites varies and a site may be as small as a few square metres or may cover several hectares, or display minor or very marked topographic relief. The same sites are used year after year, whilst apparently similar nearby sites may not be used. Sites do not necessarily provide nectar food sources for the butterflies nor food plants for the next generation of caterpillars. Hill-top aggregations are essential for continuity of the reproductive cycle of some butterfly species, and hill-top sites may constitute vital focal points for such aggregations. The importance of hill-topping sites is out of proportion to their extent, so that a small area can be vital to the survival of species over a larger area (Smithers 1996). Hill-topping is often found in species which seasonally or habitually have low density populations and which have a greater need to facilitate male - female encounters, such as in the drier areas of NSW (G. Newland pers. comm). Well known examples of butterfly hill-topping sites are Mt Warning, Razorback Lookout, Lions Lookout, Peates Mountain Mt Ramornie (all in northern NSW), Mt Sugarloaf, near Newcastle and Cook Trig in Wahroonga. The importance of butterfly hill-topping sites has been recognised in the nomination and listing of Mt Ramornie (Nymboidea Invertebrate Habitat), on the Register of the National Estate.

2. Hill-topping butterflies are almost entirely males that frequently take flights over the area. distant on which to lay their eggs.

3. Hill-top physiognomy is important to hill-topping butterfly species (Smithers, 1996; New 1997). Small

changes in the appearance of a site can result in males not recognising it as a suitable site.....

5. Butterflies which hill-top in NSW and whose populations could become threatened if hilltopping sites were lost include: Hesperidae such as *Neohesperilla xanthomera* and *Hesperilla crypsigramma*; Lycaenidae such as *Acrodipsas arcana*, *Acrodipsas brisbanensis*, *Acrodipsas cuprea*, *Acrodipsas mortoni*, *Acrodipsas myrmecophila*, *Ogyris genoveva*, *Ogyris olane*, *Ogyris oretes*, *Deudorix epijarbas* and *Candalides cyprotus*; and Theclinae such as *Hypochrysops ignitus* and *Hypochrysops delica*.

Proposed Gazettal date: 20/04/01 Exhibition period: 20/04/01 – 25/05/01

Record of hearing and Court's judgement; Ku-ring-gai Council-ats-Lean; Premises 153 - 165 Grosvenor Street Wahroonga; Land and Environment Court Proceedings No. 10457 of 1996.

<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Loss+and+or+degradation+of+sites+used+for+hill+topping+by+butterflies+key+threatening+process+declaration> EXTRACTS ONLY

LITORIA VERREAUXII ALPINA VERREAUX'S FROG

Description: The colour patterns of this frog vary a lot between individuals. The lowland populations can range from fawn, brown to red-brown on their backs with darker flecks. A dark broad band starts between the eyes and runs down the back. This broad band is divided by a pale stripe running down the spine. A dark stripe runs from the nostril to the eye. Behind the eye the stripe broadens to enclose the tympanum (tight membrane covering the entrance to the ear) and then breaks into a series of blotches down the side of the body. A white stripe runs from below the eye to the base of the arm. The groin and thighs are yellow or red-orange, and the groin has black spots or blotches.

The mountain populations of this frog are similar to the lowland forms except the patches on the back and sides are green with brown edges. Frogs from both populations have: white, granular bellies; smooth or granular skin on the back with a few low warts; small finger and toe discs; and half webbed toes.

Size: 30 mm

Habitat: This frog lives in a variety of habitats including wet and dry sclerophyll forests, alpine grasslands and bogs, plus coastal swamps and lagoons.

Call: A "weep...weep...weep" sound.

Breeding: Males from mountain populations call during spring summer and early autumn, often after rain. Males in lowland populations call most of the year, but breed mainly from late winter to summer. Population trend in Australia over the past 50 years: Population size known to be decreasing.

References

- Anstis, M. 2002. *Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia*. Reed New Holland: Sydney.
- Barker, J., G.C. Grigg and M.J. Tyler. 1995. *A Field Guide to Australian Frogs*. Surrey Beatty & Sons: Chipping Norton.
- Cogger, H.G. 2000. *Reptiles and amphibians of Australia*. Reed Books: Sydney.

