

# FROG CALL

NEWSLETTER No. 92  
December 2007

THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC  
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Green-eyed Tree Frog *Litoria genimaculata* photo Marion Anstis



Frogmobile helpers are like gold dust. The future depends on you. We need "Frog Explainers" No experience required. Call Lothar Voigt on 9371 9129  
Email [lothar@exemail.com.au](mailto:lothar@exemail.com.au)  
or ring the Frogwatch Helpline on 0419 249 728.

6.30pm for a 7.00 pm start  
**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December 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.



## **MEETING FORMAT for 7<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

- 6.30 pm Lost frogs needing homes. Please bring your FATS membership card, donation & Amphibian Licence to home a froggy friend.
- 7.00 pm Welcome and announcements.
- 7.30 pm The main speaker is George Madani  
"The Great Dingo Debate" Friend or Foe ?  
Small animal diversity in the Strzelecki Desert.  
Annie Nielson will give a short presentation on  
Animals from Galapagos, Venezuela and Peru.  
Matthew McCaffery will be giving a run-down on  
the most recent Smiths Lake field trip.  
Grant Webster will be talking about frogs in the Watagans.
- 9.30 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. Christmas raffle, guessing competition, light refreshments and pleasant conversation.

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## LAST MEETING 5 OCTOBER 2007

**A**fter the welcome and announcements, Arthur White talked about our frog group's current field trips. FATS have been very fortunate to have Robert Wall, our field trip co-ordinator and a team of experienced volunteer field trip leaders who donate their time and share their experience with our members. They have generously provided us with regular and varied opportunities to meet frogs and other creatures in the wild. You are encouraged to join us on these unique, low cost adventures but don't wait to the last minute. No previous experience required!

Aaron Organ from the environmental advisory firm Ecology Partners, consult on small fauna. He traveled from Melbourne to talk to us about managing and monitoring the Homebush Green and Golden Bell Frogs. FATS have been assisting with the auditory survey work.

Ecology Partners monitor frog populations, assess their status, inform management, ensure regulations are fulfilled, harness community involvement and increase our understanding of these creatures at Sydney Olympic Park.

The site has had the longest period of monitoring which includes tadpole audits, spotlight surveys and capture. Trends of breeding, distribution and abundance over time have formed part of the key performance indicators. To determine what's going on, the monitoring program identifies emergent vegetation in ponds and the presence of *Gambusia* especially during flooding. It has been found that a flooding and drying regime helps.

FATS have surveyed 8 sites and 70 ponds and spotlighted 73 sites, with a crew of 15 people. 83 pond sites were dip-netted with 4 to 10 sweeps. One to six tadpole traps were set, all working within animal ethics guidelines. Mark and recapture techniques, the use of passive integrated transponders, pit tags, and VIA tags are used. Efforts are being directed to make established populations more robust over time.

Active management techniques include frog fences, weed removal, maintenance of minimum water levels, pond drainage, expanding tadpole trapping, varying survey times, undertake detailed mark and recapture programs and planting of suitable aquatic vegetation.

The presentation ended with loads of questions of Aaron and debate from the floor. FATS members are encouraged to participate in this exciting field work which will occur in November and December commencing at 8pm until late. We thank Aaron for a very interesting presentation and fascinating slides.

MW

Philip and Wendy Grimm presented slides of the field trip / holiday in the Border Ranges. Slides and commentary included Red Crowned Toadlets in amplex, a fat python in the sand-dunes of Urunga, a beach stone curlew, *Wilcoxi* (at Teronia Creek North of Nymbin) and *Adelotus* spawn, a magnificent 30 feet high Giant Climbing Orchid, tiger snake, yabby, koala, *Mix. fasciolatus*, barred frog and calls of *Adelotus* and *Uperoleia*. Another interesting field trip, thank you Wendy and Phillip.

Marion Anstis announced the web site work currently being carried out to update the site. Alistair MacDougall is preparing our website which will include photos of frogs and recorded calls. **Continued on page 4**

## CONGRATULATIONS GRANT WEBSTER

**T**he success of this field-trip, led by Grant Webster, can be measured not only in the species obtained on the night, but also by the prompt response by NPWS staff to the FATS species list. Contacting FATS within days, Acting Area Manager, Heidi Bennett, was delighted to confirm that NPWS had no previous records of *Heleioporus australiacus* or *Pseudophryne australis* in that part of Ku-rin-gai National Park. FATS obliged with a NPWS request for more detailed information. As a result of Grant's investigative work, Heidi confirmed that habitat management plans would now likely be put in place to safeguard the habitat of these two species. **Congratulations Grant !**

Needless to say, FATS fieldtrips are led by members whose knowledge of Sydney frogs is second to none. On a night where week-long rain kindly held off for the duration of the field-trip, we also picked up *Litoria freycineti*, *Litoria fallax*, *Litoria phyllochroa*, *Uperoleia laevigata* as well as the usual *Crinia signifera* & *Limnodynastes peronii*.

