

# FROG CALL

NEWSLETTER No. 89  
June 2007

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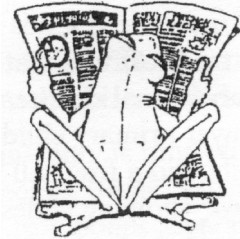
*Neobatrachus centralis*, Western S.A.. Photo by Lothar Voigt

Frogmobile helpers required at the Centennial Park duck pond.  
Call Lothar Voigt on [lothar@exemail.com.au](mailto:lothar@exemail.com.au)  
or 9371 9129 or the Frogwatch Helpline 0419 249 718.

Join us at the next FATS meeting 6.30pm  
for a 7.00 pm start

**Friday 1st June 2007**

Follow signs to Building 22, Jamieson St.  
off Holker Street, Sydney Olympic Park  
Public transport available by bus or train.



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## MEETING FORMAT for 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007

- 6.30 pm Green Tree Frogs *Litoria caerulea*, Dainty Tree Frogs *Lt. gracilentata*, *Lt. rubella* & *Lt. peronii*. "Lost frogs" are ready to collect. Bring your FATS membership card, and Amphibian Licence if you would like to give one of them a home.
- 7.00 pm Welcome and announcements.
- 7.30 pm Main Speakers: Andrew Lo:  
"A Frog Lover's Search for Ecological Sustainability."  
Marion Anstis "Kimberley tadpoles" and  
Wendy Grimm "The Pt Macquarie Cane Toad muster"
- 9.00 pm 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.



**Arthur White, our president, welcomed attendees to our April meeting. He introduced Karen Russell who has hundreds of Red-eyed tree frogs available.**

FATS regularly gets asked about the availability of *Litoria chloris* now there are plenty! See page 4 for more details.

Our main presenters were George Madani and Henry Cook, taking us on a lively and riveting adventure back to the research being carried out around Theda and Doongan Stations, near Mitchell Station in the Kimberleys. The nearest town is Kununurra, 500 K away. I have listed a few of their impressive slides below.

At Noolawayoo Creek Magnificent Tree Frogs, *Litoria splendida*, *Lt coplandi*, *Lt. meiriana* and fast moving Velvet gecko *Oedura gracilis* were sighted. Laterally depressed species do well here, seeking refuge in rock formations. Excellent slides included python *Antaresia childreni* but no mammals were sighted. At Pangor Creek a feisty tree snake *Boiga irregularis* was photographed.

At Theda Station with its beautiful sunsets, many species were sighted. Baby crocs were seen more than 1 K from the nearest water. Other species photographed included the marbled black and yellow *Litoria rothii*, the reptile feeding Black Headed Python, *Crinia bilingua*, *Ctenopus inornatus* (snake food, skink), dark or marbled or bright green *Cyclorana australis*, gecko *Diplodactylus stenodactylus*, the "threatened" Yellow-bellied Sheathtail-bat *Saccolaimus flaviventris*, black palmed rock monitor *Varanus glebopalma*, Northwest Redfaced Turtles *Emydura australis*, Flood Plain Frog *Litoria inermis*, Giant Rocket Frog *Lt. wotjulumensis*, the tiny 4 or 5 gram Dusky Leaf Nosed Bats, Woodworker Frogs far inside a cave *Megistolotus lignarius*, small populations of Merton's Water Monitors and a feisty Giant Bluetongue caught in a tree *Cyclodomorphus maxima*.

At Doongan Station, which is not so densely wooded, species found included *Cyclorana longipes* and rare *C. cultripes*, *Lt. caerulea*, sticky *Notaden melanoscaphus*, frill necks, Rocket frogs, Rubellas, *Lt. taunia* (sp?), water pythons, a *Ctenopus* yet to be identified, Stores Monitors that live in groups of 10 to 12 individuals, each group living about 50 metres from each-other, Marbled Frogs, Ornate and Burrowing Frogs.

George and Henry may be going back in July to set up a cattle exclusion zone and observe changes. An inventory of species is being built to apply the best practice for cattle grazing and fire regimes.

Currently altered fire regimes and "woodification" need to be correctly managed, some areas are over burned and others such as at Cape York, not enough. Mosaic burning and independent needs for each area will be essential.

The FATS committee wish to thank George and Henry again for an enthralling, action-packed presentation.

Marion Anstis, author of the comprehensive field guide *Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia* spoke to us about her latest expedition and slides of the Mitchell Plateau and Prince Regent River areas, inaccessible other than by air. Whilst at Little Burton's Falls, with its lush ferns, Marion has come across a gecko which may be undescribed. More on that later! Amidst cave paintings, Marion photographed *Litoria cavenicol*, the Cave Frog and its big lower jawed tadpole, heard choruses of *rothii*, saw boab trees, Olive Whip Snakes, and new species of *Lt. staccato* and *Lt coplandi*. Marion will be keeping us informed of the unidentified creek dwelling tadpole from Prince Regent, which may be undescribed and similar to *Litoria meiriana*.

