

FROG CALL

NEWSLETTER No. 101
June 2009

THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP OF NSW INC
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Frogs are doing it tough Long time frog champion Lothar Voigt
SMH article Photo *Lisa Wiltse*
<http://www.smh.com.au/news/science/sex-hex-may-be-causing-frogs-to-croak/2007/08/10/1186530617604.html>

Join us at our next meeting.
Arrive at 6.30pm for a 7.00 pm start
Friday 5th June 2009

Park at the first security gate on the right hand side of Jamieson St. (about 300m off Holker St), Follow the signs to Building 22 Homebush Bay, Sydney Olympic Park Accessible by bus or train.
Call us for details.



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MEETING FORMAT for 5th June 2009

- 6.30 pm Lost frogs needing homes. Please bring your FATS membership card, donation and amphibian licence. Red eyes available.
- 7.00 pm Welcome and announcements.
- 7.30 pm The main speakers:
- Rodney Wright "Bell Frogs of the Hunter"
- Aaron Payne and Grant Webster "Victorian Frogs".
- Field trip reports and five favourite slides. Tell us about your recent frogging trips or experiences. If you have slides or other images, bring them along as well.
- 9.30 pm Evenings end with our regular guessing competition, light refreshments and pleasant conversation.

TWO NEW FROGS DISCOVERED IN WA



Tiny Toadlet *Uperoleia micra*

Two new species of frogs have been discovered in Western Australia and announced this week by the Western Australian Museum. The discovery of the frogs from the high rainfall zone of the northwest Kimberley were formally described this week in the *Records of the Western Australian Museum and Zootaxa*.

The first species is called the Tiny Toadlet *Uperoleia micra* and is just over 2 cm long. It was discovered near the Prince Regent River when it was first heard calling near the field expedition base camp at Bachsten Creek. The new species is extremely shy and would not have been discovered if its call did not differ from those of three related species in the area. 'Toadlets' are not true toads, but a group of native frogs that have a stocky appearance. The Kimberley is host to the highest diversity of Toadlets in Australia.

The second species, the Kimberley Froglet *Crinia fimbriata*, was discovered on the Mitchell Plateau – an area previously believed to be well surveyed for frogs. It is also about 2 cm in length. It was noticed owing to its blue and red background colour and covered with tiny white dots, similar to some Aboriginal painting styles. Males of this species have flanges on the fingers, but it is not known what the flanges might be used for.



<http://frogwatch.museum.wa.gov.au/Kimberley/984.aspx>

The discovery of two frog species in the northwest Kimberley emphasises the high diversity of the area, and is timely owing to current State and National reviews of the area's biodiversity assets. The very rugged northwest Kimberley region is being increasingly impacted by tourism, industry, feral weeds, cattle and soon the Cane Toad.

“Other than being able to describe these two new species, we know very little about their behaviour and habits, he said. The discoveries were made possible by a research grant through Alcoa of Australia to support the WA Museum's Alcoa Frog Watch programme. Also participating were Dale Roberts of

UWA, Marion Anstis Australia's tadpole expert, PhD student Luke Price, genetics specialist, from the SA Museum and many others. More information is available on the Museum's award-winning Alcoa Frog Watch web site

frogwatch.museum.wa.gov.au http://www.museum.wa.gov.au/news/Discovery_of_WA_Frogs.asp

ED: Marion Anstis has written several frog and tadpole books and is responsible for describing the tadpole of the Kimberley Froglet *Crinia fimbriata*. Congratulations Marion!



MISTAKEN IDENTITY:

The native Kimberley frog, *Cyclorana australis*, is being mistaken for cane toads and being killed.