Thanks Grant for a great, well-researched night out. **R.W.**

## ARP CHRISTMAS PARTY 2 DEC 2007

**T**he Australian Reptile Park and John Weigel have kindly invited FATS members to their annual herp. Christmas party, which will be held on Sunday 2nd December 2007. I understand that you can bring your current FATS membership card to obtain free entry. **MW**



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## FROGBITS AND TADPIECES



Is it too late to start a new party?

The Frogs First Party

“Frogs First – Us Next?”

The FFUN Party

Let’s have a party anyway! Photo Lothar Voigt

### OUR 2008 GYF COMPETITION:

**T**he last *FrogCall* promised a bottle of frog wine to whoever comes up with the best idea on what FATS should do about the Global Year of the Frog. The response, needless to say, was completely overwhelming! Harald Ehmann produced a list of over 20 ideas, some crazy, some funny, some eminently do-able. Harald, FATS founder Harald, came up with even more, because he came up from Adelaide himself and addressed the FATS committee meeting on the subject. That bottle of wine is well earned – our congratulations!

**As you well know:** Not only is 2008 the GYF, but the 29<sup>th</sup> of February is World Frog Leap Day. Around 30% of the world’s frogs including Australia’s are or are becoming threatened with extinction.

**Christmas gift memberships:** We could really do with some more members. So why don’t you take out a few for your friends and relatives at the next meeting?

**Frog and pond workshops:** FATS ran one at Ourimbah on 24.11. and is running another one at Ku-Ring-Gai Wildflower Gardens on 2.12. These workshops are always booked out quickly, the attendees are fired up with enthusiasm and the frogs are gorgeous. The next one is tentatively in Marrickville in April. L.V.

## THE TRAVELS OF THE FROGMOBILE

### Where we’ve been in October and November:

**Su. 14.10.** Lane Cove shopping centre (Burns Bay Rd), with Andrew Lo and Annie Nielsen as Frog Explainers. Huge crowd. Andrew was literally bowled over.

**Sat. 27.10.** Liverpool (Jacquie Osmond Reserve), with Grant Webster and Chloe Neuman helping. A pretty and froggy bushland site but right off the beaten track. There was a very froggy clown who livened things up.

**Su. 4.11.** Centennial Park (Duck Pond). That was the big one, the FROGWEEK one. We had the Whites there, the Grimms, Punia, birthday-boy Grant, Danie and lots of visitors. Luckily the weather had turned after a downpour in the night and the sun had come out in time.

### Where we are next:

**Sat. 26.1.08,** Parramatta Park, Australia Day, 10am – 5pm. Two shifts of helpers needed.

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

**Sat. 2.2.08,** Sydney Olympic Park (Armoury), World Wetlands Day, 10am- 3pm. Helpers needed.

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



When you’re a frog, finding a safe place is getting harder all the time!

Photo Lothar Voigt

**T**he next lot of auditory surveys for Green and Golden Bell frogs at Homebush will be on 13 and 14 December at night, anyone interested should ring Arthur White or talk to him at the December meeting. A.W.

**CHRISTMAS RAFFLE OF “PRINCE CHARMING”**  
Framed frog photo kindly donated by Karen Ferguson



## SCIENTISTS CLAIM CURE FOR DEADLY FROG FUNGUS



- Fungal threat: A green tree frog (AAP)

**A**n estimated one-third of the world's amphibian species are facing imminent extinction and one of the biggest killers of frogs has been the deadly chytrid fungal disease. But now scientists in New Zealand claim to have discovered a chytrid cure which comes in the simple form of an antibiotic that is traditionally used in eye drops.....

### Special bath

But Associate Professor Poulter and his team of researchers have come up with what appears to be a cure. They have discovered that giving infected frogs a special bath in ointments commonly used to treat eye infections could help save frogs. Associate Professor Poulter says it is a safe, effective and inexpensive method.....The research will be presented to an international conference in the United States later this week and will be published in the *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms* science journal.

### Building immunity

Associate Professor Poulter say the team is now focusing on research aimed at building immunity among frog populations, by deliberately infecting species.....

Researchers from Griffith University in Queensland recently found the deadly chytrid fungus is prevalent in frog populations throughout eastern Australia.