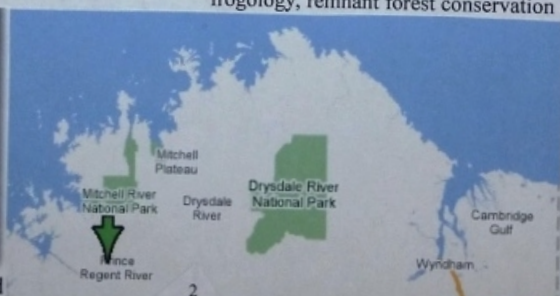
Matt and Brad McCaffrey spoke about thier excellent slides of the FATS weekend field trip to Smiths Lake and Seal Rocks. Species sighted and photographed included Southern Leaf Tailed Gecko, Tusked Frog, *Lt. latopalmeta*, cicadas, Redbacked Toadlets everywhere, carpet snakes, Wallum Froglets, a Common Death Adder creating great excitement as it wandered through the open field during a cricket match, Bibron's Toadlet, *Pseudophryne* with its eggs, a Golden Crowned snake, *Uperoleia fusca*, Striped Marsh Frogs, Southern Angled Headed Dragon, *per ons*, *jerviensis*, *signifera*, *fasciolatus*, *timula*, *freycineti*, a night jar owl and a lace monitor *Varanus varius* - 20 herp species in all.

Arthur White spoke about threatened species *Neobatrachus pictus*. Does it occur between the Darling and the Anabranch of the Darling? It is found in SA but in the East the known species is *Neobatrachus sudelli*. It rained for the first time in seven years in that region. Mining companies are questioning whether *N. pictus* naturally occur in the area. During January 2007 the ponds were examined for signs of *N. pictus*. None were found. No photographic or calling records have ever been made of *pictus* in NSW. To keep *pictus* on the protected species list, proof will have to be found of its existence in NSW!

Amongst those who briefly spoke were Anthony Stimson, about the forthcoming Amphibian and Reptile Expo and new member, author and artist, Jane Davenport, about frogology, remnant forest conservation and her work.



Smiths Lake dining area and cricket field





## WITH THE FROGMOBILE IN TOW

**A** great day for getting tangled up at the Kite Flying Festival! And a beautiful Sunday on 22 April in Centennial Park. Around 800 people came to see the Frogmobile and to have a chat with us. They and the frogs kept our Frog Explainers Andrew Lo and Beth Raymond busy all day. It was Beth's first time, but she is a teacher and took to the kids around her like a frog to water. Andrew taught me "ching waa", which is frog in both Cantonese and Mandarin, but with my accent I was hopeless.

**The Frog and Reptile Expo** at Castle Hill went like a charm. We were there from Friday, 4 April till Sunday, 6 April, with Punia Jeffery, Annie Nielsen, Jason Luke, Grant Webster, Karen Russell, Lisa Tennyenhuis, Marion Anstis, Bec Hansen, Brad and Matt McCaffery and Rob Wall. Each day was a long day for all our helpers, because the crowd was great and in more sense than one! Lots and lots of people, and all of them frog- and reptile mad. Our Frog Explainers did a marvelous job. And the whole expo was quite something: amazingly big and varied and permanent-looking – and all that for just three days! We must give Anthony Stimson and his organisers top marks for the expo. Let's hope that one day soon they will run another one!

**The World Environment Day Expo** at Warringah's James Meehan Reserve will be (possibly "was" by the time you read this) on 23 and 24 May for school class workshops and on Sunday, 27 May for the community. If you can, spend a few moments on the Sunday in the shade under the Frogmobile, any time between 10am and 4pm.

**Randwick Council's Ecoliving Fair** at the Randwick Community Centre in 27 Munda St. and is on Saturday, 16 June from 10:30am – 3:30pm. A froggy date for your diary.

**Centennial Park**, with the Frogmobile again by the Duck Pond, on Sunday, 15 July from 11am till 4pm. This is the last weekend of the school holidays.

**Frogmobile helpers** are like gold dust. The future depends on you. Please ring me if and when you can help (Lothar on 9371 9129 or Frogwatch Helpline 0419 249 728). L.V.



Kids can check out the green and golden bell frog on the Brickpit Ring Walk at Sydney Olympic Park.

## FATS AGM NOTICE

**T**he FATS AGM will be held at the beginning for the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2007 FATS meeting, at 7pm. If you would like to ask questions about joining the FATS committee, please give any of us a call. Refer to the committee contact details in this newsletter.

We are an informal and friendly committee, who meet for about 3 hours, once every two months, currently Sunday afternoons, to discuss many frog related issues including the management of our organization, event management, the newsletter, the Frogmobile, future strategies and plans. There are a diversity of roles within the committee to accommodate your interests, skills and available time. You only need to devote whatever time you can spare. New committee members help develop fresh ideas and keep our organization interesting and fun. No previous experience or qualifications are required. Please contact our secretary Punia Jeffery or myself for further information or a nomination form. **MW**

## 2007 INAUGURAL FROGOGRAFIC PRIZE

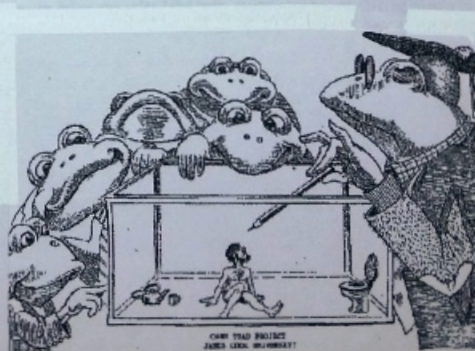
**D**o you have a favourite froggie photo or drawing?  
**Yes?**

Post a copy to The secretary, FATS at PO Box 296 Rockdale NSW 2216 or email the Editor of Frogcall. Entries to arrive no later than 15 July 2007. Please include your name, age and contact details. All entries must be the entrant's own work. Maximum, six entries per person. Entries will be judged by the FATS committee and may win a small prize, appear in future FATS publications and our web site.

