

FROG CALL

NEWSLETTER No. 91
October 2007

THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC
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Website www.fats.org.au
ABN 34 282 154 794



One of our Frogographic Competition winners

Best frog portrait, by Kim McCaffery

Frogmobile helpers are like gold dust. The future depends on you. We need "Frog Explainers" see page 3.

No experience required.

Call Lothar Voigt on 9371 9129

Email lothar@exemail.com.au

or ring the Frogwatch Helpline on 0419 249 728.

MEETING FORMAT for 5th October 2007

- 6.30 pm "Lost frogs looking for good homes" Adult and juvenile Dainty Tree Frogs *Litoria gracilentata*, GTFs *Lt caerulea* and White Lips *Litoria infrafrenata* are ready to collect. Please bring your FATS membership card, donation & Amphibian Licence if you would like to foster care a frog.
- 7.00 pm Welcome and announcements.
- 7.30 pm Main Speakers: Aaron Organ (Ecology Partners) "Monitoring Green and Golden Bell Frogs at Sydney Olympic Park".
- 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.

6.30pm for a 7.00 pm start
Friday 5th October 2007

Follow signs to Building 22
end of Jamieson St. off Holker Street,
Homebush Bay, (Sydney Olympic Park)

Public transport available by bus or train.
Call us the day before if you would like
to be collected from the train station.



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One of our Frogographic competition winners



Best frog portrait, Eastern Banjo Frog, Matthew McCaffery

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2006-2007

This year has been another productive year for FATS. It is the second year that we have been based at Homebush. Thanks to Judy Harrington, Kerry Darkovic and Jenny O'Meara from SOPA for their help and support during this move. One consequence of the move has been a drop in our membership. However, we have not started to pick up new members from the western suburbs or even from the Homebush area yet. That will be our major push for the upcoming year. In 2006, FATS ran a food stall at Bunnings at Ashfield in an attempt to start to raise our image in the local area. We intend to conduct another day like this at Bunnings, and perhaps other suitable venues. Thanks to Alistair MacDougall and all the helpers for that day.

FATS was again 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 strong which means that the Society has been able to carry out 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: Wendy Grimm, our Vice-President has also been acting as Secretary; Karen White our Treasurer and controller of the purse, Andrew Nelson maintains our membership lists and David Nelson looks after our web site (with help from Steve Weir). 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.

This year FATS instigated the Frogographic Competition" and we had a lot of entries for the competition. We will maintain this as an annual event.

Also this year, FATS has decided to launch a students' grants scheme whereby students who are working on frog-related projects can seek some small financial assistance with equipment or travel costs for their work.

Finally, I invite all of you present to think about helping FATS to continue to function as an active Society. You can help by becoming a member of the executive (or even President) or help out with community days, mail-outs, etc. Please do not think that you have to be a frog "know-all" to be able to be involved, most of our executive members are normal people who enjoy FATS, frogs and simply being useful. **Arthur White 3 8 2007.**

LAST MEETING and AGM 3 AUGUST 2007 (cont.)

Karen White presented the treasurer's report, see page 10. The committee gave of vote of thanks to Arthur and Karen White for their continued commitment, expertise and time to FATS. The newly elected committee members are listed on page 11. A special welcome to our newest committee member Brad McCaffery.

David Nelson spoke of his experiences at the extensive Frog Dam, located in the Northern Territory, between Humpty Doo and Djukbinj National Park, close to the flood plains, Adelaide and Mary Rivers. It was created to irrigate rice projects in predictable land zones called "wet dry tropics", with its overgrown reeds and patches of monsoon forest. The temperature is 30 degrees all year round, lots of rain and the insects go wild. This year was one of the wettest.

During David's time there, 19 amphibian species were recognised, ground-dwelling *Litoria pallida*, (possibly *Lt tornieri* Torniers Frog and it's amazing tadpole), *Lt wotjulumensis* (not found in that immediate area), Linermis Floodplains Frog, *Lt nasuta* Rocket Frog and everyone's favourite which descended en mass during monsoons, the Green Tree Frog *Lt caerulea*.

Continued on page 5

THE BIGGEST TOAD

This is not about the Federal election.
It's about Christina's livelihood.

Christina makes purses, spectacle cases and other small leather things out of cane toad skin. But the toads have been getting smaller, and her industry is struggling to stay viable.

The photo shows the biggest stuffed toad she had on her stall table at the Strathfield fair. It was too much for me to resist: I reached into the Frogmobile, got the well-nourished FATS one out with a flourish and announced "Now that is a toad". (I had always wanted to do that, even without an election on.)

It has been known for many years that when cane toads colonise a new area, they get very large until much of their food supply is eaten out.

They then decline, and the second wave of invaders won't grow to anything like that size, nor will they stabilise at such high densities as at first. There is an obvious conclusion: Cane toads compete with each other for food; they keep each other's numbers in some balance. And in turn, the conclusion from this is that if you remove a large proportion of cane toads from an area, then the remaining ones respond by breeding even better. Clobber half the toads and the other half might not lay 20,000 eggs but 30 or 40,000. And the baby ones will grow extra well on all the ants and termites they get stuck into when they're young.

A purse-maker's delight, at least for a while.

So, thinning them out is a never-ending effort. To be effective, one must try to get the very last one – like at Port Macquarie. Or like in Sydney, get the very first ones as they come in. Hence the FATS Group's Cane Toad Alert program.

Our oversized FATS toad is safely back in its cage. But at least somebody wanted her. Christina. L.V.