Associate Professor Jean-Marc Hero has welcomed the findings but says it will not do much to protect frogs in the wild. "The disease and the cause of the disease, which is a fungal pathogen, is still out there," he said. "So as soon as those frogs breed, their offspring will die from the disease, so it can't be used. It's not going to help the frogs in the wild, or the corroboree frogs in the Australian Alps." However, Associate Professor Hero says the research will help protect frogs in isolated populations "On perhaps an island, where there is an outbreak of the disease, we can go in and cure, hopefully, a population, and rid the disease of that area," he said. "The problem is we can't get rid of the disease in the

wild, we can only cure individuals with this technique, which means that if we have the last of the corroboree frogs in a container at Sydney Zoo, and if the disease gets into that container, we can then cure it, we can clean the container and we can remove the disease." So we can save species from the brink of extinction, but we can't save species in the wild." **EXTRACT Sent to Frogcall by Steve Weir**

**Writer Lindy Kerin 31/10 07**

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/10/31/2076519.htm>

## FATS MEETING 5 OCT 2007 continued from page 2

**G**rant Webster spoke about his Port Stephens field trip, to Fingal Bay, which has Wallum paperbark swamps. Heatherbrae swamps had *Crinia*, Green Tree frogs, Smooth Toadlets and a 34.1 mm large male *Uperoleia laevigata* was sighted. Other swamps were One Mile Beach and Fingal swamps. Jervis Bay Tree Frogs were sighted and Tylers Tree frogs were calling.

Shoal Bay wetlands was the best spot in the region, with 11 species identified. Many of the slides such as Haswell's Frog, Smooth Toadlet and Wallum Rocket frog, included their calls. Nelson's Bay Golf Club had at least five species including the very common Dwarf Tree Frogs. Common Eastern Froglets, Perons and Striped Marsh were sighted. As usual Grant's presentation included impressive slides, recorded frog calls and interesting commentary. Thank you Grant.

**Arthur White** spoke about the Cane Toad eradication program in Port Macquarie, as previously described by Wendy Grimm. The population appears to have been wiped out. There has been a great deal of community awareness. Toad kits sent to schools were quite comprehensive. FATS received a complimentary kit which included a "bum-bag" with speaker that plays Cane Toad calls. The next Cane Toad roundup will be February 2008 well before the gravid females produce spawn. If no Cane Toads are found next year, an official statement will be released indicting that the eradication program was successful.

The next attempt will be at Broome Head near Grafton. Toads often use existing bush tracks, so in isolated communities, it's possible to get rid of them. **MW**

## PAYING ELECTRONICALLY FOR FATS MEMBERSHIP

**T**ake advantage of our direct banking, FATS membership payment option but remember to complete your details so we know who has paid us. We prefer you name on the payment advice because your payer code is very hard to associate with your member name.

**NB** One of our FATS members has paid us directly into our FATS bank account however they have not identified themselves. Unfortunately this means they are missing on their Frogcall. If you are ware of anyone not getting their mail-out, please let us know. **MW**

## CHIPPING NORTON / HAMMONDVILLE FIELD TRIP – 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007

A few diehard members met at the Education Centre managed by the Chipping Norton Lakes Authority where we met our guide for the evening, Sharyn Cullis. While we indulged in coffee, tea and biscuits, Sharyn gave us an insight into the geography and hydrology of the region as we pored over satellite photographs of the area. Chipping Norton Lakes are part of the middle flood plains of the Georges River and are surrounded by residential, industrial and recreational facilities. The area was extensively mined for sand from the 1950's to the 1990's which combined with increased urban run off led to a deterioration in the water quality and led to the expansion of the lakes. If you were to look at an aerial photo of the lakes you would see islands and these islands represent the original shoreline of the Georges River before the mining took place.



Peron's Tree Frog *Litoria peronii*

After the introductory talk we drove to Lieutenant Cantello Reserve in Hammondville. The reserve is managed by Liverpool Council and has a large clay based dam with smaller swamps and woodlands scattered throughout the park. We heard Common Eastern Froglets *Crinia signifera*, Perons Tree Frogs *Litoria peronii* and Tyler's Tree Frogs *Litoria tyleri* calling from the pond. Whilst some Smooth Toadlets *Uperoleia laevigata* were calling in a ditch beside the track.

Past the dam we entered an area dominated by earthworks and construction activity, which meant we couldn't access one of the ponds. However Matt spotted Bleating Tree Frogs *Litoria dentata* inside garbage bins filled with water and it wasn't long till everyone began to spot juvenile *L. dentata* on the ground so we had to be careful where we walked!

A Striped Marsh Frog was also spotted here and another one was seen sheltering under debris beneath the M5 Motorway.



Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*

After negotiating a barbed wire fence we entered a swamp where a Perons Tree Frog *Litoria peronii* was found calling from a tree. We headed back to the main road and walked down towards a toilet block where we spotted a small Bleating Tree Frog disappearing inside a tap. In the bushes next to the toilets Grant spotted a juvenile Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea*. It was fairly early in the season and we hadn't had much rain but we still saw a variety of frogs. Thanks to Robert for organising the field trip and Sharyn for guiding us around and giving us the benefit of her local experience.

*By Aaron Payne*

Bleating Tree Frog *Litoria dentata*



## SMITHS LAKE FIELD TRIP 12-14 OCT 2007

**D**ad, Brad and I had made a decision that we would go to Smiths Lake earlier than usual to check what it was like during the day. Arriving at around 12pm, we headed off to Wallingat National Park to see what we could find. The first stop-over was Whoota Lookout. The Lookout is on a high mountain and overlooks Wallis Lake to the north, and Myall Lake to the south. There were some spectacular views to be found. To the east the sky was clear and blue but to the west the sky was black. It was an unbelievable view. On our way to the field station, detours in the park took us to Sugar Creek Picnic Area, the Twin Fire Dams and the Quarry.