### Categories:-

- Best frog photo (all ages)
  - Best frog photo (under 16 yrs old)
- Best frog artwork ie drawing, cartoon or painting (all ages)
  - Best frog artwork (under 16)
- Most interesting image (all ages)
  - Most interesting image (under 16)
- A "people's choice" award will be judged at the August meeting of FATS. (open to all ages)

The FATS Committee



CHIP YEAP ILLUSTRATION  
JAMES LOAN, MURBERT



## FROGBITS & TADPIECES

**FATS at the Easter Show:** Monica and Bill gave two half hour frog talks on 4 April, and Grant and Chloe gave two more on 13 April. Needless to say, they were running into open doors, with a dead-keen audience at the Flower and Garden (Horticultural) Pavilion. Several eco friendly organizations had displays within and surrounding the Horticultural Pavilion, such as Jane Davenport's "Garden Guardians". Bill Wangmann signed Jane up as a FATS member. She is a fully fledged propBUGanderist and had a display of the secret bug world that exists at your toe tips. Permaculture North representatives also took a keen interest in the FATS presentation (see articles below).

**Do frogs attract snakes in rural areas?** Julie from Coonabarabran was wondering about that. Yes, they do, Julie. Frogs are tasty, and many snake species are at least occasional frog eaters. Some start off eating frogs and small lizards and later switch over to mammals and birds only. But they might still like to come to the water anyway, especially when a drought is on. In winter, snakes don't eat in cold areas although they might still come out occasionally to sun themselves, but they won't be out after dark then. Even in the warmer months, snakes tend to give up looking for frogs after midnight and they go home then, especially the smaller snakes that feel the chill of the night first.

**Tons of baby Red-eyed Green Tree Frogs!** Karen Russell is our FATS member who has, together with Jason Luke, bred and raised them. If you have a keeper's licence and want to buy some baby ones, you can contact her on 0407 297 728 or [russelltvr@dodo.com.au](mailto:russelltvr@dodo.com.au). Or get some from her at the next meeting on Friday, 1 June. And thank you, Karen, for having donated a cageful of them for the Frogmobile!

**Do you have any frog stories** or frog encounters you might like to share with Jane Davenport for her next book? Jane is a small creature artist from Byron Bay. She is a brilliant award winning photographer, exhibiting large scale outdoor photographic installations, insect expert, nursery and garden young achiever in 2005 and columnist, eager to take the "creep out of crawly". She talked about the Perth Frogology project at the last meeting. You can contact to her on (02) 6680 8550 or [jane@janedavenport.com](mailto:jane@janedavenport.com)

**Permaculture North** was at the Easter Show and is a dynamic non-profit organization run by volunteer members who are passionate about achieving healthier and more sustainable lifestyles through permaculture design and sustainable living practices. They meet the third Monday of every month except January at the Ku-ring-gai Centre for Seniors 259 Pacific Hwy, Lindfield. **Contact** [info@permaculturenorth.org.au](mailto:info@permaculturenorth.org.au) PO Box 1145 Chatswood NSW 2057 9412 3294

**The Bell Frog site at Sir Joseph Banks Reserve** in Botany was thought to have gone extinct. It appears they are being sighted there again!

**Heaps more Frog Wrangler stories on [www.aqob.com.au](http://www.aqob.com.au)**, the 2SER (FM107.3) radio "A Question of Balance" website. Tune in on Tuesdays at 9am, or download Arthur White's 5-minute talks at will. Joe Dimech downloads these audio clips to his iPod, ready to take them to the swamps. (He has now also stuck an external mike to his video iPod and will use it to record frog calls.)

**MP3 sound file traffic** is on the increase. This year the Frogwatch Helpline has received quite a few of them as email attachments, which helps greatly in identifying the frogs. Grant and gave two half hour talks at the Flower and Garden pavilion.

**Pacific Coast Produce - Eco Bananas** is one of the few banana plantations collecting and returning frogs to the farm. When the bananas are dehanded and placed into the tanks of water, any frogs found are placed in special containers. Frogs are counted, recorded and released back to the paddock at the end of each day. Hygiene is critical, not to pass on any disease. There are separate trays for different frogs and sizes as some larger ones will eat smaller ones. Only farmers who are genuinely interested in frog habitat preservation should attempt to collect and release frogs in this way. Containers need to be clean and disease free. There needs to be commitment to release the frogs daily, not keep them until packing is finished in 3 or 4 days etc These types of operational issues cost to the business, and if it is not valued by the business and staff then it becomes a liability to the frogs.

**Pacific Coast Produce and Eco Bananas Innisfail can be contacted on [pacific@znet.net.au](mailto:pacific@znet.net.au)**

*Inspecting for the presence of beneficial insects, an essential part of the Integrated Pest Management system which places emphasis on biological control of pests <http://www.eco-banana.com.au/story.html>*



**Aust Fauna Resources** sell mice and rats of all sizes: a pack of 10 pink mice is \$7.50 while a pack of 5 pink rats is \$ 6.35. They have juveniles and adults as well. Adult mice were \$7.20 for 5, and \$ \$16.50 for 3 large rats. Bulk crickets eg. 1000 large, 1500 mediums, 2000 small or 4000 pinheads were \$51.00. They also sell flies. They only sell in bulk produce, so if your organization or group are interested, please contact AFR on 0429 900 443 or email [afr@koee.com.au](mailto:afr@koee.com.au) to arrange purchase.