Robinson, M. 2002. *A Field Guide to Frogs of Australia*. Australian Museum/Reed New Holland: Sydney.

http://frogsaustralia.net.au/frogs/display.cfm?frog_id=191 **EXTRACTS ONLY**

ALPINE TREE FROG - ENDANGERED SPECIES LISTING NSW SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE - FINAL DETERMINATION

The Scientific Committee, established by the Threatened Species Conservation Act, has made a Final Determination to list the Alpine Tree Frog *Litoria verreauxii alpina* (Fry 1915), as an ENDANGERED SPECIES on Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Act. Listing of Endangered species is provided for by Part 2 of the Act.

The Scientific Committee has found that:

1. The Alpine Tree Frog *Litoria verreauxii alpina* (Fry 1915), is a sub-species of the broadly distributed Whistling Tree Frog *L. verreauxii*. *Litoria verreauxii alpina* is distinguished from *L. v. verreauxii* by the presence of dorsal green or olive markings, extensive dorsal warting, and by its greater size. The Alpine Tree Frog is listed as Vulnerable under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.
2. The Alpine Tree Frog is the only tree frog known to occur above the winter snowline on mainland Australia. Formerly, the sub-species occurred throughout the alpine and sub-alpine high-country of NSW and Victoria (Green and Osborne 1994), where it was known to utilise a large variety of habitats for breeding, including bog pools, wet grassland, fens, streamside pools and artificial dams (Hunter et al. 1997).
3. During spring and summer of 1996 to 1997, surveys were undertaken that targeted historical Alpine Tree Frog locations in the Bimberri Range and Snowy Mountains, as well as sites in Victoria on the Buffalo Plateau, Bogong High Plains and Davies Plain (Hunter et al. 1997, Osborne et al. 1999). These surveys demonstrated that the Alpine Tree Frog had undergone a dramatic decline throughout its range, had apparently disappeared from the alpine zone and was extremely rare in sub-alpine areas.
4. In NSW, the Alpine Tree Frog is currently known from two man-made ponds and five natural ponds, all within Kosciuszko National Park. Alpine Tree Frogs were last recorded at an alpine site in 1998 through identification of two calling males, although subsequent investigations have not been able to relocate the sub-species at this site (D. Hunter, W. Osborne and K. Green, pers. comm.).
5. As for many Australian frog species, a strong altitudinal relationship is evident in the decline of the Alpine Tree Frog. Increased exposure to ultra-violet (UV) radiation at high altitude, resulting from atmospheric ozone depletion, has been implicated as a likely contributing factor. The Alpine Tree Frog appears

to be more susceptible to UV radiation than the sympatric Common Eastern Froglet, *Crinia signifera* (Broomhall 1997). Species-specific differences in the impact of exposure to UV radiation on hatching success and development have also been demonstrated in North American amphibians (Blaustein et al. 1995).

6. Stochastic events may lead to the extinction of the Alpine Tree Frog at the seven remaining breeding locations. The two man-made ponds are susceptible to pollution by run-off from nearby busy roads. The five natural ponds are subject to drying during drought years. Moreover, all breeding locations are vulnerable to trampling by feral horses and livestock.

7. In view of the above points, the Scientific Committee is of the opinion that the Alpine Tree Frog *Litoria verreauxii alpina*, is likely to become extinct in nature in New South Wales unless the circumstances and factors threatening its survival or evolutionary development cease to operate.

Proposed Gazettal date: 15/03/02 Exhibition period: 15/3 – 19/4/02
<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/npws.nsf/Content/Alpine+tree+frog+++endangered+species+listing> **EXTRACTS ONLY**

PSEUDOPHRYNE CORROBOREE SOUTHERN CORROBOREE FROG

Description: This frog has bright yellow and black striped markings on the top and sides of its body and legs. The belly is marbled black and white or black and yellow. The skin on the back is slightly granular with low warts. The warts form ridges that run down the length of the body. The skin on the belly is smooth. The toes are not webbed.

Size: 30 mm Habitat: This frog lives in the Australian Alps. It is found in marshlands and sclerophyll forests under logs and vegetation. It likes to breed in the sphagnum bogs.