FROGMOBILEOPHILES

This is where we went with the Frogmobile in September:

Su. 9.9., Baulkham Hills (Annangrove Park) with Joan Young

Sat 22.9., Bankstown (Paul Keating Park)
with Joan Young and Kathy Godfrey

Su. 23.9., Strathfield (Strathfield Park)
with Grant Webster and Jeanie Muspratt

Sat 29.9., Blacktown (Woodcroft Lake), going there now.

Those of you who have been to recent Frogmobile appearances will have seen our nice new small-frogs-cages. We got six of them (Kellyville Pets gave us ¼ off), and they go on the table where the kids can see them. Would you like to see them, too? Then come to one of the next Frogmobile shows:

Su. 14.10., Lane Cove shopping centre (Burns Bay Rd)
10am – 4pm

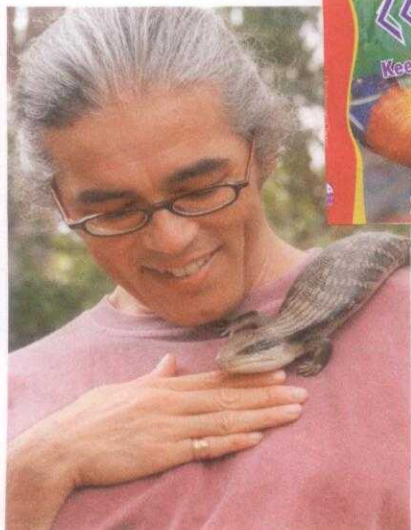
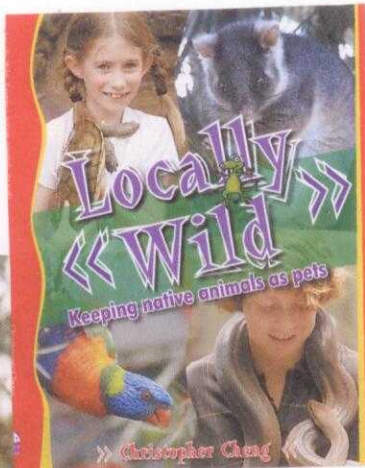
Sat. 27.10., Liverpool (Jacquie Osmond Reserve)
10am – 2pm

Su. 4.11., Centennial Park (Duck Pond) 11am-4pm
(FROGWEEK)

Su. 27.1.08, Centennial Park (Duck Pond)
11am-3pm

If you would like to help as a Frog Explainer, please contact me (9371 9129, 0419 249 728). L.V.





LOCALLY WILD
Keeping Native Animals as Pets.
By Christopher Cheng

Locally Wild is a glossy, fully illustrated book for children written by one of the nation's best children's authors. Chris Cheng introduces readers to a nation of native -animal enthusiasts whose hobby is caring for fauna as diverse as turtles, cockatoos, bats, native honeybees and marsupials like quolls and possums. We also meet the children who have transformed their communities and neighbourhoods into native animal sanctuaries, and their own yards into havens of animal life.

Locally Wild is a 'how-to' guide for children 9 to 14, parents, teachers and enthusiasts of all ages explaining how to care for those native animals we are allowed to keep under existing laws; from caging, feeding and keeping them healthy; to where to get them from and the local hobby groups you can join.

Includes insects, fish, reptiles and frogs, birds and marsupials, an all types of situations from suburban yards and flats to farms and schools.

Beautifully illustrated with stories about kids and adults who live with natives, amazing facts, weird critters, and instructions and diagrams on building enclosures and how to turn your yard into a wild life haven

Christopher Cheng is the author of a number of best selling picture and information books, short stories and novels. This year, he is once again an Ambassador for the Commonwealth Government's Literacy and Numeracy Week program. **RRP \$26.95**

bodywer@plutoaustralia.com Pluto Press Australia

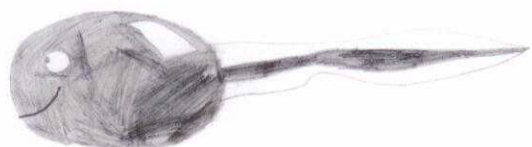
*****Several copies of the book were donated for or competition*****