## A FROG LOVER'S SEARCH FOR ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

*This is the frog talk you are going to get at our upcoming meeting. When I asked Andrew Lo (remember the ink painting on the last FrogCall's front page? That's him), when I asked him what he meant by being a frog lover (after all, he does have a reputation with them), he was kind enough to send us a brief taster. Here it is. (L.V.)*

**T**he market driven industrial economy, which provides us with our daily bread, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the "Great Economy": the economy that sustains the total web of life on Planet Earth. The talk will focus on current challenges as well as positive developments that may enable these two life support systems to become good bedfellows, with complementary sweet dreams for the future of the planet, rather than having separate nightmares. The talk will be based on the personal perspective of

a passionate frog lover who has a day job as a dispassionate environmental academic bean counter. About Andrew Lo: Andrew is a Hong Kong born and bred Australian Chinese. Andrew came to Australia as a tertiary student and he completed his B.A. (Hon) at the University of Melbourne in 1968 and his M.A. (Hon) at the University of NSW in 1971. He subsequently became a member of the UNSW's academic staff. Andrew taught environmental economics for many years to students in the School of economics, as well as the University's Institute of Environmental Studies. Andrew was Secretary of NSW ANGFA at its inception and he has been involved in an ongoing campaign with members of the Save Manly Dam committee since 1998 to conserve a landlocked population of *Galaxias brevipinnis* in the Manly Dam catchment. Andrew also has a night job as a Chinese brush and ink painter of the Australian bush and his nature based art works have been exhibited in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korean, Japan, London and New York.

## TOAD FOUND DEEP DOWN IN LOCH NESS

**U**S researchers carrying out a sonar survey of Loch Ness have been amazed to find a common toad crawling in the mud 324ft (98m) down.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has been attempting to unravel the mysteries of the loch. However, MIT said it did not expect to come across the amphibian so far down.

Bob Rines, a lecturer at MIT, will tell the Oceans 07 engineering conference in Aberdeen about the toad and the survey next month. Conference chairman Professor John Watson, of the University of Aberdeen, said: "They were surprised to find a toad at that depth." MIT said it had completed a side-scan sonar map of the entire length of the loch - which is about 750ft (228m) at its deepest point. 'Picturesque patterns' The data has been compared with a geological map of the bottom made by Sir Edward Murray using plumb lines 100 years ago.

The institute said the scan was part of its continuing efforts to find animal remains preserved at the low temperatures at the loch bottom that might explain unusual sightings on the surface.

Professor Watson's presentation to the conference will cover details of how the loch has changed over the past century. This includes "picturesque patterns" in the silt caused by water pumps for a hydroelectric plant.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/scotland/highlands\\_and\\_islands/6618995.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/highlands_and_islands/6618995.stm) forwarded to FATS by Andrew Nelson Oceans 07 takes place from 18 June to 21 June at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre



ADI site St Marys environmental campaigner Dot Laughlan at the Castle Hill Frog and Reptile Expo - photos from Bernie Laughlan



## CARA CONFERENCE 2007

**O**n Saturday the 5th of May, 2007, the 2nd Care of Australian Reptiles and Amphibians Conference was held in the Baulkham Hills Council Function Room. Also known as the CARA Conference, it was again a great success. Participants could also visit the Reptile and Amphibian Expo during their breaks, which was on concurrently at the Castle Hill Showground nearby, where the Frogmobile was on display.

Conference sessions featured keynote talks by John Weigall on future directions in Australian Herpetoculture and Craig Latta on the conservation and captive breeding of the Mary River Turtle. Veterinary pathologist Dr Tony Ross, led a session of three talks into reptile and amphibian health. For the avid breeder there was a series of experts covering information on cutting edge herpetocultural techniques for a range of snakes, lizards, turtles and frogs. It was an exceptional opportunity for both experienced and novice herpetoculturalists alike. The talk on Lace Monitor Breeding by David Kirschner (with live videos of pairs of monitors courting on the carpet and on the bed in David's home!) proved very entertaining and it was great to have the input of a veterinary pathologist (Dr Tony Ross) as well as all the other interesting talks on herp culture.

### Conference Speakers were:

**Kieran Aland** - Hygiene and Quarantine

**Craig Latta** - Conservation: The Mary River Turtle Story

**John Weigel** - Future Directions in Australian Herpetoculture

**David Kirshner** - Lace Monitor breeding

**Dr Tony Ross** - Reptile Viruses

**Simon Watharow** - The Art of Snake Catching

**Peter Comber** - Small Elapids

**Steve Comber** - Geckos

**Brad Walker** - Coastal Carpets

**Adrian Hemens** - Green Tree Python keeping & breeding

**Marion Anstis & Prithi Nambiar** - Frog Zone: a wetland creation project for the school and community

The **Frog Zone** project was the only frog talk, but it went over well and there was a lot of interest in this education program, with its kit comprising a Teacher's Manual, 2 CDs for construction details and extra resources such as the Life Cycle of an Australian Tree Frog and how to make your own interactive database for monitoring life at your pond area, plus a children's story 'Torie the Tadpole' (life cycle of Littlejohn's Tree Frog for children grades 2-4), posters stickers etc. The kit is available for \$79.95 from Centre for Environment Education: **Prithi Nambiar Executive Director CEE Australia Inc PO Box 42 Lindfield NSW 2070 Telephone: (02) 9416 0432 Fax: (02) 9416 2583**

### FUNGUS THREATENS FROG POPULATION

**A**ustralia's frogs are under attack from a deadly fungal disease. Researchers from Griffith University in Queensland have recently completed a study of frogs from Cairns to Melbourne and say the deadly chytrid fungus is firmly established in frog populations throughout eastern Australia. Jean-Marc Hero from Griffith's Endangered Frog Research Centre says if the disease spreads further, one-third of the world's 6,000 amphibian species could be threatened with extinction. "Frogs are probably the most threatened group of vertebrates on the planet at the moment," he said.