(EXTRACT) Kununurra vet and Kimberley Wildlife Rescue president Sarah Brett feared that huge populations of the giant burrowing frogs had become victims of mistaken identity. KTB field co-ordinator Ben Scott-Virtue said a campaign would help people identify the frogs. **Glenn Cordingley 21 March 2009** <http://www.news.com.au/perthnow/story/0,21598,25220678-5017007,00.html> sent in by Aaron Payne

LAST MEETING APRIL 2009

Arthur White spoke about the history and diversity of the FATS group. See Frogcall 100 and pages 4 to 7 in this edition. April's newsletter was a landmark publication in colour, produced by Alistair MacDougall. FATS would like to thank the many members who contributed fine articles and photos. We ended up with far more copy than we could fit into its 16 pages.

It would take a week to cover the diversity of contribution, all the events FATS has been involved in and our many supporters such as Robert Wall, who has put together an exceptional field trip program each year. Most of our members devote themselves to frog research, education and conservation, in some way.

Andrew Nelson presented a report on Falls Forest Retreat, near Taree and the work of palaeobotanist Mary White (no relation) in protecting and restoring the habitat there. Anthony Stimson spoke about the Frog and Reptile Expo. The meeting ended with food, drink, a wonderful celebration cake and surprise presentation to Monica Wangmann for FrogCall's 100th edition, making her Frog Ambassador of the year.



Harald Ehmann -our founding President photo from Arthur White

ENDFROGS

With frog conservation as a main aim, it should come as no surprise when Harald Ehmann proposed in late 1992 that FATS should become a major player in providing reliable field data for the better determination of the conservation status of frogs in New South Wales. In order to do this, every frogger in New South Wales would be contacted and asked to participate in field surveys or to provide current field data from sites that they were familiar with. This would require considerable co-ordination and Harald agreed to take it on. This project was going to require some funding and so Harald and Lothar Voigt set about seeking grant money to help defray field costs. The field surveys began in earnest in December 1992 despite the lack of a grant, but in 1993, the Commonwealth Government (under the National Estate Grants Program) decided to put money into the project (called ENDFROGS).



Michael Mahony and Karen Thumm on one of the EndFrog surveys Photo by Arthur White

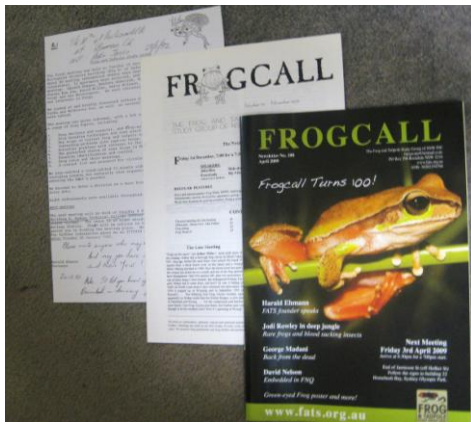
It was primarily through the massive undertaking that FATS spread its tentacles throughout the herpetological community in New South Wales. There were detractors who said that this was a waste of money; there were even academic detractors who said that FATS were not capable of carrying out the surveys, there were many who said that it could not be done with the small amount of grant money available.

For two and a half years the field surveys continued, some involved groups of up to 20 people while many involved just one or two people driving out to some remote swamp or creek on a wet and wild night to count frogs. Throughout this time, Harald (who had now moved to Adelaide) continued to co-ordinate the project.

Because Harald had overseen the influx of surveys and field data, it seemed most appropriate that Harald should collate the publications of these surveys. Despite his heavy workload and distance from the scene of this activity Harald agreed to do it. The principal frog workers for the 25 species that were targeted were contacted, provided with the field data and given a proforma to follow so that they could prepare the various chapters of "Threatened Frogs of New South Wales: habitats, status and conservation".

The ENDFROG book was published in 1997 and for more than ten years was the only reference book for rare and endangered frogs in this state. The information in the book affected state government policy about the correct listing of species, and provided advice about the best way to assist the recovery of each species. This was truly a landmark publication for Australian froggers (and for FATS).