Gerry Marantelli and Dave Hunter calling Corroboeree Frogs - Kosciuszko National Park March 2006

Call: A short, grating "ark" repeated at regular intervals.

Breeding: This frog has a short breeding season because it lives in such cold environments. In the summer months males call from concealed sites in sphagnum bogs and mating occurs in depressions in the sphagnum moss. Females lay their eggs in nests that are hollowed out near the roots of sphagnum clumps. The embryos develop inside the eggs and the tadpoles hatch out when the winter rains or the melting snow (in spring) flood the nest.

Eggs: Are 3.5 mm in diameter and laid in clutches of 10-30.

Tadpoles: Are small in size and black to brown in colour. As the tadpoles approach metamorphosis their gold and black colour patterns become evident.

Conservation Information

Suspected threatening processes

Direct human impact/urbanisation/tourism

Inappropriate catchment management, including degraded water quality

Exotic predators (e.g. trout, *Gambusia*)

Disease/pathogens (e.g. chytrid fungus, viruses)

Global warming and other climate changes

Habitat modification (e.g. vegetation clearing, invasive weeds)

Population size: An estimate of the total number of adults present in the species entire range is 0-1000 individuals. Some factors affecting population size and distribution are known, but 1 or more major factors are unknown.

Population trend in Australia over the past 50 years: Population size known to be decreasing.

Knowledge of population trend in Australia: Nation-wide monitoring with statistical sensitivity, or nearly complete census.

Population concentration: Majority concentrates at more than 25 locations. (e.g. the number of sites in which individuals group together either seasonally, such as breeding sites, or they may occupy discrete habitat patches within the broader landscape, such as discrete water bodies or drainage units.)

Ongoing management activities in Australia: Some direct management/interventionist (i.e. manipulation of natural populations) activities in addition to enforcement of conservation law.

Reproductive potential for recovery: The average number of eggs deposited per adult female per year is 1-50 eggs/female/year. Minimum age at which females are known or suspected to first reproduce is 4-6 years.

Range size in Australia: The size of the geographic area over which the taxon is distributed: < 100 km².

Distribution trend: Area occupied has declined by 75-100%. (This is an estimate of change in the portion of the total range that is occupied or utilised; it may not equal the change in total range.)

Knowledge of distribution in Australia: Distribution is well known and occurrence can be accurately predicted throughout the range.



Dave Hunter with Corroboree Frog March 2006

References

Anstis, M. 2002. *Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia*. Reed New Holland: Sydney.

Barker, J., G.C. Grigg and M.J. Tyler. 1995. *A Field Guide to Australian Frogs*. Surrey Beatty & Sons: Chipping Norton.

Cogger, H.G. 2000. *Reptiles and amphibians of Australia*. Reed Books: Sydney.

Robinson, M. 2002. *A Field Guide to Frogs of Australia*. Australian Museum/Reed New Holland: Sydney.

Swan, G. 2001. *Green Guide to Frogs of Australia*. New Holland: Sydney.

http://frogsaustralia.net.au/frogs/display.cfm?frog_id=74

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2005-2006

2005-2006 was a time of upheaval for FATS. After more than ten years at the Australian Museum, FATS has moved on and taken residence at Sydney Olympic Park. This move was not lightly taken as we had many good friends at the Museum. We polled the membership and found that many were happy with the proposed move, some, of course, were not. The move has been a positive one and one that will send FATS in other directions and allow us to reach a new group of people. Many thanks to Jenny O'Meara, Kerry Darkovic and Judy Harrington from SOPA for their help and support during this move.

The holding of our meetings at Newington has seen a change in the members who attend our meetings. Unfortunately, some of our steadfast membership are no longer able to attend, but we have slowly picked up some new faces at the meetings. One activity that FATS was involved with at Sydney Olympic Park were the auditory surveys for Green and Golden Bells Frogs. We will be carrying out more of these surveys in November for all who would like to be involved.

Overall, our membership remains healthy and the Society has been involved in many activities throughout the year. 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 our 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.