At Sugar Creek Picnic Area, we managed to spot a big male Eastern Water Dragon on the road. As I tried to sneak up on him, he bolted off into the forest. Whilst at Sugar Creek, we decided to go on a walk into the forest on the hunt for the elusive Southern Angle Headed Dragon but were disappointed when there were none to be seen. We did, however, walk into a forest full of Tusked Frogs calling and breeding. It was quite amazing. It was quite different in the daytime and we were glad that we did venture into the forest for a look around. We then drove off to the Twin Fire Dams. Here there were Tusked Frogs, Banjo Frogs, Striped Marsh Frogs and Eastern Dwarf Tree Frogs calling. Our Last stop was the Quarry where we looked...and looked... but didn't turn up anything.

After that stop, we decided to head off to the field station. As soon as we drove up the driveway, it started to rain. Shortly afterwards, it started bucketing down hail. The whole field was covered in white ice. FATS people began arriving, coming in dribs and drabs. A good old game of Smiths Lake Cricket was played just before dinner. By dinner almost all the trippers were up there and we were all eager to get out into the forest for our first night of frogging. Our night started at about 7:30 when everyone had finished their dinner and were ready to head out.

Arthur called us all in and told us that we would be heading down to the Grandis and Stoney Creek Forest Road in Myall Lakes National Park. As soon as we left the rain started and 5 minutes from the field station, the hail came again. After a quick stop waiting for the hail to subside, we drove off to our destination. We arrived at the car park near the Grandis and walked off with in our various groups to different directions to see what could be found. Some people went up the boardwalk towards the Grandis while others went up the road. I stayed around the cars to look for the Red Backed Toadlets *Pseudophryne coriacea*. I didn't find any calling Toadlets but I found a large King Cricket eating a Red Back Toadlet. I would never have expected this.

We continued along Stony Creek Road and wherever we could hear frogs, we stopped and listened. If we had not found that species earlier, we pulled over and went on a hunt to find it. There were several ponds and creeks to the side of Stony Creek Road so we stopped for closer inspections at each one. Here and there we found Red Backed Toadlets, Tusked Frogs, Striped Marsh Frogs, Eastern Dwarf Tree Frogs, Tylers Tree Frogs, Perons Tree Frogs, Stony Creek Frogs and Leaf Green Tree Frogs. At the last spot, we looked around for ages because there were a lot of frogs calling. Grant walked away from the main group because he thought he heard something different. He came back, to our surprise with *Litoria barringtonensis*. This frog is like the Leaf Green Tree Frog *Litoria phyllochroa* but it has black spots flecked over it and its call is different. This was the find of the night.

We got back to the field station at about midnight but people still wanted to go out to see what else they could find. I was one of those people. We drove out into Wallingat National Park and specifically the Quarry as some people had been there earlier and had a good list of frogs. As soon as we arrived we heard Tusked Frogs, Striped Marsh Frogs and Common Eastern Froglets calling. We walked in a bit and found Red Eyed Tree Frogs *Litoria chloris* calling (below).



These frogs are one of the nicest frogs found in the Smiths Lake region. After having a further look around we turned up a couple of baby Southern Leaf Tailed Geckos *Saltuarius swainii*. I decided to look around at the top of the quarry and under rocks. I managed to catch a glimpse of scales with my head torch and moved quickly for it. What I had managed to find was an 'intergrade' which is a Diamond Python X Carpet Python. This one was not too healthy and had quite a few ticks on it. As this was the end of the night we all headed back to the field station for just a little sleep.

A late night and an early morning is never good at home but when you're at Smiths Lake it doesn't affect you (well not me) at all. I got up at around 6:30 am so I only got about 5 hours sleep. I was ready to rip into the day. There was just one problem and that was there were barely any people up. So I sat around for a while and kept as quiet as I could. Had my breakfast, went for a little walk and when I came back the place was roaring with action. Someone had already caught a Black Bellied Swamp Snake *Hemiaspis signata*. The action had already started. The day was clear without a cloud in the sky, completely different to the previous day. After everyone had finished breakfast and washed up, we decided that we would go into Wallingat National Park to go for a walk around Sugar Creek Picnic Area and to look for the elusive Southern Angle Headed Dragon.

When we arrived at the spot, we walked straight into the forest. Everyone was keeping their eye on any movement. It was a very nice walk and was tranquil. It took us through the forest and then onto a fire trail and then through the forest again. Although it was only a kilometre, it was a leisurely walk and took a good hour. Unfortunately, we did not manage to find a Southern Angle Headed Dragon. When we moved onto the Twin Fire Dams where we managed to hear and find some frogs and catch glimpses of two small Red Bellied Black Snakes.