"Hundreds of species worldwide have disappeared in the last 20 to 30 years and so as a biological indicator of the environment, we're very concerned."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200705/s1911318.htm> forwarded to FATS by Stephen Weir

### SMUGGLING OF FROGS ON THE RISE (INDIA)

**T**he smuggling of frogs from the North East to China and Europe has increased. Frog legs are one of the better-known delicacies of French and Chinese cuisine and bull frogs in particular are much sought after for their meaty hind legs.

Recently the railway police seized a container filled of endangered bull frogs from a local train coming from the North Cachar Hills, which say they were meant to be smuggled. The 71 frogs that were seized have now been released. There may be no accounting for taste but these amphibians play a more meaningful role in their natural habitat rather than when served with white wine.

Less than 50 frogs are needed to keep an acre of a paddy field insect free. Decline in the number of frogs means increased pesticide use and spread of insect-borne diseases like malaria and encephalitis. Concerns mount. India was France's biggest supplier until it banned frog exports in 1987 because the cost of importing pesticides was greater than what the export of frog legs fetched. It is protected under schedule 4. Wildlife crime is increasing. (extracts) **NDTV-Kishalay Bhattacharjee Friday, 13/4/2007 (Guwahati) Herpdigest**

### EVEN IN LOWLANDS, PROTECTED AREAS FROGS, AMPHIBIANS AND RELATED SPECIES ARE SUFFERING FROM CALAMITOUS POPULATION DECLINES, POSSIBLY AS A RESULT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

**F**rogs and their fellow amphibians are disappearing worldwide and no one knows exactly why. In some areas, encroaching human activity has caused habitat changes or loss. In mountainous regions, a vicious fungal infection-chytridiomycosis-has wiped out entire populations. But scientists had assumed that amphibian populations in protected, lowland areas were fine, continuing much as they have for millions of years. According to a new paper, though, they were wrong. Biologist Steven Whitfield of Florida International University in Miami and his colleagues collected long-term data from the La Selva Biological Station in the Caribbean lowlands of Costa Rica. Surveys of amphibian and reptile populations stretch back to 1970 and, by compiling this data, Whitfield and his colleagues detected a calamitous decline that no one had noticed: a 75 percent drop in the total amount of amphibians over that 35-year period. The decline is all the more ominous for not having a precise cause, the researchers reveal in the current Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA. No sign of fungal infection was found and no habitat loss has taken place. Whitfield and his colleagues can only surmise that perhaps climate change has reduced leaf litter, the cover the declining amphibians and reptiles rely on to survive. **Herpdigest (extracts) Scientific America.com, 16/4/2007, By David Biello**



# FROGMAIL

## Postcard from the Central Coast



Just returned from a 3 night (package) at a resort just north of Forster. I selected this particular resort for our school holiday break after reviewing the resort's website. Alas, things are not always what they seem. This was confirmed after an initial reconnaissance of the facilities immediately after arrival (and upfront payment).

Of particular interest was the resort's spa. It was noted after a brief inspection that the spa had been colonised by frogs and tadpoles (possibly *Litoria freycineti*, the Wallum Rocket Frog) and as such was unlikely to be suitable for bathing purposes much to my daughters' disappointment.

However, I turned my daughters' sad faces around by purchasing a couple of small nets and they went about catching the tadpoles (which were already morphing) and later transferring them to an overgrown pond approximately 30m away.

So the story had a happy ending, for the frogs at least.

Attached are photos of my daughters Avalon (7) and Sofala (5) in the process of collecting the tadpoles. Sofala, when at the age of 3, was auctioned off at a FATS meeting by Arthur White - but we got her back. She had a habit of standing next to Arthur out the front when Arthur was addressing the meeting. **Paul Vogt**



## Postcard from the Blue Mountains



I refer to our conversation last night regarding the frogs that have been breeding in the backyard pool of an abandoned house. The house has now been sold to a friend of ours, however, the Blue Mountains City Council have ordered for the pool to be drained. The pool is alive with tadpoles and frogs! Luckily the new owner of the property is a frog lover too and is more than happy for us to 'rescue' the little guys prior to the pool being drained.



I have attached some photos of the frogs that were captured today for identification. I look forward to hearing from you when convenient. (AW: baby Peron's or possibly Tyler's Tree Frogs). Would it be fair to expect some death as a result of us having to capture them? Certain death awaits if the pool is drained! It seems a shame, as they all appear to be thriving in their own little eco system within the confines of the pool area! Yet another struggle for our amphibian friends to cope with.

**Neil Cubitt & Kelly Garlick Springwood, Blue Mountains**





## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS PROPOSED BY THE DRAFT CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE GROWTH CENTRES

[http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/nsw\\_act/](http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/nsw_act/)  
<http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/story/0,22049,21511340-5006009,00.html>

You can send a letter to the Editor of the Tele at this link <http://www.news.com.au/dailytelegraph/yoursay/> or you can post a general comment in the feedback section at the bottom of the story. The Tele could push this along if they get a strong response and we may get some concessions out of the Government.