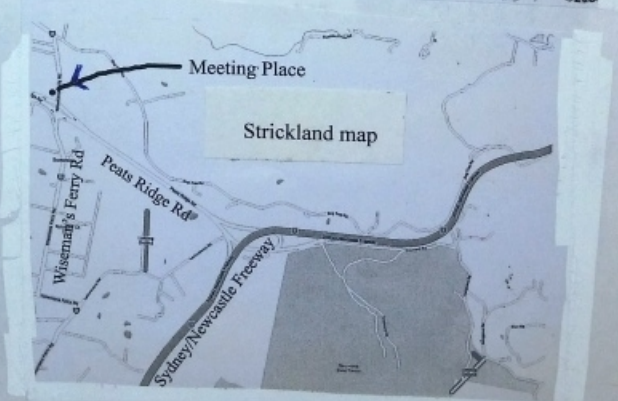
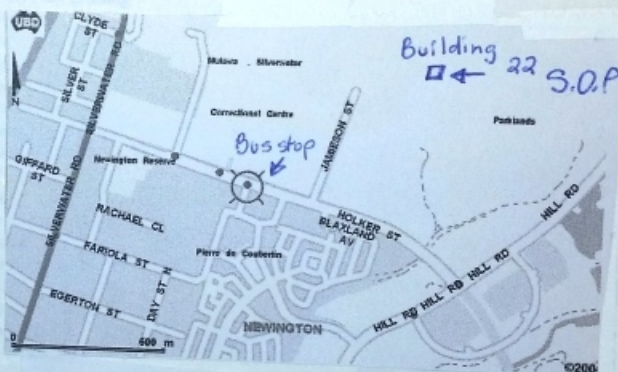
But we also have those who work behind the scenes to keep the Society functional: Elvira Lanham has been our new and very efficient Secretary (with the help of Wendy Grimm), Karen White our Treasurer and controller of the purse, Andrew Nelson maintains our membership lists and David Nelson looks after our web site (with help from Steve Weir). Robert Wall again organised a full program of field trips and Alistair MacDougall has been our Chairman for the past year. 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.

One of the issues facing the executive this year is the future of the FrogMobile. This large display trailer is an effective means of displaying frogs and promoting FATS but it has two big drawbacks: to warrant its expenses the FrogMobile needs to be used regularly and this has exhausted the supply of volunteers who normally assist FATS with displays, secondly, the FrogMobile needs money for maintenance and running costs. At present, the FrogMobile continues to attend functions because Lothar is prepared to push its use constantly. Its long-term use may be as a commercial operation should FATS be unable to provide people to assist with its setup and management.

The Rosebery Green and Golden Bell Frog project came to a successful conclusion early this year, thanks largely to Lothar. As this population is still in a precarious position FATS may initiate the second step in the conservation of this highly endangered population. Stay tuned for details as they emerge.

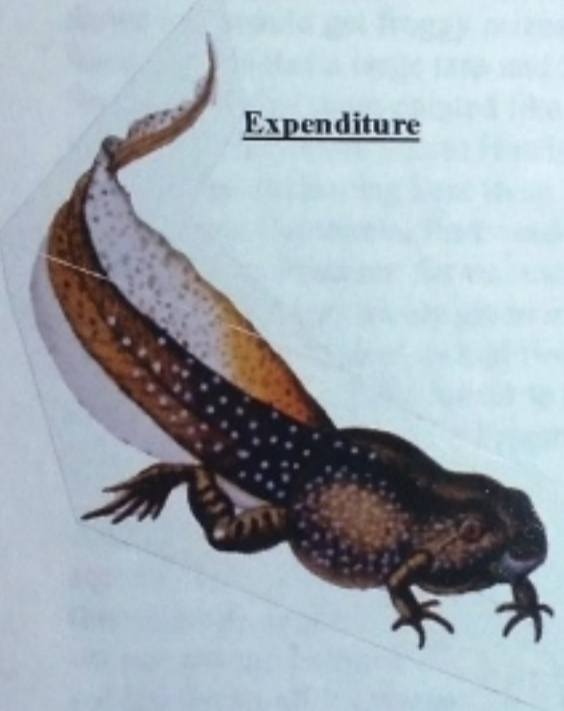
Finally, I invite all of you present to think about helping FATS to continue to function as an active Society. Please do not think that you have to be a frog "know-all" to help, most of our executive are general members who enjoy FATS, frogs and being useful. **Arthur White**



FREE Frogs of Sydney poster FATS designed it for easy recognition of frogs within the greater Sydney region. For those who didn't attend the last meeting, we will give out a free poster to every member/(family) who attends the December meeting. Please bring your FATS membership card for "stamping".