We then moved onto the Quarry. Here we looked around for anything that could be found. We hadn't managed to find anything but a bit of a skin that had been shed by a young Eastern Brown Snake. After about fifteen minutes of looking, the second group who had left later from the field station and who had also gone on the same walk had arrived at the Quarry. This group seemed excited and rushed over to Arthur. They were carrying something but from where I was I couldn't see what it was. Then they called me over and I got excited. I rushed over hoping they had a Southern Angle Headed Dragon *Hypsilurus spinipes* (below).



I had been looking for one of these for a while now so I was relieved that I had been able to see one. They also found a Small Eyed Snake *Rhinoplocephalus nigrescens*. All action around the Southern Angle Headed Dragon was quickly stopped when one of the Froggers called out 'SNAKE'. The first one there was George who quickly tailed the snake to catch it. It turned out to be a small Red Bellied Black Snake. This was a good find. We soon moved back to the field station as the day had gone by quick and it was nearly lunch time.

After a long lunch and a kick around of the footy, we headed down to Seal Rocks for a swim and snorkel. Although the temperature was low, some of us braved the water to see what was to be seen. Some highlights were massive schools of Bream and several Puffer Fish. It was a bit cold so we got out pretty quickly. When we did get out of the water we went looking for fossils in the rocks that run up and down the back of the beach. We did manage to find quite a few good fossils in the rocks. The fossils were of ancient marine creatures called crinoids. They looked like segmented stems and resembled flowers but they were really animals. They were very interesting.

After our snorkelling and fossil hunting session we moved back to the Field Station. It was now a bit after 2:00pm and people were having afternoon naps and showers after the beach. At around 3:00pm it was time for another game of Smiths Lake Cricket. This lasted for a good 2 hours and killed a bit of the time. When the game finished it was time to kick the footy around and then dinner.

After dinner it was time to go out for our second night of frogging. We were told that we would again enter Wallingat National Park. We would visit three sites and would need to split up into three groups so the sites weren't overcrowded. Our group went to Sugar Creek Picnic Area. Here we didn't find very much. We did however hear a lot of Tusked Frogs and Red Backed Toadlets. The highlight of this area was when a Powerful Owl came into land and Yellow Bellied Gliders started calling and tried to scare it away.

We moved onto the Twin Fire Dams where there, like always, were many of frogs calling. They were Tusked Frogs, Striped Marsh Frogs, Eastern Dwarf Tree Frogs, Whirring Tree Frogs, Tyler's Tree Frogs and Whistling Tree Frogs. We stayed here for about 30 minutes because there is a lot to look at but apparently not much to find. We then moved onto the Quarry. Here we found everything that we had found the previous night. They were the Tusked Frogs, Red Eyed Tree Frogs, Common Eastern Froglets, Perons Tree Frogs and Red Backed Toadlets. We also found the same snake and more people got to see it. It was time to head back to the field station. We managed to get back at about 11:00pm.

When we did get back we found that the first group who visited the Twin Fire Dams also found a Rough-scaled

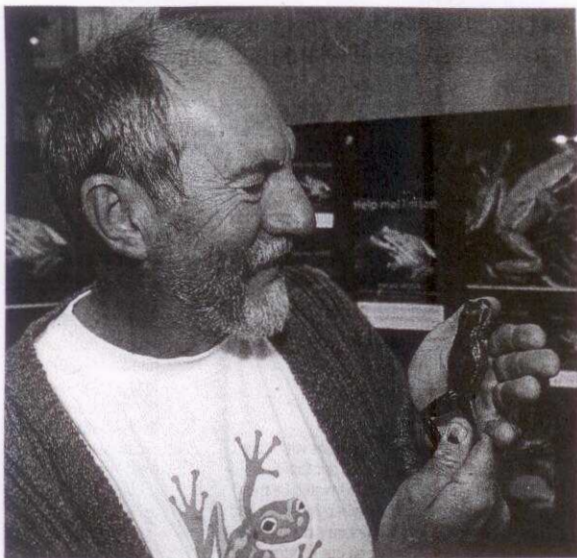
Snake *Tropidechis carinatus* (below). These are quite rare and their bite can be potentially fatal.



People still wanted to go out and find more animals so we drove up towards the Twin Quarries and walked into them. Here we managed to find a few different animals. We found Common Eastern Froglets, Eastern Banjo Frogs, Perons Tree Frogs, Eastern Dwarf Tree Frogs, Jervis Bay Tree Frogs, Whirring Tree Frogs, Haswells Froglet, Bibrons Toadlet, Red Backed Toadlets and Dusky Toadlets. This was a fantastic site as we only doubled up on a couple of species. We then left and drove back to the field station. Here we talked for a while before we went to bed.

Another early morning but not too much happened as it was basically the end of the trip. We started to pack up straight away after breakfast but stayed around to talk a bit. It was slow and steady. Everyone was tired and wanted to sleep in which most did.