If you haven't yet viewed the draft Conservation Plan for the Growth Centres it is a two edged sword. Massive areas of Endangered Ecological Communities can be cleared if the Minister issues Biodiversity Certification for the Growth Centres. Yet to offset that loss, a \$530 million developer funded offset program is being set up to mitigate the loss of this vegetation. 75% of that fund is to be spent outside the Growth Centres acquiring and protecting vegetation of equal or higher conservation value. This offset program wasn't mentioned in the Tele story. The problem with the offset program is the funds may not be available immediately as it is tied to housing development therefore land clearing will occur first and environmental protection may take years. The Government needs to commit immediate funds to acquire bushland and mitigate these losses and then be reimbursed later as the funds come on stream from the inevitable development. **Regards Geoff Brown 0431 222602**

**In danger ... conservationists fear developers could hack into woodland like this. The Daily Telegraph**



### DEVELOPMENT THREATENS WILDLIFE

**T**HE State Government plans to give companies the power to build massive residential developments in growth areas without considering their impact on threatened species at each site. The growth centres, northwest of Blacktown and west of Liverpool, are part of the Government's 25-year, staged land release program to accommodate greater Sydney's growing population with about 181,000 new homes.

*Is development out of control? Tell us via the feedback form below.*

The draft Growth Centres Conservation Plan, currently open for public comment, aims to pinpoint key areas and species in need of protection through an all-encompassing "biodiversity certification" and do away with individual, site-specific impact assessments.

Conservationists are concerned the certification is based on old, aerial mapping of the areas and may be flawed.

"The environmental assessments that this plan is based on is, at best, dodgy," local activist Geoff Brown said.

"There's holes in it all over the place and it's absolutely devastating for the environment."

About 1300ha of endangered Cumberland Plain woodlands would be cleared under the plan to make way for the developments.

There are fears an endangered rice flower, the downy wattle, and a land snail native to the area, will be affected by the clearing.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW said only a small amount of land outside existing flood plains would be protected and any remnant bushland smaller than 4ha would be disregarded because it is deemed too difficult to manage.

"The conservation plan will protect some areas, yet the majority of this is already protected through land that is flood-prone," NCC executive director Cate Faehrmann said.

"(Biodiversity certification) will enable threatened species protection to be turned off, undermining the Threatened Species Act," she said. "A species impact statement for 1ha of land is sometimes more thorough than the assessment outlined under the growth centres."

This will be one of the first times "biodiversity certification" has been used in NSW, but it is likely to be rolled out in other development areas in future.

The state Department of Environment and Conservation said it expected people to have some reservations about the scheme.

"We don't blame people for being concerned, but it's a system with tremendous potential," a department spokesman said.

It was more effective than site-by-site impact statements because it provided a wider view of an area, the spokesman added. **By Saffron Howden The Daily Telegraph April 06, 2007**



Is development out of control? You bet it is and who is to blame? The NSW Government.

The massive Nth and Sth West Growth Centres are a major plank in the NSW Governments Metropolitan Strategy, a 25 year plan which the Government assures us will deliver jobs, housing and environmental protection. But as usual, if the Growth Centres Conservation Plan is anything to go by, these plans are just mere rhetoric and its business as usual with the environment seen as just an impediment to economic growth and so called progress. This plan if allowed by Phil Koperburg will allow developers to clear over 12% of all remaining Cumberland Plain Woodland and over 13% of all remaining Shale/Gravel Transition Forest. This is like allowing 12% of the total tiger population to be destroyed and this is happening in Sydney.

Biodiversity Certification by the Minister is a broadbrush solution that allows a massive area approval to developed. One would assume that every part of that area to be issued with Certification would have been thoroughly assessed by experts on the ground. Only after this occurred could the Minister be assured that this his decision was based on the most rigorous scientific assessment. But what is happening under this plan?

There has been minimal on the ground assessment by ecologists because it costs too much, instead they have relied on old data from a handful of random site inspections and aerial photography done for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, this aerial mapping doesn't pick up the smaller endangered species only the canopy cover of trees. So this is hit and miss methodology and this is the so called 21st century solution this Government offers up as environmental protection. The conservation plan talks about raising \$530 million dollars from developer levies to mitigate the loss of the endangered vegetation. Most of that money is to be spent offsetting the loss of bushland elsewhere in Western Sydney by acquiring bushland of similar or better conservation value. However, nowhere in the plan does it say what patches of bushland outside of the Growth Centres are to earmarked for acquisition and protection.

The whole plan comes in at around 60 pages, the whole Growth Centres covers over 20,000 hectares. I urge the Telegraph to keep on the back of the NSW Government about this issue. Sure we need housing but not at this cost to the environment. The Minister can't approve this plan unless he is satisfied that a 'maintain or improve' outcome is achieved by it.

Please get him to explain how the loss of 1900 hectares of Endangered Ecological Communities maintain and improves the environment of Western Sydney.

Ask him to identify the bushland outside the Growth Centres that need urgent protection and insist that he commits urgent funding to protect these areas from more of this devastation.

Posted by: LC of Cranebrook 4:08pm April 06, 2007

#### TREE FROGS USE GEOMETRY TO HANG ON

**T**he ability to stick to smooth objects and detach when needed is a perpetual game of geometry for tree frogs, which repeatedly adjust the angle of their toes with respect to the surface. White's tree frogs-originating in Australia and

Indonesia and capable of growing to almost 5 inches-maintain their grip on surfaces by keeping the angles of their toe pads below 90 degrees, according to a new study presented earlier this month at the annual meeting of the Society for Experimental Biology in Glasgow, Scotland.