**Frog and Tadpole Study Group
Statement of Income & Expenditure
For the Year 01/07/05 – 30/06/06**

	01/07/04 – 30/06/05		01/07/05 – 30/06/06
Opening Balance	\$ 8717.99		\$15481.64
<u>Income</u>			
	\$ 364.96	Interest	\$ 1023.54
	\$ 5000.00	Matured IBD's	
	\$ 6477.00	Membership	\$ 6736.00
	\$ 694.00	Sundry Income	\$ 334.00
	\$ 645.00	Donations	\$ 530.00
		Grants	\$ 2000.00
	\$ 443.00	Sales	\$ 363.00
	\$ 443.00	Auction/Raffle	\$ 332.00
	\$ 2333.00	Rescue Frog Donations	\$ 1925.00
	\$ 150.00	Sales – Tadpole Book	\$ 90.00
	\$ 1209.00	Field Trip Income	\$ 1622.00
	\$ 1602.00	Frogmobile Income	\$ 3250.00
		Community Broadcasting	\$ 3890.00
		Airport Frog Donations	\$ 1921.00
		Sausage Sizzle Income	\$ 1539.00
<u>Total Deposits</u>	\$10469.96		\$25556.24
	\$28187.95		\$41037.88
<u>Expenditure</u>			
	\$ 10.00	Bank Charges	\$ 5.00
	\$ 41.00	Dept Of Fair Trading	\$ 42.00
	\$ 720.00	Insurance	\$ 700.00
	\$ 932.53	Printing – Sundry	\$ 494.04
	\$ 1664.00	Printing – Frogcall	\$ 1431.88
	\$ 1028.17	Postage – Frogcall	\$ 1094.68
	\$ 307.71	Postage – Sundry	
	\$ 492.83	Stationery	\$ 60.26
	\$ 89.00	Post Box Hire	\$ 95.00
	\$ 1089.00	Field Station Hire	\$ 1540.00
	\$ 1212.75	Herpetofauna	\$ 1331.55
	\$ 85.80	Sales – Expenditure	\$ 160.00
	\$ 130.00	Subscriptions	\$ 70.00
	\$ 1875.43	Sundry Expenses	\$ 467.58
	\$ 497.26	Mobile Phone	\$ 503.67
	\$ 2530.83	Frogmobile Expenses	\$ 8264.19
		Sausage Sizzle Expenses	\$ 757.52
		Term Deposit	\$10000.00
<u>Total Payments</u>	\$ 12706.31		\$27017.37
<u>Closing Balance</u>	\$ 15481.64		\$ 14020.51
<u>TOTAL FATS ASSETS</u>	04/05		05/06
Cash in Bank	\$ 15481.64		\$ 14020.51
Investments	\$ 17114.65		\$ 27117.45



styro boxes for raindance pond.



photo Lothar Voigt

Winner of a 5-box tree frog pond,



"Mmmm my first experience of water outside the womb - where are the frogs?"
Birth of Lewis Hahn 3 Oct. 2006 Congatulations to our assistant secretary Elvira Lanham and Michael.

WHERE HAS THE FROGMOBILE BEEN?

It went to Baulkham Hills Council's Sustainability Fair on Saturday, 14 October. Showground Road came alive with the sound of frogs, with sterling help from Wendy and Phillip.

On Sunday, 22 October we went to Sydney Olympic Park, and park we did. We parked the Frogmobile right in front of the railway station again. But I had no idea how one of its corner posts got so bent on the way. There was no way of winching the roof up like this. A forklift driver, frazzled as he was at first, responded kindly to our frogs' and our own plight. He simply reached up – and up – and soon had us straightened out. With Punia, Arthur and Karen, I was soon surrounded by swarms of cyclists. We had fallen into the Festival of Cycling cauldron, and we must have convinced quite a few that cycling and frogging go well together.