Most interesting frog photo Frogographic competition



Blue Mountains Tree Frog spawn Brad McCaffery

Best frog art work, under 16, Ed Bambach aged 7



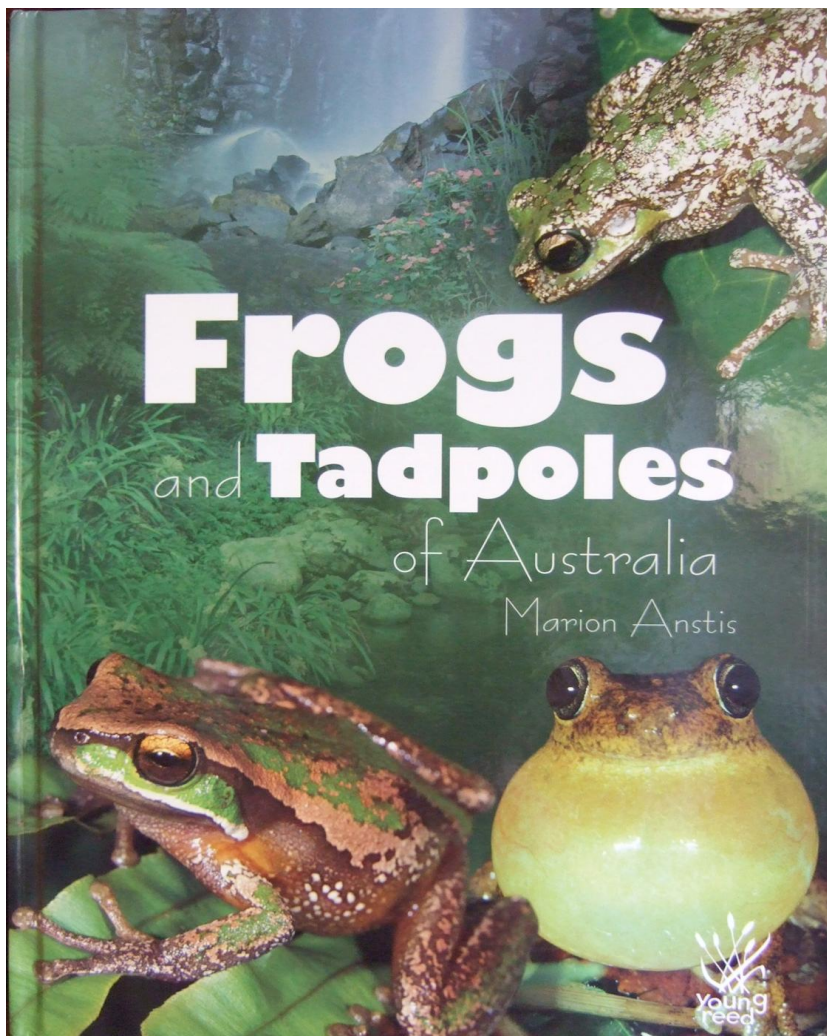
2008 – GLOBAL YEAR OF THE FROG

The world has woken up to the fact that many frogs are disappearing into extinction. And we humans have at last decided that we must not let that happen.

To save the frogs and to get a nice bottle of wine into the bargain, wine that even has frog juice in the label, this is what you can do to for starters:

1. Type the above heading into Google and find out what the GYF is all about.
2. Come up with at least one good (or at least funny) idea on what FATS should do about it next year.
3. Send or give or email it to Arthur – he's the one with the bottle: **9599 1161** or **awh41103@bigpond.net.au** will reach him.

The best entry gets the bottle. If you're a kid, it's your Christmas present for your parents. If there are no praiseworthy entries, Arthur will drink the wine by himself. We mustn't let that happen, either. **L.V.**



FROGS AND TADPOLES OF AUSTRALIA

By Marion Anstis

From Marion Anstis, the author of *Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia*, comes this new book, one of the New Holland Young Reed series on Australian wildlife.

FROGS and TADPOLES of Australia takes us into the private world of frogs and tadpoles and how they live and breed in many different habitats across Australia. Hard cover, 48 pages in full colour design enough to wet anyone's appetite, and there are even activities to do at the end! Attractively priced at \$19.95, it is available from the author (email: frogpole@tpg.com.au), FATS, or can be ordered through good bookshops (ISBN: 9781921073076).

LAST MEETING 3 AUGUST 2007 continued from page 2

David's slides were extensive and interesting. Frogs photographed included *Lt rothii* Northern Laughing Tree Frog, *Lt rubella* the Desert Tree frog which likes human dwellings, is fat and chubby and has a huge range, *Lt fallax*, *Lt Dahl* an aquatic frog whose taxonomy is being reconsidered, *Cyclorana australis* the Giant Burrowing Frog, the Stonemason's Frog *Uperoleia inundata*, a video of a frog eating termites, *Limnodynastes convexiusculus* with its foaming egg mass and huge black tadpoles, *Lt coplandi* the Sandstone Frog, the dreaded *Bufo marinus* toad which has been there for three seasons now. We thank David Nelson for another excellent presentation.

Frogs and Tadpoles of Australia

By Marion Anstis

Which came first, the frog or the egg? For Marion it was and is the tadpole. In 2002 her award winning "Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia" eliminated "tadpole unknown", a common statement in many field guides. All serious froggers are grateful to Marion for her years of painstaking research. Frogs are easy, tadpoles are not. Tadpoles are mostly aquatic, often cryptic and hidden.

Marion's tadpole research has meant close observation through every stage of metamorphosis. Now all, frog, egg and tadpole are wonderfully presented in "Frogs and Tadpoles of Australia"

The book, aimed at young readers, is a visual delight. It is easy to learn about frogs shown in their natural habitats. Rainforest, wallum, alpine heights... The Spotted Marsh Frog on the inside title page is montage perfection on dewy grass in misty air.

The chapters on the frogs, their breeding, behaviour and development are fact-filled. Greatly intriguing is the account of direct development. New words in the clear and lively text are explained in a glossary. An Australian map gives a general picture of habitats. There are quizzes and activities, always a treat for a young reader. Declines and extinctions are mentioned and "What can I do to help?" is well answered.

Delightfully informative, "Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia" is a children's book for everyone; for adults and for parents to read selectively to early primary school children. And any toddler would love a chat over the larger frog portraits. **Written by Punia Jeffery**