"The toe pads of tree frogs are coated with thin mucus which adheres to surfaces by wet adhesion, like wet tissue paper sticking to glass," said study leader Jon Barnes of the University of Glasgow. Rather than a mechanical force, such as air suction, adhesion relies on the attraction between molecules of its toe pads and those along the walking surface.

The tree frogs, which range in color from light blue to emerald green and gray, can stick to leaves and trees even when they are tilted downward, which would typically make more of a slide than a steady platform. The frogs can also detach their toe pads in a snap to jump elsewhere when needed. "The process by which they detach their toe pads is called peeling and is akin to us removing a sticking plaster from ourselves," Barnes said, referring to adhesive bandages.

To investigate how these gravity-defying amphibians can both stick and peel, Barnes and his team measured the adhesive and frictional forces created by the frogs' toe pads when placed at different angles. Adhesive forces weakened at steep angles above 90 degrees. So when the frogs needed to stay stuck to a surface, they kept the angle of their toes with respect to the surface at low values, and when the time came to detach they increased these angles. **By Sara Goudarzi**  
LiveScience Staff Writer 4/9/07  
[www.herpdigest.org](http://www.herpdigest.org)

#### CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO SAVE JERSEY'S INDIGENOUS TOAD.

**T**he crapaud is believed to have disappeared from Guernsey, and the population is also falling in Jersey. A study has found that high nitrate levels in ponds because of intensive agriculture have forced toad populations to the edges of the island.

Toad Watch campaigners are urging residents to make their gardens more toad-friendly by adding ponds. The toads were once a familiar sight inland. A three-year study into crapauds has found most in the south east, south west and near town. Amphibian conservationist John Wilkinson is leading the study, which is due to be completed in 2008. Toads (Jersey Island, U.K.)  
BBC 2/22/07  
[www.herpdigest.org](http://www.herpdigest.org)





AUSTRALIA has a proud tradition of making silk purses out of sows' ears, but according to a new book, some things - such as the Australian dead and wounded in World War I, the stolen generation and cane toads - are impervious to spin.

*The Great Mistakes of Australian History* outlines Australia's worst errors in judgement, our historical tragedies, and the failings that stained and strained the nation.

The book's editor, Martin Crotty, a history lecturer at the University of Queensland, says the top 13 had been chosen for their ability to teach Australians a lesson so future mistakes can be avoided.

Crotty told us the biggest blunder in Australian history was the naive militarism surrounding World War I, which cost Australia 60,000 lives and wounded 150,000 men.

"The Anzac legend turned an horrific event into a story about nation-building, mateship and egalitarianism when the reality tore Australian society apart," he says. "Yet we seem to be able to forget the cost of war every few generations."

Crotty believes the book does not rubbish Australian history, but teaches the importance of recognising the bad and the

ugly. "Those people who say that we should concentrate on the good parts of our history are arrogant and ultimately do us a disservice," he says.

Australia's misadventures with good intentions have caused a history war of its own. The conservative Melbourne think tank the Institute of Public Affairs beat Crotty and his fellow "leftie" historians to the

punch by running a cover story on 13 great Aussie mistakes in the October issue of its magazine *Review*.

The institute was far ruder: it named the invention of Canberra, Patrick White's Nobel win and the establishment of a basic wage in 1907 among its 13 failures.

But the academics and the institute's economic rationalists did agree on cane toads.



SMH 31 10 2006 \* Embarrassments  
Nation's blunders : Lest we forget

### THE 13 GREAT MISTAKES OF AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

- Loss of life in World War I.
- The stolen generation.
- The introduction of cane toads and foxes.
- The misuse of pastoral land.
- The inflexibility of the constitution.
- The World War II Singapore strategy.
- The denial of Aboriginal land rights.
- Burke and Wills's failed attempt to traverse the continent.
- Sydney's Cahill Expressway.
- Wartime internment of enemy aliens.
- The 1849 closure of the Northern Territory Asian trade settlement, Port Essington.
- Australia's first immigration minister, Arthur Calwell, attempting unsuccessfully to deport non-European war refugees after World War II.
- Gough Whitlam's misreading of Sir John Kerr's intentions to dismiss his government in 1975.

The Daily Telegraph 2 4 2007

SMH GRAPHIC: J. DODD

SOURCE: MARTIN CROTTY

## Cane toads' advance scout reaches Sydney

IT'S big, it's ugly, it's poisonous - and it's just 45km from the heart of Sydney.

In what is believed to be the most southerly incursion yet by the dreaded cane toad, a large breeding-age specimen was discovered in the back garden of a house in the western Sydney suburb of Quakers Hill yesterday.

The startling discovery was made by 11-year-old Scott Hogan who spotted the toad hiding in a stormwater drain at his father's house.

The toad, possibly a breeding female, is 15cm long with large sacs on its shoulders which excrete toxic fluid.

NSW Department of Conservation officials are treat-

ing the discovery seriously and will today collect the animal for examination.

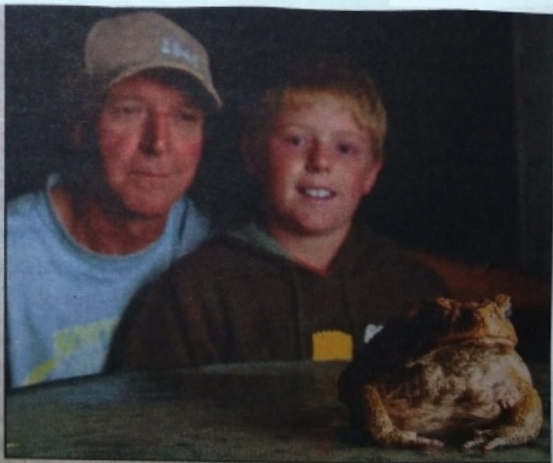
They will seek to determine the sex of the toad, where it came from and if there are any more in the local area.