And then it was FROGWEEK! ABC 702 Radio's Ian McNamara and Simon Marnie stirred the pot, Centennial Park's events calendars told everyone, and even those who only read Column 8 knew about it. This time we wanted to set up a big wading pond for a raindance, just to make a splash. The public would be spruiked into the pond and dance and would get froggy prizes. We had the prizes all lined up. We had a large tarp and 50 broccoli styro boxes lined up, half of them painted like sandstone blocks. (There is a big thank you to Harris Markets and three Coles shops for having kept them for us.) We had John Martin from Centennial Park wade into the lily pond for us and dig water lilies out for us, and *Juncus kraussii*, an emergent that stays nicely green even in winter. And if that was not enough, one of us had fleeting thoughts of engaging a proper belly dancer to lead the raindancing and to whisk herself around the Frogmobile! After all, frogs are going belly-up, aren't they?

Alas, the raindance had to be cancelled, due to rainy, squally weather. But the rest of the show went on. With the unfailing help of Paul Solomon from Centennial Park, we opened the Frogmobile up, Karen took up position behind the small frogs table and handed out froggy lolly bags, Arthur indoctrinated innocent families with young kids into liking frogs, Punia dragged audiences over for me to talk to about the tree frog ponds we had set up, and there were people we had never seen before who started helping, too. There was Tanya from Parramatta who pinned posters to styro boxes, put a brick inside so they wouldn't blow over and then stood them all along the road. There was her sister-in-law Sheila Roberts from Gosford who was busy setting everything up with us. She had travelled all the way down to see the Frogmobile! And, as luck would have it, she won a tree frog pond to take all the way back home with her.

The Frogmobile's next appearance at Centennial Park will be on Sunday, 28th January. We will set up the big wading pond for you then. For the Frogdance. L.V.



Olympic Park frog and train station

Field-trip Report: Scheyville National Park.

On Saturday night we went out looking for frogs. There were lots of frogs because it was raining. Grant showed me how to hold a frog. We had a really good time. Thank-you to Grant and Robert and the team. James (age 7) and Natasha. (age 9). This fieldtrip report was accompanied by some fabulous froggy artwork. R.W.



Pushing roofpost straight



Touch n go

Field-trip Report : Darkes Forest.

Today, Marion came along to lend her expertise on tadpoles & soon we were scooping up all sorts of different tadpoles. We began at a conveniently located dam with lots of reeds around the perimeter & some nice shallow sides that are good for tadpoles. Amongst other things, we picked up the very distinctive *Paracrinia haswelli*. – well it was distinctive *after* Marion had pointed the differences out. We looked at some species typical of pond dwellers then went up the road to Maddens Creek to look at some of stream dwellers. Amongst other things we picked up *L. citropa*, & *Lim. Dumerilii*. Thanks Marion for a wonderful afternoon spent by the cascading waters of Maddens Creek. R.W.

Frogweek 06 at Centennial Park, photo Lothar Voigt



Directions for Strickland Forest Fieldtrip.

Take F3 expressway north. Turn-off at the SECOND Peats Ridge Rd. exit. After approx. 2km exit & turn right into Wisemans Ferry Rd. Travel 150m then park on the left. RW

A tub pond for tree frogs, photo Lothar Voigt



LAST FATS MEETING (continued from page 2)

George Mandani spoke about a comprehensive fauna survey in the Northern Territory, conducted in the dry season, at two cattle properties covering millions of acres. Both unexpected and possibly new species were observed.

About 15 species of frogs, 80 herps, 140 birds, including the rare grey falcon, 12 bats, numerous mammals, skinks and other animals were found. Dingo scats indicated the presence of golden bandicoots. The FATS committee hopes that George will continue his presentation at a future meeting.

Grant Webster spoke about the Mudgee / Dubbo trip. His slides included many species of frog such as *Litoria peronii* that were everywhere and the Spotted Grass Frogs. Whilst looking for *Litoria booroolongensis* at the Turon River, Grant came across *Litoria wilcoxi*. He could hear Eastern Froglets and Banjo Frogs calling. He found two Booroolong frogs on the edge of a river.

George Mandani and Arthur White continued with the earlier presentation and spoke about the Bradshaw Period of rock art, rock art surveys, local indigenous culture, the likely origin of the huge Boab trees in Northern Australia.