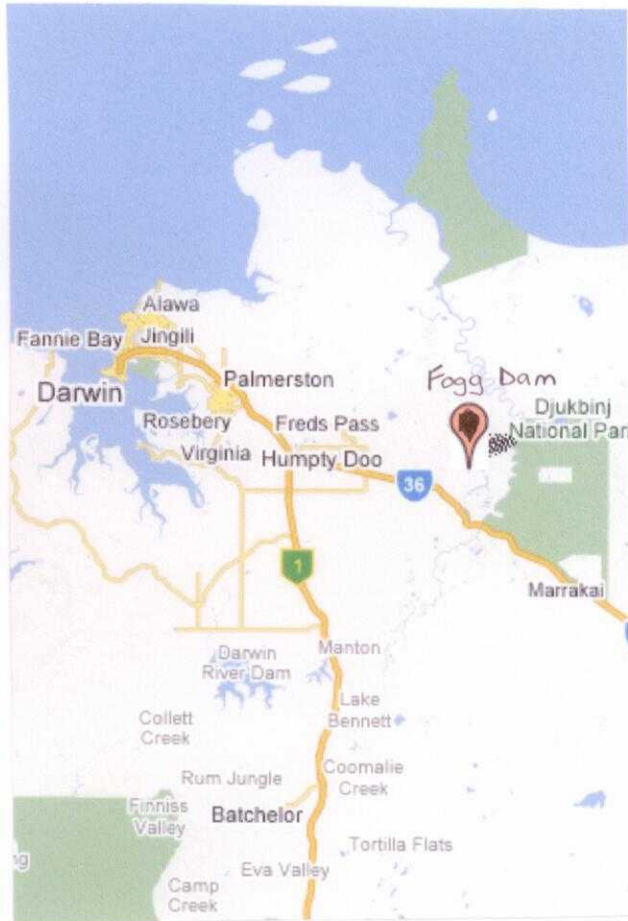
The 49 Frogographic competition entries were displayed on screen and results announced. Congratulations to all the winners. All received a book "Locally Wild", zoo passes and \$50. The entries were a high standard, well done all! The committee would like to thank everyone who entered, Marion Anstis for preparing the slide show, the donator of all the book prizes "Locally Wild - Keeping native animals as pets" Christopher Cheng, who also donated the Darling Harbour zoo entries. We look forward to your entries in the 2008 Frogographic competition. **MW**

Your amphibian license fauna record returns are due each year to NPWS in August.

For any enquiries please contact the Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit ph 02 9585 6406 fax 02 9585 6401

wildlife.licensing@environment.nsw.gov.au or mail to PO Box 1967 Hurstville NSW 1481

Most interesting frog, under 16, "Peek a Boo" Kiara Leong



WORLD-RENOWNED WETLANDS PROTECTED

ONE of the state's most important and vulnerable bird breeding wetlands in the Murray-Darling basin has been granted international recognition and will be protected as an area of national environmental significance by the Federal Government.

The Paroo River Wetlands in north-west NSW, which supports tens of thousands of waterbirds and internationally migrating birds, is connected by the last free-flowing river in the northern basin. It has been added to the Ramsar Convention, the international treaty that protects the world's most significant wetlands.

The Environment Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, will announce the listing today and described the inclusion of "the magnificent Paroo River Wetlands" as one of the most important systems for waterbirds in eastern Australia. The wetlands support several threatened species including painted snipe and freckled ducks and are a drought refuge for many others. It covers about 138,000 hectares and includes the Nocoleche Nature Reserve west of Bourke.

A wetlands expert from the University of NSW, Dr Richard Kingsford, last night described the Ramsar listing of the Paroo Wetlands as "fantastic", saying it would offer a greater degree of protection from upstream development under federal legislation.

Yesterday Mr Turnbull also announced that deep groundwater supplies and using aquifers to store stormwater would be examined as part of further attempts to boost water supplies. Mr Turnbull said \$52 million would be spent on working out how much of the "forgotten" resource there was and what could be done with it.

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/worldrenowned-wetlands-protected/2007/09/19/1189881595540.html>

Marian Wilkinson and Stephanie Peatling

20 September 2007

Best frog portrait, under 16, Chloe Newman, Stuttering Frog



Best frog artwork Julie Farrell



The beautifully framed White Lip Frog photo "Prince Charming" donated by Karen Ferguson will be auctioned at the December FATS meeting

Snakes let meat rest before serving

Richard Macey

IT IS not just humans that have found fast food can be a health hazard.

Scientists say an Australian snake has somehow learnt that the secret ingredient needed to turn very dangerous frogs into a delicious dinner is allowing the meal to sit for exactly the right time before serving.

In the vast flood plains between Darwin and Kakadu, says Rick Shine, an evolutionary biologist from the University of Sydney, "frogs are like hamburgers" for local snakes.

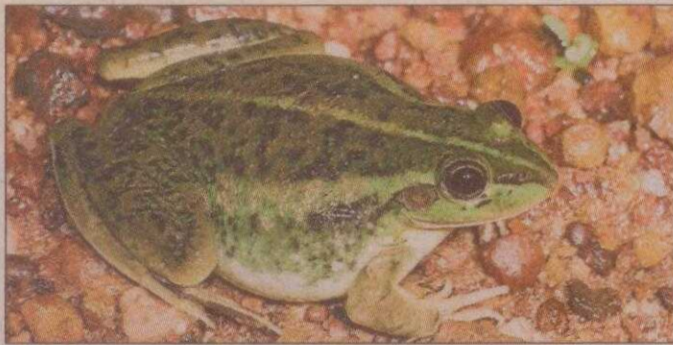
But an evolutionary arms race has given two frog species a means of protection.

Marbled frogs, when threatened, produce a powerful glue from their skin that gums up the mouths and heads of any snake foolish enough to swallow the amphibian.

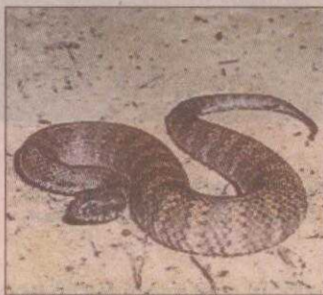
"The snake gets stuck to the ground," Professor Shine said.

Another species, Dahl's aquatic frog, exudes a toxin that can kill a snake in minutes.