**Inner West Courier 6/11/2007 below**  
**Look before they leap away**



**Hop to it: Strathfield Council and Frog and Tadpole Study Group president Dr Arthur White is calling for help for Saturday's Frog Hour. Photo: Phil Rogers**

We talked a lot about the past two days and past field trips and field trips in the future. We talked about wildlife, all its wonders and about whatever we could whilst packing up. We left at about 10:00am for the 'Big Smoke'. I was once again disappointed that we didn't get to stay longer.

On behalf of all the people who managed to go to Smiths Lake and all the people who have been up there before, I would like to thank Arthur and Karen White for their time and effort into organising these field trips. If it wasn't for them we wouldn't have experienced some of the best wildlife the Mid-North Coast has to offer. Thank you for another great trip and I can't wait to get up there again for another adventure on the shores of Smiths Lake.

**Matthew McCaffery**

**Joseph Sumegi**

Remember the success of the global warming awareness event, Earth Hour? Now Strathfield Council is hoping its residents can show the same type of commitment for its "frog monitoring" event, Frog Hour.

The council is rallying residents to spend an hour in their backyards at 8pm this Saturday to record sightings of the endangered green and gold bell frog.

The data will then be collated by the Frog and Tadpole Study Group so it can find out whether there is a pattern to the frogs' movement.

"We get occasional reports from people that they find one of these frogs in their backyard, or sometimes they're seen in the street, but what we really want to do is to get a sense of how they're moving about around here," the group's president Dr Arthur White said.

The frogs are seen mainly in Strathfield, as opposed to other Inner West suburbs, because the area has habitats that suit the amphibians.

strange animals in that they are colonising frogs, so they don't normally occur in large stable wetlands," Dr White said.

"What they tend to do is to move around and constantly be on the search for a new water body. When the suburbs were developed, there were not many places for the frogs to go to, but favourites became abandoned brick pits.

"In Strathfield, there are a number of brick pits and the bell frogs found it and so that's where they reside."

Dr White said that residents had shown an interest in the bell frog and he expected to see a large number of people taking part in the event on Saturday night.

"What we find are that people know nothing about frogs when we come in, and they think what is all the fuss is about," he said. "If you go back over 200 years ago, there was 33 frog species in Sydney – now you'd be lucky to see any."

**To participate in Frog Hour, phone Strathfield Council on 9748 9999.**



## TOOBYS CREEK OURIMBAH NEEDS YOU



Phoenix, a disabled pensioner writes:-

I am suing Forests NSW. The case concerns the possible extinction of the southernmost population of the Stuttering Frog, *Mixophyes balbus*, in a logging operation in Toobys Creek Ourimbah. The destruction of rainforest habitat, water sources, and damaging other protected species is part of the court case.



## FATS AT KU-RING-GAI FESTIVAL OF WILDFLOWERS

A successful week-end of public education was held on August 25-26 with the FATS team of Marion Anstis, Punia Jeffery, Wendy and Phillip Grimm. There were non-local frogs like splendid tree frogs and burrowing frogs as well as local red crowned toadlets and striped marsh tadpoles.

Marion gave well attended talks on Frogs of the Sydney Region. The dip-netting for the younger kids was a success for the team, with Striped Marsh Frog and Dwarf Tree Frog tadpoles found in the ponds. The publications on constructing frog ponds and the FATS poster on the Frogs of the Sydney region were popular.

Phillip Grimm



Toobys Creek was once the largest area of Lowland Rainforest in the Sydney region. Many endangered species had found refuge in this Endangered Ecological Community. In 2004, the people of Ourimbah Community Incorporated (Central Coast) were horrified to discover that many hectares of native vegetation have been cleared (and are continuing to be cleared).

It is being argued that since the logging began, uniquely Australian endangered species such as the Stuttering Frog have disappeared from this once thriving place.

The court will hear that the effects of logging are disastrous for this unique frog - the siltation of breeding pools, opening the pond area to light, heat, drying winds, extra UV and extra predation. These extra stresses increase their susceptibility to disease. Only a few breeding populations remain for the frog. It is extremely important that any illegal and harmful logging is stopped before it is too late.

Are you able to go to the court in February 2008 to demonstrate support, just by being there? The Ourimbah Community need an expert witness in conservation management or the Stuttering Frog to confirm the frog's significance. Can you assist?

Phoenix v Minister for Primary Industries and others is an action currently on foot in the Federal Court No 1938 2007 Mentioned on 25th October 2007 and adjourned to February 2008. The Court is being asked to order FNSW operations out of Toobys Creek and to make a repair order to attempt to compensate for the damage to this beautiful habitat.

Please let me know if you can help.

Thank you,

Phoenix

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## ARTHRITIS FAILS TO SLOW INVADING TOADS IN AUSTRALIAN FIELDS

**I**t Couldn't Happen To A Nicer Bunch Of Toads. Researchers have found that the cane toad, one of the most invasive species anywhere, is paying a price for conquering northern Australia. The toads are growing so big and hopping so rapidly into new territory that they are developing severe arthritis.