Arthur White described the continuing nomenclature upheavals for about sixteen species of Lords of the Marshes, *Limnodynastes* frogs. Is it truly just one species, despite the protein differences uncovered by biochemical analysis? We thank our presenters for sharing their experiences with us. Our meeting ended with the winning of door prizes and the serving of light refreshments. **MW**

Depending on the listener, the sounds of an evening outdoors in Southwest Florida are either a jumbled mass of funky noises or a choral symphony of territorial frogs. A discerning ear can tell the difference. Some of the best listeners head into the night just after dusk the third Wednesday of every month during rainy season. The citizen scientists and Florida Gulf Coast University students and

professors listen for frogs, but what they hear tells them about the health of Southwest Florida's ecosystem.



On a recent Wednesday, the intensity of the "baaaaaaaa, baaaaaaa, baaaaaaa" calls told them how many narrow mouth toads were in an area. When they heard the sound of marbles rubbing together, they knew the cricket tree frog was near. And the sound of squeaky shoes drowning out everything else was bad news because it meant the invasive Cuban tree frog was taking over. What's worse, though, was silence. The presence, diversity and abundance of frogs can indicate how well an ecosystem is doing, said Win Everham, a professor of marine and ecological sciences at FGCU. "Frogs are a good measure of the health of water quality," Everham said.

Madeline Goncalves, a Ph.D. candidate in marine biology and exchange student at Florida Gulf Coast University, holds a Cuban tree frog, an invasive species to Southwest Florida, in the palm of her hand in Estero on Wednesday night. Goncalves, along with a group of students and scientists led by Win Everham, an FGCU marine and ecological science professor, spent several hours on Wednesday night patrolling the periphery of the FGCU campus listening to frogs to monitor habitat health. **Daily News USA By Julio Ochoa sent to FATS by Cameron Webb**

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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.

A drown-safe dog pond

WATER AND STEEP SIDES DON'T MIX

Did you notice the garbage bin in the photo with the 50 styro boxes? Here it is again. That bin has been standing next to the Frogmobile for weeks. It ran full of rain water and became a death trap for a family of mynah birds.

Next picture. Same problem here, only this time out there in nature. We are in western South Australia, looking for reptiles, digging for marsupial moles and having a stroll on this enormous rock slab sticking out of the red sand dunes. Father emu and his seven chicks had a stroll there too. They found water to drink. But the chicks couldn't get out. They were already as big as geese and must have been able to stand in there for a long time, up to their necks.

These potholes on their giant rock slabs attract all sorts of wildlife, often fatally as you can see. Harald and I cleaned a number of them out, shovelled the kangaroo bones out and put branches in. The branches will of course be gone in a few decades; the rock holes will then be active traps again. (One such hole we scraped out is famous now. Once, in the 1880s, it attracted 12 of the fabled night parrots, and they all got bagged by a certain Fred Andrews, the equivalent of Bin Laden in ornithology circles.)

One steep-sided rockhole was smothered in *Nymphoides*, a native pond lily, with both tadpoles and adults of *Neobatrachus pictus*, the Painted Burrowing Frog. How they are supposed to get out is a mystery, but the tads eat the greens and the frogs can live on the tads and probably stay put. There wouldn't have been much burrowing opportunity on that giant flat rock slab anyway.

Out in South Australia's sheep country, just this side of the dingo fence, we climbed up into a big open-topped water tank. We badly needed a swim (it was 43 °C), and Harald had this idea that tanks attract bats which skim over the surface to drink and then sometimes come to grief. So, we climbed up and there, inches from our faces, floated our first drowned sheath-tailed bat. Scraping the tank's bottom with a very long-poled net, we dredged up a huge pile of bird bones as well, probably from galahs. Needless to say, we had our swim anyway.

That evening there were bats skimming over a large dam. As we watched, one stumbled in but then expertly swam to the gently sloping edge, from where it took off with no trouble at all. If those stock tanks only had some floating wooden island, maybe they wouldn't fill up with so many skeletons.

We all know of swimming pools where Striped Marsh Frogs drown in, because there's no floating island tethered to one or two of the corners.