Until recently it was thought that no snake could dine on either frog and live to slither away. But Professor Shine and a colleague, Dr Ben Phillips, now have video evidence that the northern death adder has discovered that patience is a



A dish best served cold ... a poisonous native frog. Photo: David Nelson

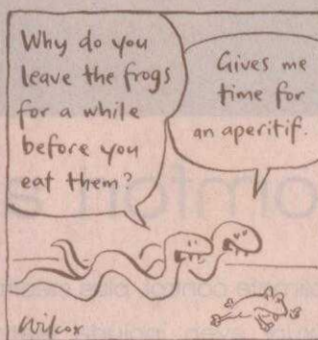


Death adder ... forced to wait.

Photo: Queensland Museum

virtue when pursuing dangerous prey.

While investigating how animals behave when they encounter toxic cane toads, Professor Shine and Dr Phillips put the death adders and the frogs into tanks fitted with video cameras.



The marbled frog's glue has one defect - it stops being sticky after 10 minutes. The surprised scientists watched as the snake would bite the frog, inject a lethal dose of venom, and then quickly release the amphibian before it could wrap the attacker in glue.

The death adder would wait about 12 minutes for the dead frog's glue to break down, before devouring it.

Poison emitted by Dahl's aquatic frog breaks down after 30 minutes. The snake would pounce, inject its venom, and retreat - for about 40 minutes.

Professor Shine said the snakes gobbled up harmless frogs without delay, indicating they could tell the difference between various species.

"They are pretty good little frog taxonomists."

They had also learnt exactly how long they had to wait to consume a dangerous frog. The death adder was "certainly more sophisticated than I would have guessed. It's hard to know what is going on in that very small brain behind those eyes".

On first striking a Dahl's aquatic frog the death adder would lie with its mouth open, as if it had been poisoned. But in every experiment the snake recovered, waited the appropriate time, then swallowed its dinner.

The scientists began their study after another colleague, Dr Gavin Bedford, reported witnessing the snake's previously unknown behaviour.

"We were astonished; it's extraordinarily impressive," Professor Shine said.

Wallum Froglet (underbelly) photographed by Grant Webster



"Peoples' Choice" winner Frogographic competition

The Australian Reptile Park ARP and John Weigel will hold their annual Christmas BBQ in early December. Traditionally FATS members have free entry. You need to confirm the date and bring your current membership card with you. The FATS committee would like to thank John and the ARP for their continued generosity in inviting FATS members. **Australian Reptile Park Pacific Hwy, Somersby ph 02 4340 1022 Winner 2001 New South Wales Tourism Award for Business Excellence Winner 1998 & 1999 National Tourism Award for Australia's best Regional Attraction** jweigel@reptilepark.com.au www.reptilepark.com.au www.snakeranch.com.au

TOADS FALL VICTIM TO CROWS IN NT



Cane toads in remote NT have recently found themselves a predator. (Reuters: David Gray)

Cane toads have been doing pretty well in some of the Northern Territory's remote areas, but at a tiny outstation about 500 kilometres east of Darwin, people have started to see them falling out of the sky.

John Greatorex has been visiting the Mapura outstation for years, but has only recently discovered that the cane toads have found themselves a predator. He says he was quietly having a cup of tea last week when things became a little strange. "We were sitting down just having breakfast by the fire and there was this 'plok' just beside us," he said. "I looked down and it was a cane toad and I thought, 'hey, how come a cane toad's falling out of a tree?' I thought 'no, it couldn't be', and I looked up and saw a crow."

Mr Greatorex says a few minutes later, it happened again. "Plok! Another one landed and I looked up and there was another crow up there," he said. "It flew down and picked up the cane toad and off it flew too, up into the tree and it grabbed the cane toad and turned it over up on the bough of this tree and started eating its insides."

Queensland crows have been reported eating cane toads, but there has been less evidence of it in the NT. Mr Greatorex says he was not entirely convinced, so he went out that night, caught a toad and released it when the crows were around the next day. "One of them turned its head and it walked over to this cane toad and grabbed it by its leg and turned it over," he said. "After it had got good hold of the leg off it flew up into a tree and started eating it."

Roslyn Malnumba spends most of her days weaving baskets at Mapuru, and has also seen the crows eating toads. She says she is thrilled about the discovery.

At Alice Springs Desert Park, native bird trainer Gareth Cat says once a group of crows have learnt how to eat the toads, the knowledge should spread. "Crows show remarkable cognitive abilities, a lot of research believes them to have higher cognitive abilities than a lot of apes," he said. "They can think about what they're doing and even in certain cases show imagination, which is a pretty hard thing to try to comprehend."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/09/15/2033759.htm> includes audio story By Katrina Bolton
15 Sep 2007 Sent to Frogcall by Steve Weir

Amid heated debate over the treatment of animals at the Taronga and Western Plains zoos, **Paul Andrew** and **Jonathon Wilcken** say wildlife faces a calamity and the world needs zoos more than ever.

IN 1973 the most extraordinary of frogs, the gastric-brooding frog, was discovered in Queensland's rainforests. It was last seen, since presumed extinct, in 1983. If ever anything could make us wonder at the magic of Australia's fauna it must be a mother that stops eating while she raises her young in her stomach. Yet within a decade of its discovery this frog slipped from the planet with barely a whisper from the Australian public. And this is not an isolated case.

A group of corroboree frogs is now living in a climate-controlled facility at Taronga Zoo. This tiny little frog is as toxic as a poison-arrow frog, winters beneath the snow in the high alps of Kosciuszko, and will probably be extinct in the wild through a deadly fungus by this year or next. Its last hope is a zoo breeding program, which plans to have frogs to release back into the home

range in coming years. You can't get much more public than the ski fields, yet again we could lose another remarkable Australian without comment.