Cane toads were introduced in Australia in the 1930s in an effort to control insects in sugar cane fields. But the toads, which are toxic to snakes and other animals that try to eat them, quickly expanded beyond their initial habitat. Cane toads can now be found across about 400,000 square miles.

An earlier study found that toads at the leading edge of the expansion - the invasion front, as it were - had evolved to move faster, with longer legs and larger bodies. In the new study, by most of the same researchers, including Gregory P. Brown and Richard Shine of the University of Sydney, about 10 percent of large toads along the invasion front were found with spinal abnormalities, mostly fused vertebrae caused by bony growths. The researchers, who report their findings in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, suggest that some of the same factors that have made the toads successful invaders have led to their health problems. The toads are big and growing bigger, and generally, large size increases susceptibility to arthritis.

The toads are so active that they are hopping more, and with their longer legs, each hop puts greater stress on their skeletons. In laboratory tests, the researchers found that after about 15 minutes of hopping, arthritic toads would cover less distance with each hop.

But arthritis didn't slow down toads in the field, the researchers found. These toads are so programmed to move, apparently, that the hobbled toads traveled as fast and as far as healthy ones, continuing their relentless march across the landscape. *NYTimes* by **Jerry Fountain, 16 10 2007**

## FROGGY WENT A COURTIN - MILLION TOADS GETTING HELP TO CROSS HIGHWAY

**Y**ung western toads are running a deadly highway gauntlet as they hop inland to high ground from the swamp where they spent their tadpole months. But Ministry of Transportation staff are doing their best to help, setting up plastic fences along the highway to herd the little amphibians into buckets for safe transport across Highway 19.

Doug Wright, area manager for the Ministry of Transportation, said the toads are crossing the road near a swamp lying between Courtenay and Campbell River. Wet swamp seems to have spawned a high population, all intent on migrating inland. Unlike in past years, the swamp has stayed wet all summer, and appears to have spawned a high number of toads, all bent on migrating inland.

The highway, however, was constructed without toad tunnels along that stretch, leaving the migrating toads no safe way to safely cross underneath the tarmac. So, for the past few weeks, human hands have been helping out. Officials estimate they've helped to move about a million toads. On some days, as many as 25,000 young toads have been transported across the road, Wright said, adding the ministry is now mapping the pathway of the migrating toads and considering whether any permanent measures can be taken to help out. But Victoria's Stan Orchard, (in Canada) a scientist who specializes in reptiles and amphibians, expressed doubts about the effectiveness of toad tunnels. Orchard said when two male western toads encounter each other in the close proximity of a tunnel, their defensive instinct kicks in.

Anxious to avoid a fight, triggered by the invasion of another toad's personal space, they tend to back up and even cause traffic jams in the tunnel. He said the western toad has steadily declined over the past few decades in its range in the western United States. The suspected cause is the toad-killer virus, imported with the African clawed frog, once used to test pregnancy in women and formerly a common lab animal. B. C. said Orchard, remains a stronghold of the amphibian. Orchard said the toad typically spends six to eight weeks as a tadpole. Once it metamorphoses into a toad, it leaves the water to find habitat that offers a moist, cool refuge during the day and foraging territory at night. Left alone, the animal can live as long as 30 years and reach a body length of 12 centimetres. Orchard said the western toad is reasonably tough for a fresh-water amphibian and can even tolerate some exposure to salt water.

It's believed to be the only amphibian to have migrated on its own from the mainland to the Queen Charlotte Islands. **October 16, 2007 From Peppermint Patty Blog (Comment of interest by Stan Orchard on male toads in tunnels)** Volume #1 Issue #69, Wednesday, October 17, 2007

## FROG KILLER FUNGUS 'BREAKTHROUGH' FOR AMPHIBIANS (Chytridiomycosis)

**B**ut the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) expressed caution at the news. Wildlife epidemiologist Dr Trent Garner said there would be reluctance to take up chloramphenicol as a solution, certainly in Europe and North America, because of the chemical's link to harmful side-effects in humans.

New Zealand scientists have found what appears to be a cure for the disease that is responsible for wiping out many of the world's frog populations. *Chloramphenicol*, currently used as an eye ointment for humans, may be a lifesaver for the amphibians, they say. Researchers found frogs bathed in the solution became resistant to the killer disease, chytridiomycosis. The fungal disease has been blamed for the extinction of one-third of the 120 species lost since 1980.

Fearful that chytridiomycosis might wipe out New Zealand's critically endangered Archey's frog (*Leiopelma archeyi*), the researchers have been hunting for a compound that would

kill off the disease's trigger, the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. They tested the chloramphenicol candidate on two species introduced to New Zealand from Australia: the brown tree frog (*Litoria ewingii*) and the southern bell frog (*L. raniformis*).