Having no natural enemies, the toad dominates coastal Queensland and has spread into the Northern Territory.

But its southerly advance was previously thought to only extend as far as Yamba on the North Coast.

Scott's father Michael said the find was a shock.

"I'm fearful for the local ecology and I hope this toad is just a one-off as they destroy everything they come in contact with," he said.



Hop to it... Scott and Michael Hogan with the toad last night





## Innocent victims: don't mistake local frogs for 'hitchhiking' cane toads

Following this week's discovery of a cane toad at Quakers Hill, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is urging people not to confuse the pests with protected native frog species.

NPWS environment officer John Dengate said that the community needed to be vigilant to help stop southerly incursions of cane toads, which are already well established in the NSW North Coast following their introduction to Far North Queensland in the 1930s.

"There's always the possibility of cane toads 'hitchhiking' southwards in vehicles or boxes of agricultural produce, so we certainly want Sydneysiders to be on the lookout for them," he said.

"But at the same time, native frogs - including threatened ones - can be mistaken for cane toads.

"We don't want these native frogs to become the innocent victims of well-meaning people. So the message is, double-check that it really is a cane toad before you do anything drastic."

Mr Dengate said the adult cane toad was easily identified by its size (up to 15cm), warty appearance, large gland behind the ear and pointed boney ridges between the nose and eyes.

"It also has a very distinctive "purring" call, a bit like an old telephone dial tone," he said.

"But the juvenile toad can be harder to identify and can look a bit like natives such as the giant burrowing frog, which is classified as vulnerable. So if the animal you've found is shorter than your thumb, you should take particular care."

Mr Dengate recommended that people should trap the suspect cane toad under an upturned basket or bucket, then double-check its identity.

"The NPWS website at [www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au) has good information to help people identify cane toads, including photos of both toads and native frogs and recordings of their calls.

"If it turns out to be a native, let it go. If it's a cane toad it should be disposed of humanely. If you're still in doubt, contact your nearest NPWS office for further advice."

Mr Dengate said cane toads should be handled carefully and with gloves, because the toxins in their bodies can pose a danger to people as well as the environment.

"They're big, they're prolific breeders, they eat almost anything that's smaller than them, and they're toxic enough to kill almost anything that tries to eat them," he said.

**Editors, please note:** we have photos (of a cane toad and a native frog) and a sound file (cane toad's call) to accompany this story – please email [john.ross@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:john.ross@environment.nsw.gov.au).

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## FIELD TRIPS.

Permaculture display at Easter Show



**Autumn / Winter Recess. No fieldtrips scheduled.**

**The Spring / Summer fieldtrips programme recommences in September 2007.**

A Reminder - Specialist Field Trip / Research Opportunities.

As many of you would be aware, FATS for some time now have had an on-going arrangement with Dr. Graham Pyke & The Australian Museum. We are in a position to offer a range of specialist field-trip & research opportunities to interested members. Graham's research program provides opportunities for volunteers, training & student projects. All aspects of fieldwork, including handling, microchipping, measuring, & sexing of frogs & recording data will be explored. Lab work is also available, from the caring & maintenance of frogs to assisting with computer work.

Graham can help students design projects & provide supervision. Projects can be carried out at school, College or University level. Tertiary level projects can be part of undergraduate, honours, Masters or PhD. programs. Furthering academic study is not however, a prerequisite for participation on this program, anyone who is interested in seeing frog research being carried out is most welcome- although some assistance with duties will be required! It is hoped that members of more advanced interest levels will take advantage of this program. **Please note however, that these are fairly arduous field-trips & involve some very late nights & detailed scientific work.** They should not be seen as being similar to our regular field-trips programme.

Regular fieldwork is conducted at three locations; Long Reef Golf Course, North Avoca & Broughton Island (near Nelsons Bay). Duration of field trips vary from nightly work to 3-4 days. Fieldwork is carried out at regular intervals throughout the year. There are some limited transport pick-up and drop-off arrangements available.

FATS believe this program represents a major leap forward in nurturing the skills required to meet the future needs of frog research in Australia. It also provides a unique insight for the enthusiast & we encourage participation in this program. We will regularly provide updated fieldtrip information in Frogcall. We thank Graham & The Australian Museum for the support they have shown FATS. For further details of field trip times and/or other details, speak to Graham Pyke directly (c/- The Aust. Museum ph. 9320 - 6000) or to the Field-trips Co-ordinator.

### 2007 / 2008 Field Trips Programme.

This year we are once again lining up some of our most experienced leaders to lead some new & exciting fieldtrips. Details will be announced in the next issue of Frogcall.

By now, most of you would be aware of the significant input that Brad & Matt McCaffery & Grant Webster have into our fieldtrips programme. These days, I feel the role of Field Trips Co-ordinator is very much a shared one, much of the fieldwork is undertaken by the boys & their feedback greatly influences the final shape of our programme. On behalf of everyone at FATS, I would like to express our great appreciation for the work they put in. Special thanks are also due to our resident safari drivers, Des & Kim. **Regards, Rob Wall.**

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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.