The number of people attending FATS meetings steadily grew and by July 1993 the meetings moved from Ultimo to the Australian Museum (in the Peppermint Room). The Australian Museum was to be the host of the FATS meetings until October 2005 when FATS moved to Newington. The change in location was brought about by increasing difficulties in using the Museum's lecture theatre (which was now the only room large enough to accommodate FATS crowds), the increasing number of members from greater Sydney and possibility of expanding even more in this new location. A major relocation is not without risk and some of our long-term froggers from the inner city were inconvenienced by the move. However, a whole new group of frog-lovers were able to attend meetings and so FATS has continued to flourish.



Monica and FrogCall

In 1994, a new face appeared on the scene, Monica Wangmann. Monica began attending the FATS meetings, dragging her 6 year old daughter Katherine along. Monica reveled in the frog activities and soon put her hand up to be on the executive. One of the jobs that she was keen to do was the newsletter, which up till now was rather dull and read like a set of minutes from a meeting. Monica was aware that many people who could not make it to the meetings needed to be given readable and current news items about frogs. She quickly revolutionized FrogCall into a meaty newsletter that came out every two months. Monica took over at Issue No. 28 and is still the editor today at Issue 100. There is no doubt that FATS has maintained an active role in the wider community because of Monica and how she has turned FrogCall into an information bulletin that people want to read. Most of the early editions of FrogCall were literally cut and paste (i.e. taking a pair of scissors to a magazine or newspaper that had a good frog story in it). Monica still trawls the press for news items and is assisted by many folk who send stories or find articles, pictures or anecdotes to add to the mix that is FrogCall.

The Presidents



Lothar Voigt Australia Day '08 Parramatta Eco Workshops
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/octobersun/2287864296/>

In 1995 Lothar Voigt took over as President from Harald Ehmman. Lothar, in his mercurial way, set out to make FATS a household name. To do this, FATS needed to be seen and heard. Lothar started contacting schools, local councils, community groups, in fact anyone who would listen to him. Did they have frogs in their garden, did they want to learn about frogs, did they know about the global decline of frogs? Lothar arranged FATS to have stalls at the Easter Show, to do workshops at Council community days, to do displays at fairs, carnivals or at local parks. Fats was on the move.

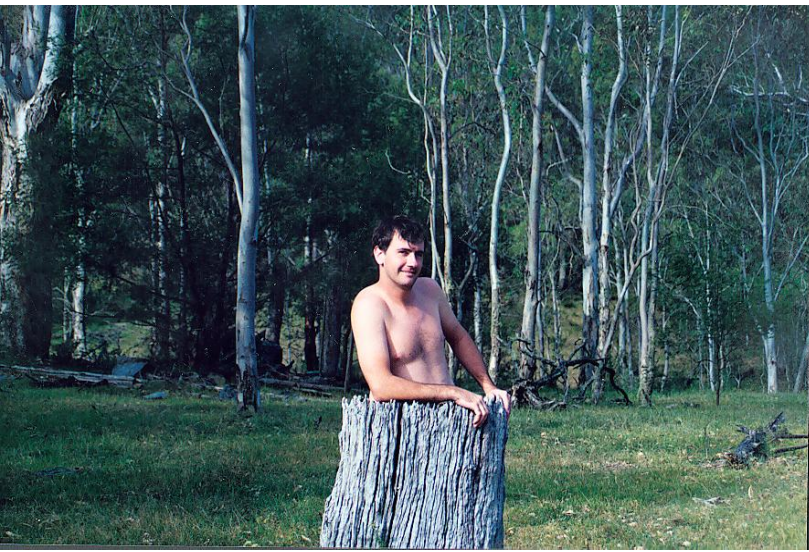
Lothar remained as President for one year and was succeeded by Martyn Robinson. This move allowed Lothar to spend even more time on frog displays and community presentations, as well as letting loose his pent up need to write. Those of us who remember the old issues of FrogCall will undoubtedly remember the adventures of Claude the Frog.

Martyn acted as a temporary President until Frank Lemckert was able to take up the position. Frank was the antithesis of Lothar. Frank demanded adherence to the rules and ran a tight ship. All of this naturally meant nothing to Lothar who continued on his merry way, devising a myriad of frog cage designs from old broccoli boxes.