Humankind is at a crossroads. We are responsible for the worst spate of extinctions since the dinosaurs. We are undermining the environment for animals and plants by polluting it, deforesting it and introducing "alien" species to it... and then there's global warming.

We face a crisis that requires resources, public commitment and innovative thinking.

How is it, then, that zoos, despite being the most trusted of organisations by the general public, face poorly considered opposition from some animal welfare groups?

There are issues of great consequence and we need to discuss them, yet in no other field is such voice given to opinion based on so little knowledge. These issues would be purely of academic interest were the consequences of such slack thinking not so far-reaching.

Zoos are placed to undertake a pivotal role in conservation, and already support programs for critically endangered species from Indonesia to Botswana. Research done in collaboration with Australian zoos has led to breakthroughs in the fields of population genetics and wildlife medicine.

Together, 600 world zoos maintain an international database about wildlife management based on the care of

2 million animals over the past 40 years. This data is used to manage complex breeding programs to ensure a future for endangered species.

However, zoos do far more than breeding and caring for animals. They deliberately identify and manage animals in a way that retains their natural behaviours; they expressly value the "gibbon-ness" of

gibbons and the "wallaby-ness" of bridled naitail wallabies

Zoos are unique in having this skills set. There are no other agencies that work with endangered species, not only to care for their health, but also to retain the behavioural and genetic blueprints of the species. Zoos also engage in some of the world's most complex logistical and administrative exercises. They move tigers around Australia, and between Australia and Europe, not just to make sure zoos have tigers, but to ensure that in a 100 years planet will still have tigers that are behaviourally and genetically fit for reintroduction to the wild.

Political planning lasts about three years, but programs such as this are deliberately maintained, without pause,

over a century. There are few human endeavours lasting more than a generation. The pyramids and European cathedrals come to mind, but not much else. Yet the zoos use a base-line measure of success that spans 100 years; over this time frame they plan to retain

90 per cent of the genetic diversity of entire species. It is a hugely complicated scientific and logistical task.

So it has come as something of a surprise that we've seen the recent tide of noisy opposition to zoos from welfare groups, mainly because it has been so ill-informed.

We can all acknowledge that we would prefer to see a gibbon in the forests of Java, but zoos know animals too well to make presumptuous statements that a particular specimen is

"better off" in the wild. In reality, the animal may be struggling under a load of intestinal parasites, with ticks all over its skin, hungry, cold and constantly looking over its shoulder for predators. It is a purely human predilection to presume it is better off. Perhaps the animal would have a different view.

Taronga Zoo faced two years of concerted opposition when it recently sought to bring five surplus Asian elephants from work camps in Thailand - where they lived chained to the ground in crowded groups - into specialised facilities to take part in a conservation breeding program for their species. Further opposition to the zoo's elephant program surfaced in recent days as part of a barrage of criticism from anti-zoo groups.

A tremendous opportunity is before us. It's time for zoos, with animal welfare and wildlife conservation groups, to join in close partnership to combine their skills and resources to make a real impact on the conservation of species in the wild and in zoo populations. Without this co-operation and shared vision, many species will become extinct in our lifetime.

With human population set to reach at 12 billion by 2050, the reality is that there are not enough "wild" places left to sustain viable populations of many species on earth. We must make every effort to preserve remnant populations in protected sanctuaries and zoos and that needs to start now.

Political point-scoring at this juncture would be criminally negligent. True sharing of what are highly specialised skills is the only answer to the calamity facing wildlife.

Paul Andrew is curator of the Taronga and Western Plains zoos.

Jonathon Wilcken is executive officer of the Australasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria.

The right and wrong ways to zoo it - Page 17

Some welfare groups made startlingly naive allegations about elephants and "the wild", constructing a utopian vision of elephants meandering through endless primordial rainforests. The truth of the circumstances of the actual animals was neither sought nor recognised, while the debate raged across the media and the courts.

Too much of the debate starts and ends with human prejudice. Worse, in no other field are commentators allowed to so completely confuse their prejudices with animal welfare. Statements made on behalf of an animal are so casually accepted as reasonable.

When the renowned primatologist and conservationist Jane Goodall visited Taronga's chimpanzee group last year, she was asked if she thought chimps should be in the wild, rather than in a zoo.

Somewhat surprised by the question, Goodall said that Taronga's chimp exhibit was one of the world's best and that "although it is my preference for chimps to live in the wild, there are no places left in the wild where they are fed and taken care of as well as at Taronga".

A rising human population of 6.5 billion is undermining the environment for animals and plants via pollution, expanding cities, deforestation and global warming, leading to the current pace of extinctions, which is 1000 times faster than historic rates.

Much of the world's megafauna doesn't have a short-term future in the wild and unless zoos keep populations of endangered species ticking over, fit, behaviourally healthy and genetically sound, it won't have a long-term future. For at least 26 species, zoo animals are all that are left; all that stand between their survival and extinction. This number is rapidly rising.

Sperm bank could preserve dying frogs Richard Macey SMH 20 6 2007

FACED by disease, drought and climate change, Australia's frogs are in such peril that a national centre is needed to preserve their frozen sperm, eggs and embryos, a scientist has warned. The centre would cost up to \$5 million a year to run, says Dr Michael Mahony, an associate professor in biological sciences at Newcastle University, and would allow future generations to bring the frogs back from extinction.