My first large pond did have gently sloping sides, made with a slippery PVC liner. But after our puppy drowned in there, I quickly put a black shadecloth over the liner and weighed it down with a few planter pots. Solved that problem. (And the shade cloth also lets lots of good bacteria sit on its surface to eat the poisons out of the water, plus it protects the liner from the worst wear and tear.)

So, that's why for Frogweek we demonstrated various designs of small ponds for tree frogs, where other animals have little chance of getting in, or if they do, where they should be able to get out again. I will show you a few ponds like that at the next meeting. **L.V.**



Drowned mynah birds in bin



Drowned emu chicks in rock hole, S.A.



Harald Ehmann at *N. pictus* rock hole, S.A.



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.

Sunday, December 3. The Australian Reptile Park, Somersby. Christmas Party.

Once again our friends at the Australian Reptile Park have invited FATS to join in with other herpetological groups for the annual Christmas bash. You are free to check out the latest exhibits. Bring your own food & drink. BBQ facilities are available. Gates open at 9.00a.m, but you may arrive at anytime. No bookings are required, but you must produce your membership card to gain free entry.

December 9. 8-30p.m. Heathcote. Leader : George Madani.

Meet at Heathcote railway station, Wilson Pde, Heathcote. Poised at the edge of an ever-expanding Sydney suburbia, Heathcote remains curiously rich in froglife. This is no doubt due to the rich mixture of micro-habitats it possesses. Tonight, we will look at these various habitats. We will also examine some of the problems & pressures that an intruding city can exert upon wildlife habitat. George is most at home amongst the vastness & remoteness of the Kimberley region. His lengthy work here has seen him gain a familiarity with some of the least-known & least-understood frogs & reptiles in Australia. Tonight, in between his outback commitments, he will spotlight his favourite Sydney locality.

January 20. 8-15p.m. Strickland Forest - Gosford. Leaders : Brad & Matthew McCaffery.

See directions inside for meeting place. The Hawkesbury River represents an important ecological barrier for many frog species. Across the river, the rich influence of the warmer temperate & sub-tropical regions immediately to the north becomes evident. Tonight we will look at some of the frogs from these areas north of the river & consider some distribution patterns & make comparisons to the froglife of Sydney. Brad & Matthew conduct regular field-survey work on behalf of FATS. They have also forged their own highly unique, no-nonsense fieldtrip style. With a quiet assuredness they manage to produce a constant array of the most difficult-to-find frogs.

February 10. 8-30p.m. Yeramba Lagoon - Panania. Leader : Robert Wall.

Yeramba Lagoon lies on the northern side of Henry Lawson Dr. at Panania (approx 0.9 km. east of Sylvan Gr or 1.9km west of The River Rd). Please exercise extreme care when turning/parking at this site, traffic flow can be fast along this section of road. Wetlands are amongst our most threatened group of habitats. Few realise they include a bewildering variety of forms including lakes, swamps, mudflats, mangrove forests, saltmarshes, rivers, creeks, overflows, anabranches, irrigation channels, bogs & ditches. In fact, just about any water body, permanent or ephemeral, may be considered a wetland. Tonight we will look at one of our more precious urban wetlands. Yeramba Lagoon lies unobtrusively beside one of Sydney's major arterial roads. Robert will take us around this largely-overlooked site.

March 2-4 Smiths Lake Camp-Out. Leaders : Arthur & Karen White.

Smiths Lake is one of the most reliable sites to encounter the Great Barred Frog. This beguilingly beautiful frog prefers a rather solitary life on the damp, dimly-lit floor of our wetter forests. It remains one of our more private, elusive & charismatic species. This weekend, amongst the luxuriance of the Wallingat forests, we will search for this very special frog. Arthur's work & extensive scientific output has proven pivotal in the understanding of many frog & reptile species. He & Karen together enjoy a reputation as leading figures of frog conservation & advocacy in Australia. They are also key figures of the Riversleigh Society, which is at the forefront of Australian palaeontology - Riversleigh being the location of many of Australia's major fossil finds. Cabin/dormitory accommodation & camping sites available. All kitchen facilities/utensils/crockery supplied. A **non-refundable** fee of \$14 p.p. per night applies. Phone Arthur & Karen directly on 9599-1161 for bookings & further details. Limit of thirty people.

***** 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.