Martyn Robinson past president photo Arthur White

Frank was an important President as he imposed an order over Fats that was needed. Fats was no longer a dinky little group of frog-nuts. It had grown to become a widely respected conservation and frog advocacy group. This status required method, particularly with our accounting system and record keeping. Poor Frank. He was in charge of a group of loose cannons and struggled valiantly to maintain order and direction.



Frank Lemckert past president photo by Arthur White

Frank Lemckert remained as President until 1999 when he was replaced by Arthur White. By this stage, FATS accounts were in good shape, thanks mainly to Karen White.

Karen who took control of the bank books in 1998. Her role has been so important that over the next ten years FATS shifted from having virtually no money, to being in a position where it could consider awarding student grants. FATS is financially sound and capable of undertaking projects that most other community groups could not.

When I took over as President, the initial problems were those of money (i.e. we had none). Without finances, we could not do many of the ventures that we wanted to be involved in. Opportunities to fund raise were sought at every opportunity—money was raised through raffles, through hiring frogs to film production companies, through paid TV and radio interviews and displays.

The big issue of the time was the identification of Chytrid as the big frog killer in Australia. The other issue was the fate of the many frogs that are accidental stowaways in produce trucks and trains. These frogs entered New South Wales from all parts of Australia and were obliged to be destroyed by quarantine officials. FATS started the Frog Rescue Service, after considerable discussion and consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and Department of Agriculture and Customs and Quarantine. In brief, the arrangement was that FATS could rescue stowaway frogs on the proviso that these frogs were quarantined (by FATS) for a minimum of 2 months; if the frogs showed signs of disease they were to be put down (especially if Chytrid was suspected), or treated if possible.

FATS became the first group to experiment with artificial control measures for Chytrid. A number of the rescued frogs were sick (some with Chytrid). Lothar and myself began trialing various fungicides and antiseptics on Chytrid-affected frogs.

In the early days we had many deaths. Eventually, we started to have some successes. Loyal FATS followers may remember the days when Toilet Duck (containing 2% *benzalconium chloride*) was used to treat all of our frogs and to sterile cages. Since then, more available antiseptics have been found that are effective against Chytrid, and ideal for husbandry use.

Frog Rescue Service

Over the years, the Frog Rescue Service has expanded and many people have acted as frog collectors, quarantine officers or have adopted a rescued frog. In 2000, the Frog Rescue Service handled almost 2000 frogs, many of them banana box frogs (*Litoria gracilentia*). Such a massive number of frogs required some other intervention and consultation began with the Queensland Banana Growers Association about way to reduce the numbers of frogs crossing the borders. The outcome was that the larger banana growers now do inspections of the hands of bananas before they are shipped and many of the frogs are retrieved while still at the plantations (where they can be released into the wild). Rescued frog numbers have declined greatly since this action came into effect but we still get 200-300 frogs each year through the service. One offshoot from the Frog Rescue Service has been the Cane Toad Alert Program— not only were frogs crossing the border but Cane Toads were hopping a ride as well FATS embarked on several community Cane Toad control programs (with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and local Councils).



Marion Anstis and her Award Winning Tadpole Field Guide Photo by Arthur White



Lothar Voigt doing one of his many frog talks at the FrogMobile Photo from Arthur White

The FrogMobile

You can't keep a good man down. With one of his spare moments Lothar decided that FATS could really knock the socks off the general public if we had a mobile display trailer for frogs. He brought his ideas to the executive meetings and began to prepare plans for the trailer.

Eventually, the plans were unveiled. It was a bold design with fold out sides and slide out frog ponds. The cost was a big drawback so Lothar set out to find a sponsor, which he did. Osram Lights came to the party and funding the purchase and fitting of the trailer. For three years various FATS people spent time helping fit and refine the trailer, under Lothar's watchful eye.