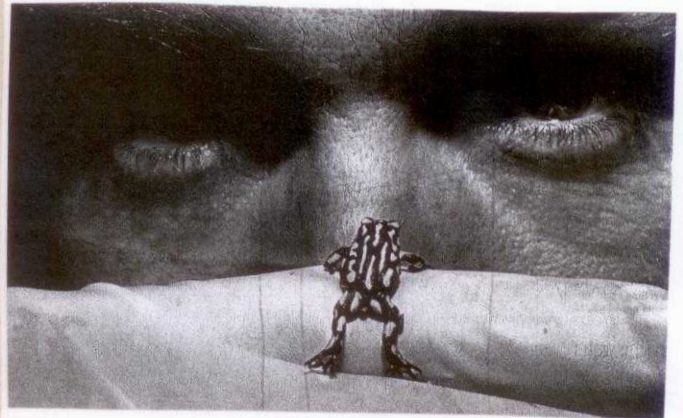
The chytrid fungus, which has spread around the world in the past 30 years, has been blamed for driving hundreds of frog species to oblivion, including nine Australian species. Mahony estimates at least another 30 Australian species are threatened by the fungus.

Frogs are also increasingly under pressure from the loss of their habitats, while dozens of species only found in cool climates high in mountains could eventually be annihilated by climate change.

Taronga Zoo has joined an international effort to create "amphibian arks" to protect and breed frogs on the brink of extinction.

The zoo is already breeding corroboree frogs, found in a narrow altitude band, between 1300 metres and 1700 metres, in Kosciuszko National Park. "They are very close to extinction," says the zoo's acting manager of the amphibians, Michael

"Amphibian ark" Taronga Zoo's Michael McFadden with a Corroboree Frog, a species the zoo is helping to conserve photo Robert Pearce



McFadden. As few as 100 remain in the wild. "In drought years they don't breed," McFadden says.

Mahony says the fungus is by far the greatest danger facing Australia's frogs. However, when combined with projected rises in temperature over the next 50 years, Australia's amphibians are facing "a double whammy".

While Taronga is developing the amphibian ark program, Newcastle University researchers are seeking ways to freeze frog eggs and embryos in liquid nitrogen, in case they become extinct. He hopes that such a centre will never be needed to bring a species back from the dead, but sees it as an insurance policy.

McFadden says the fungus might have been spread in the 1940s by the African clawed frog, which was shipped around the world for medical research and pregnancy tests. "Urine from a woman was injected into the frog and if it ovulated, then you knew the woman was pregnant."

Both species of gastric-brooding frog are among the Australian amphibians exterminated by the fungus. The first was discovered in the 1970s; the last was dead by 1986.

Mahoney says the Carbine Tablelands barred frog, which lives above 1000 metres in Queensland's Atherton Tablelands, is one of dozens of species whose habitat could be destroyed by climate change within 50 years.

"We think of it as being in the tropics but even in summer the average daily temperature is only around 18 to 20 degrees.

"The prediction is those areas will become hotter and drier" pushing the frog habitats "higher and higher until there is nowhere further to go". Some scientists have speculated that global warming could push temperatures in high altitude habitats closer to the 17 to 25-degree band that best suits the spread of the fungus.

Scientists working as far away as the forests of Central and South America have also identified possible links between global warming and the fungus in massive frog extinctions since 1980.

In an email to the *Herald*, Dr J. Alan Pounds, of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve Tropical Science Centre in Costa Rica, estimated there had once been more than 110 species of harlequin frog in the forests. "We estimate that about two-thirds of them have disappeared, often despite protection of their habitats," he wrote. "About 80 per cent of the losses immediately followed years that were unusually warm across the tropics, suggesting that climate change is loading the dice for the chytridiomycosis outbreaks."



Mini me ... the gastric-brooding frog and its young. Photo: Mike Tyler

Frog and Tadpole Study Group

Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year 01/07/06 to 30/06/07

	01/07/05 – 30/06/06		01/07/06 – 30/06/07
Opening Balance	\$15481.64		\$14020.51
<u>Income</u>			
	\$ 1023.24	Interest	\$ 1277.72
	\$ 6736.00	Membership	\$ 5670.00
	\$ 334.00	Sundry Income	
	\$ 530.00	Donations	\$ 651.82
	\$ 2000.00	Grants	\$ 8000.00
	\$ 453.00	Sales	\$ 229.00
	\$ 332.00	Auction/raffle	\$ 354.00
	\$ 1925.00	Rescue Frog Sales	\$ 770.00
	\$ 1622.00	Field Trip Income	\$ 1557.00
	\$ 3250.00	Frogmobile Income	\$ 6513.00
	\$ 3890.00	Community Broadcasting	
	\$ 1921.00	Airport Frog Income	\$ 744.00
	\$ 1539.00	Sausage Sizzle	
		Workshop Income	\$ 1072.55
<u>Total Deposits</u>	\$25,556.24		\$26,839.09
	\$41,037.88		\$40,859.60
<u>Expenditure</u>			
	\$ 5.00	Bank Charges	\$ 53.00
	\$ 42.00	Dept of Fair Trading	\$ 43.00
	\$ 700.00	Insurance	\$ 1050.00
	\$ 494.04	Printing – Sundry	\$ 2039.38
	\$ 1431.88	Printing – Frogcall	\$ 1568.45
	\$ 1094.68	Postage – Frogcall	\$ 983.90
	\$ 60.26	Stationery	\$ 103.19
	\$ 95.00	Post Box Hire	\$ 102.00
	\$ 1540.00	Field Station Hire	\$ 1498.00
	\$ 1331.55	Herpetofauna	\$ 1262.25
	\$ 160.00	Sales – Expenditure	\$ 1095.90
	\$ 70.00	Subscriptions	\$ 140.00
	\$ 467.58	Sundry Expenses	\$ 628.49
	\$ 503.67	Mobile Phone	\$ 676.55
	\$ 8264.19	Frogmobile Expenses	\$ 7386.00
	\$ 757.52	Sausage Sizzle Expenditure	
	\$ 10000.00	Term Deposit	
		Rosebery Grant Expenditure	\$ 5998.00
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	\$27,017.37		\$ 24,628.11
<u>Closing Balance</u>	\$ 14,020.51		\$ 16,231.49
TOTAL FATS ASSETS	05/06		06/07
Cash in Bank	\$14,020.51		\$16,231.49
Term Deposit	\$27,114.65		\$27,114.65