But the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) expressed caution at the news. Wildlife epidemiologist Dr Trent Garner said there would be reluctance to take up chloramphenicol as a solution, certainly in Europe and North America, because of the chemical's link to harmful side-effects in humans. The NZ researchers tried using chloramphenicol as both an ointment, applied to the frogs' backs, and as a solution. They found that placing the animals in the solution delivered the best results. The team has admitted it was surprised by the outcome. Professor Poulter, the molecular biologist who hunted down chloramphenicol, added: "It's also got the great advantage that it's incredibly cheap."

The scientists are now making their research widely known ahead of formal publication in a science journal because of the pressing need for a safe and effective treatment for the chytrid disease. The blow that chytrid has dealt to the frog population is already immense. The disease has probably accounted for one-third of all the losses in amphibian species to date, says Professor Rick Speare, an expert in amphibian diseases who works with the University of Otago's frog research group. These losses are huge - and this is in addition to other threats such as habitat destruction, climate

change, pollution and hunting. Since 1980, more than 120 amphibian species have disappeared; and according to the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, in the near future many more species are in danger of vanishing. But a hopeful finding is that the introduced frogs that have been infected with chytrid are now more resistant to further infections.

The researchers believe that zoos now will have more options, either to be able to control an outbreak or to rescue infected frogs from the wild, knowing that they can be cured. The next challenge the research team has set itself is to find a treatment that will work in the wild.

However, just how widely chloramphenicol might be adopted is open to debate. EU and US authorities are concerned the drug may cause aplastic anaemia in humans. **(Editor - While this sounds great. I see a lot of problems that have to be solved before anything is used in the wild. Mainly in terms of application (do we crop-dust the frogs every year? And inheritance. If the frogs do become resistant to the fungus, how many generations will it take? Will the resistance be inherited?)** **HerpDigest Volume #1 Issue #71, Tuesday, October 29, 2007** By Kim Griggs, BBC, Science reporter, Wellington **Publisher/Editor- Allen Salzberg HerpDigest Inc. is a non-profit corporation that publishes the electronic weekly [www.herpdigest.org](http://www.herpdigest.org) [asalzberg@herpdigest.org](mailto:asalzberg@herpdigest.org)**

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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.

**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.

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## 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 9681-5308.**

**8 December 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 disadvantage particular animal species. Conversely, fires may 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 sea-birds off-shore.

**19 January 8-30p.m. Darkes Forest Leader : Ken Griffiths**

Take the Princess Hwy south, then take the Darkes Forest Rd turn-off. Meet 200m from the corner. The Darkes Forest site is a perennial favourite with FATS members. At this site we can see how the stream dwellers & pond dwellers clearly separate into their respective environments. We will also look at those species that prefer the more terrestrial habitats. Ken, author of the popular field guide, 'Frogs & Reptiles of the Sydney Region', also has a passion for uncovering many of the elusive reptiles that frequent the area. Hopefully, we will be turning up some reptiles tonight. Ken has also authored books on nature photography & his photographic work is featured in many publications. Tonight is an opportunity to get some professional tips on your frog photography.

**22 – 24 February Smiths Lake Camp-out Leaders : Arthur & Karen White**

Many of our newer members may ponder the popularity of our regular camp-out to Smiths Lake. The venue is a Field Studies Centre owned by the University of NSW & they kindly make this facility available to FATS. It is situated near Buladelah, & set on the shores of the beautiful Smiths Lake amongst tall eucalypt forests. This is the perfect venue for exploring the local environment for frogs & reptiles. You may arrive at anytime from Friday afternoon onwards. Comfortable cabins or camping sites & hot showers ensure a relaxing weekend. There is a commercial kitchen & all crockery & cutlery is supplied as well as refrigeration facilities. Members are free to do as they wish during the daytime. Swimming & bushwalking is always popular as is surfing at nearby beaches. Karen & Arthur have studied the wildlife & geology of this area for many years & always know where to find all the nocturnal wildlife. A **non-refundable** fee of \$14.00 per person, per night applies. Places are limited to thirty people. Bookings are necessary & this field-trip fills up quickly, so do book early. Phone Arthur & Karen directly on 9599-1161 for bookings & further details.

### **FATS Spring / Summer Field Trips Programme**

Since our move to Homebush Bay, FATS have attracted many new members who may not be familiar with our field-trips programme. Many of our long-standing members have accumulated vast experience in many fields of natural history & often are acknowledged experts in their field. These members regularly volunteer to take FATS people out to discover the wonderful world of frogs, reptiles & nocturnal mammals. Field-trips are free & are suitable for everyone, regardless of experience. We just like to have a good time & have a chat with fellow members. We like to see new faces & our leaders love to share their knowledge of our wonderful frog-life. For most people, it is their only opportunity to see frogs in their natural environment. So be adventurous & come along & enjoy a lovely summer's evening uncovering some of our most fascinating frogs. If you have any queries or would like to book a fieldtrip please contact Robert our Field-trips Co-ordinator.

**\*\*\* 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.**