In 2005, the FrogMobile was unveiled and in 2006 it was busy at various venues about Sydney. Again, FATS members rallied to act as Frog Interpreters, or simply to help set up the FrogMobile at each site. The FrogMobile was so heavily used that a section of FrogCall was devoted to detail the locations where it had been and where it was going next. Unfortunately, the lion's share of the work fell to Lothar who slaved himself to a standstill. While the FrogMobile was an attention-grabber, it was large, difficult to maneuver and required considerable set up time. These factors ultimately sealed the fate for the FrogMobile, for in 2007, when it was due for refurbishment, the decision was made not to spend more money on it. Lothar tried desperately over the next 12 months to find another backer and get financial support but this proved unsuccessful. So in 2008, we bade farewell to the FrogMobile; it was handed over to the RSPCA to be used as display trailer.

Other Activities

FATS has been involved in numerous activities since its inception. Many of you will remember the Green and Golden Bell frog rescue at Rosebery where FATS members demolished an old swimming pool and help fund and construct a custom-designed backyard frog pond to maintain these endangered frogs. Frog workshops are held every year and we continue to work with Councils and other Government agencies in the cause of frog conservation and education.



Wendy Grimm FATS stall, Kuring-Gai Wildflower Centre photo from Arthur White

I have not mentioned a lot of people who have supported FATS over the years, such as Robert Wall our field trip coordinator and our many presenters at our meetings. For as long as FATS exists, I hope that it is always active and useful. I also know, that for FATS to achieve this, its members must continue to be generous with their time and help. It is only as a group that we seem to make a telling impact. **Arthur White**



Punia Jeffery being Mother Nature at FATS frog workshop "Science in the City" photo Arthur White

FROG AND REPTILE EXPO 2009

The 2009 Frog and Reptile Expo was held at Castle Hill Showground on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of May. This event allows various groups involved in reptiles and amphibians to display their wares. FATS was present with a stand near the entrance to the Expo. As usual, we had a range of frog on show, as well as posters, books, T-shirts and other frog bits. As the Expo went over three days, many FATS volunteers were required to help out and our thanks go to all of those who put in time at the Expo - Wendy and Phillip Grimm, Marion Anstis, Lothar Voigt, Matt McCaffrey, Grant Webster, Punia Jeffery, Robert Wall, Karen and Arthur White.

The Expo was dominated by reptile dealers who had a variety of captive-bred snakes and lizards and turtles available for sale. It was quite daunting to see how many breeders and traders there were and how much interest there was in the general public. At the FATS stall, we were less into selling merchandise, and more into selling the attributes of frogs. There was a steady stream of people clustered around the frog cages, asking questions or just admiring the frogs. A lot of attention was drawn to the Cane Toad on display, as this was used to highlight the fact the toads are continually coming onto Sydney (as stowaways on trucks). Members of the public were asked to be on the lookout for toads and to report them as soon as they found any.

The first night of the Expo featured the Annual Dinner and guest speaker: this year the speaker was Bill Love, a long-time reptile trader from the United States. Bill talked about the rise of commercial trading of reptiles in the US and the various characters involved in its growth. Many of those in the audience were a bit startled by the lack of restrictions in the US and the comparative ease in which many exotic species are imported. Reptile and frog trading in Australia is tiny in comparison to the United States and our laws prevent the plethora of exotic species being imported to fill markets.

The various presenters and traders at the Expo all showed considerable knowledge and care for their animals and no exotic species (apart from the Cane Toad) were on show. Overall, the Expo was quite an eye-opener and highlighted just how many people in Sydney are interested in frogs and reptiles. Anthony Stimpson did a sterling job organizing the Expo and must have been pleased with the response by the public.
Arthur White



Frog Grotto From Virginia Ede Davistown NSW

FROGBITS AND TADPIECES

BLUE MOUNTAINS FRESHWATER ECOLOGY PAPER

FATS member, Alan Lane has completed a paper on the comparison of frog assemblages between urban and non-urban habitats in the upper Blue Mountains of Australia: Alan Lane and Shelley Burgin, Freshwater Ecology (2008) 53, 2484 - 2493; doi:10.1111/j.1365-2427.2008.02068.x This summarises the work Alan did for his masters, under Shelley's supervision. The principle finding was that the abundance and diversity of frogs in pristine habitats was much lower than in urban habitats, many of which were highly impacted by sewerage and urban runoff. To explain this, they proposed the hypothesis that some component(s) of sewage and/or urban runoff might protect frogs from diseases such as chytridiomycosis. Refer Alan Lane PO Box 388 Blackheath NSW 2785 alan.lane@zeta.org.au