By **HANNAH EDWARDS**
ENVIRONMENT REPORTER

FROGS are being put up for adoption after hitchhiking to Sydney in cases of tropical fruit and pot plants.

Many of the "banana box frogs" found a new home on Friday night at a meeting of a frog fanciers group.

Before they can be released to their new owners they must be screened for chytrid fungus, a disease that has killed thousands of

their kind across Australia. When people find the frogs – often outside supermarkets or near their homes – they can call the Frog and Tadpole Study Group of NSW (FATS), which oversees the regular adoptions.

FATS gets about six lost frog calls a day. "This time of year, they come in by the kilo," FATS committee member Lothar Voigt said.

The tiny yellow-bellied dainty tree frog is among the more common species handed in.

"It doesn't move much," Mr Voigt said. "It's very undemanding."

The white-lipped tree frog and the common green tree frog are other regular immigrants. "But in almost all cases they are tree frogs because they are more territorial. They cling onto bunches of bananas."

Taronga Zoo also gets plenty of frogs handed in to its wildlife clinic. Manager Libby Hall said: "We give them treatment and they may need antibiotics. We warm them up."

Fostered frogs hop into new homes

Stuck on you: Georgia Moore, 12 gets a close-up

look at a new arrival at a frog fanciers meeting on Friday

The Sun-Herald 5 august 2007 photo Steve Lunam



FROGWATCH HELPLINE

0419 249 728

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Thank you to the many FATS members and regular contributors including Lothar Voigt, Robert Wall, Karen White and Andrew Nelson for articles, FROGCALL production, membership administration, mail-out inserts & envelope preparation.

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.

October 12-14. Smiths Lake Camp-Out. Leaders : Arthur & Karen White.

In frog field-guides, the habitat of many frogs is described as 'WSF' or wet sclerophyll forest. The term 'wet' alludes not to rainfall, but to the presence of a rainforest understorey. This weekend we will learn how to identify these tall, eucalypt-dominated forests & we will discuss how they differ from true rainforests. By correctly identifying habitat we are more able to predict the frog species that may occur in an area. We will then look for some of the remarkable frogs that reside within the tall forests around Smiths Lake. After years of local study, Arthur & Karen enjoy an extensive knowledge of the local fauna & geology of this area. Their reputation for turning up all sorts of frogs, reptiles & nocturnal life ensures this fieldtrip is always popular. During the day, swim, surf or just relax & enjoy the beautiful views & good company. 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.

November 3. 8-00p.m. West Head, Kur-rin-gai National Park. Leader : Grant Webster.

Meet at the Duckholes Picnic Area in West Head Rd, near the corner of McCarrs Creek Rd, Terrey Hills. From earliest days, Sydney's northern suburbs fell victim to extensive ridge-top development. The fearful combination of housing, roads & stormwater drains reduced bushland & forever altered water flows & also introduced urban run-off. Species unique to the ridge-tops lost habitat. In addition, those frogs that relied on soaks for moisture, or dwelled in the streams below, faced new struggles for survival. Tonight, we will look at some of those species that once ranged extensively across the northern parts of the Sydney region. Grant has developed a fine understanding of the subtle changes in the distribution of frogs right across the Sydney basin. Tonight he will show us a site that is rich in froglife, yet is now sadly uncommon across much of the city's north.

December 8. 8-15p.m. Winmalee, Lower Blue Mountains. Leader : Darryl McKay.

Meet at the end of White Cross Rd (off Hawkesbury Rd) Winmalee. There is much controversy over the long-term impact of bushfire. In some Australian landscapes, the absence of fire impedes the regeneration of certain plant species & may also disadvantage particular animal species. Conversely, fires can be too frequent or too intense & may decimate both plant & animal life. Many believe that the Australian landscape adapts not to fire, but to a particular fire regime - an intricate mix of timing, frequency, intensity & pattern. For many endangered species however, fire is now acknowledged as a key threatening process. Tonight we will look at some of the frogs that survive in a fire-prone environment & we will speculate on some of those species that may have disappeared. Darryl is an accomplished field naturalist with a multi-discipline background. When not spotlighting frogs & reptiles he is regularly monitoring & banding albatross & other seabirds off-shore.

***** 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.

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

FATS meetings commence at about 7.00pm and end about 10.00pm, on the first Friday of every EVEN month (February, April, June, August, October and December), at Building 22, RANAD, Jamieson Street, Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush Bay. We hold six informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year. Visitors are welcome. We are actively involved in monitoring frog populations and other field studies, produce the newsletter FROGCALL and FROGFACTS information sheets. All expressions of opinion and information are published on the basis that they are not to be regarded as an official opinion of the Frog and Tadpole Study Group Committee, unless expressly so stated. Material from FROGCALL MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED without the prior consent of the Editor or President of FATS. Permission from FATS and/or author/s must be obtained prior to any commercial use of material. The author/s and source must be fully acknowledged.