WILDLIFE CONFERENCE BERLIN

The 7th International Conference on Behaviour, Physiology and Genetics of Wildlife, is on 21st - 24th September 2009 in Berlin, Germany **Dr. Petra Kretzschmar symposium@izw-berlin.de** <http://www.izw-berlin.de/de/flink/7thIZW-Conference.html>

IORELLA NELSON'S BABIES



ANOTHER AMPHIBIAN AT RISK: SALAMANDERS

It isn't easy being an amphibian these days. Perhaps one-third of amphibian species are thought to be threatened or endangered. Among these are many frog species that have suffered sharp declines in recent years, victims of a fungal disease, chytridiomycosis. Less attention has been paid to the situation with salamanders, but a report in *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* suggests that they, too, are a large part of what has been called the global amphibian crisis.

David B. Wake and Sean M. Rovito of the University of California, Berkeley, and colleagues surveyed salamander populations in Guatemala and Mexico and compared the results to past surveys. The sites included a region in western Guatemala that Dr. Wake and others had surveyed in the 1970s. This time, the researchers found very few specimens of some species, notably *Pseudoeurycea brunnata* and *P. goebeli*, which were among the most abundant three decades before. Generally, species at higher elevations showed the greatest declines. The researchers found no direct evidence that chytridiomycosis was involved, although they said it may have played a role. Deforestation and climate change may also be factors, they said, by reducing moisture at higher elevations. **By Henry Fountain, NYTimes.com, 16 Feb 2009**
HerpDigest.org: The Only Free Weekly Electronic Newsletter That Reports on The Latest News on Herpetological Conservation and Science Volume # 9 Issue #9, 2/20/09
Publisher/Editor- Allen Salzberg HerpDigest Inc. is a non-profit corporation
www.herpdigest.org The editor at asalzberg@herpdigest.org



PNG'S NEW TREASURES

The uncharted lands of Southeast Asia continue to provide conservation treasures. This large tree frog from the *Nyctimystes* genus was one of more than 50 species believed to be new to science found during a recent expedition in Papua New Guinea (PNG). **forwarded by Andrew Nelson**
http://news.bbc.co.uk:80/2/shared/spl/hi/pop_ups/08/sci_nat_png0s_new_treasures/html/1.stm

NATIONAL PARKS ARE NOT FOR SALE

The State Government is proposing to rewrite the National Parks and Wildlife Act to permit commercial developments within National Parks. This is a threat to the integrity of NPs and their natural values. Letters of concern can be sent to Premier Rees and Andrew Cox National Parks Association. The debate about the social and economic value of some of our most unique natural resources, conservation versus commercialization, has recommenced .

“Parks attract tourists precisely because they are undeveloped. The only place for commercial development is outside park boundaries on private reserves, in state forests and other unprotected lands.” said Professor Buckley director of the International Centre for Ecotourism Research at Griffith University. International research had shown that visitor numbers continue to grow in all national parks except for a small number of overcrowded parks in the US where numbers are static. “Short-term decreases which have occurred in some parks are due not to lack of interest in parks, but to the increasing development within parks and the increasing complexity of permit systems which lead people to visit other land tenures instead.”

Mal Anderson, of Coffs Harbour writes “National parks and reserves are precious to all of us they are not spare bits of real estate just lying around waiting to be cashed in by developers.”

SUGGESTED LETTER

Do Not Allow Private Accommodation in our National Parks.

Write or email Environment Minister, the Hon Carmel Tebbutt MP Minister for Climate Change and the Environment (Level 30) and The Hon Nathan Rees MP Premier of NSW (Level 40), Governor Macquarie Tower 1 Farrer Place Sydney NSW 2000 and request that:

I am concerned that our increasingly popular NSW national parks are now being seen by your administration as state-owned tourism assets that must pay their way by encouraging the construction of private tourist facilities within them. Such facilities would not make economic returns for nature conservation, but would damage the integrity of our parks and weaken nature-focused reserve management. Could you please ensure that:

- The National Parks and Wildlife Act is NOT be amended to make it easier to undertake the development of private facilities inside national parks;
- You reject on-park built accommodation, as it erodes the nature conservation purpose of national parks;
- You ensure that park roads are kept short and towards the edges of national parks; and
- National parks are managed for nature and more people are encouraged to visit national parks through improved tracks and low-key facilities, with private visitor services such as accommodation provided only in nearby towns. Yours sincerely,

Also contact Parks not for Sale Campaign Office
C/- National Parks Association of NSW, PO Box 337, Newtown, 2042. email notforsale@cnpansw.org.au

Protecting endangered frogs

A rare frog species is being carefully protected while we refurbish 77 steel transmission towers from Sydney South bulk supply point to the Kurnell subtransmission substation in Sydney's south.

Daniel Halton from the Environmental Services Unit said the presence of several freshwater ponds along the Kurnell Peninsula were well-known and documented breeding and foraging habitat for the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog.

"We were able to identify towers located in sensitive areas and put suitable environmental measures in place to help ensure the works would not impact the frogs or their habitat.

"We have also managed the Green and Golden Bell Frog on other projects including civil works on Kooragang Island and underground cabling works at Homebush Bay," Daniel said.

Steps taken to avoid negative impacts included the establishment of environmental monitoring zones, disinfection of boots, machinery and vehicles, on-site environmental inductions for workers and in certain areas, inspection and hand clearing of vegetation.

Project Manager **George Dapas** said the 132kV steel towers on our network



The Green and Golden Bell Frog. Photo courtesy of Department of Environment and Climate Change (NSW) 2007.

had to withstand some of the most corrosion-aggressive environments in the country and needed our ongoing attention.

"By completing this upgrade we are improving electricity supply and reliability into the future," he said.

There are about 700 of these steel lattice towers which are the backbone of our transmission network.

"Tower refurbishment would also take place in Newcastle, Heathcote, and Port Hacking," he said.

Work involves the:

- removal of surface corrosion
- repainting the towers including the careful removal or sealing of existing paints
- replacing corroded nuts, bolts and steel work
- installing new anti-climb devices
- removal of sediment build-up from around the base of towers.

Above Energy Australia staff newsletter sent to Frogcall by Carlos Alonso. Below from Andrew Nelson North Shore Times, 27 Feb 2009

LIFE IN THE SUBURBS

JANNE SELETTA

IORELLA Nelson remembers growing up in Italy and eating her dad's frog risotto. Now the tables have turned.

"We have a frog-mad son and our whole garden is frog friendly," she said. "I actually feed the tadpoles lightly-cooked lettuce leaves."

And despite fond memories of her father's culinary skills, Mrs Nelson isn't fattening her frogs for the pan.

"My son has educated us about them so, over the years, I've learnt to look at them differently," she said.

Mrs Nelson said the family backyard was an amphibian's delight: "Our garden has two pools, a bath, other water containers, a big wine barrel and vegetation and lots of pipes to give them places to hide.

"It's not the sort of garden you'd find in *Vogue* but it's very exciting as the frogs are now starting to breed."

As Andrew Nelson's photo "Peron's tree frog metamorphs" shows.

■ Would you like your photos of life on the North Shore published? Send your high-resolution digital image with a JPEG file size of 800Kb to 2Mb to seletoj@cumberlandnews.com.au. Images must be your own and details must include your daytime phone number, name and suburb, plus a brief description of the photo. Any images that show faces of children must be accompanied by written approval of a parent or guardian and a daytime phone number for that person. All contributors are credited.



METAMORPHOSIS: Peron's tree frog.

Picture: ANDREW NELSON

6-DAY COACH-CAMPING TOUR

“Frogs and Reptiles of the Northern NSW Rainforests”

February 12-17, 2010.

The Frog and Tadpole Study Group, in conjunction with Outback Track Tours, will host a six-day herpetological tour of the Dorrigo and Washpool rainforests of northern NSW. We will explore the unique wildlife and dark luxuriance of these spectacular World Heritage Listed rainforests. Our itinerary remains flexible to ensure that, each day, we are able to take advantage of optimum local conditions. Returning towards Sydney, we will spend a day taking in the grandeur of Barrington Tops, camping overnight. We will survey the local area for frogs and reptiles.

We will enjoy camping to the sights and sounds of pristine mountain streams set amongst towering forests. This is a wonderful opportunity to see some of our most inspiring frogs and reptiles in their natural habitat. Most members would rarely experience this fauna in the wild.

The tour will be led by Dr. Arthur White. Arthur carries out much professional fieldwork and his research is widely published in scientific journals. He lectures extensively on many scientific matters, and of course, speaks regularly on various frog matters at meetings. This tour is open to all interested herpetologists (i.e. FATS membership is not a requirement).

The tour will commence and finish at Eddy Avenue at Central Station. The fare of \$800-00 includes travel by air-conditioned 4WD coach, camp and park entry fees, driver, professional cook and meals. Some assistance with setting-up of tents, after-meal wash-up and general duties will be appreciated. Bookings can only be confirmed with the payment of \$250-00 deposit to Outback Track Tours.

This tour will eventually be advertised to the general public, members are advised to book early to ensure a place on the tour. See Frogcall page 2.

For further enquiries and detailed itinerary, phone Robert Wall of the FATS Group on 9681-5308 or Mark and Sarah Wardrop of Outback Track Tours on 9913-1484 or STD on 1300-884-463.

Please Note : This is a commercial tour and business arrangement with Outback Track Tours. All planned activities at Dorrigo and Washpool are restricted to TOUR PARTICIPANTS ONLY. Club members will not be permitted to ‘link-up’ with the tour group at Dorrigo, Washpool or Barrington in order to attend herpetological activities. Your courtesy will be appreciated.



Josephine Creek QLD 2009 Photo David Nelson



Frog matrimony to jump-start rainy days

Villagers perform a frog marriage as they pray for rain at Maghlipara village in India. Frog marriage is traditionally observed according to the Vedic rites and rituals, to appease the rain gods. A prolonged dry spell has plagued northeast India in recent months. Picture:AFP

Sent in by Arthur White p 6 MX News 29/4/2009



Photo George Madani *Litoria rheocola* Common Mist Frog

FIELDTRIPS.

Autumn / Winter Recess. No field-trips scheduled. Our Spring / Summer Programme recommences in September.

Booking Procedure For Fieldtrips.

We experienced some confusion last season regarding those newer members wanting to attend fieldtrips. You need to make TWO phone calls :

Phone Call #1. BOOKING YOUR FIELDTRIP.

You need to book onto each fieldtrip. Speak to me or simply leave a message leaving your name, how many places you require and a contact phone number. I will automatically write your name down for that fieldtrip. If you hear nothing from me, you may presume your booking has been successful. If the fieldtrip is full and your booking is unsuccessful I will **ALWAYS** phone you back (this is why you need to leave a contact number – I won't accept responsibility for things going wrong if contact numbers are not left with me, or if phones are continually switched off).

Phone Call #2. CONFIRMING THE STATUS OF THE FIELDTRIP.

A day or two before the fieldtrip is scheduled, phone to verify whether the fieldtrip is proceeding or has been cancelled. We cancel fieldtrips for a number of reasons. Hot, dry weather or cold or windy conditions will adversely affect the activity of frogs. We also take into account things like bushfire alerts and dangerously swollen creeks. There are numerous other reasons for cancelling a fieldtrip. **DO NOT PRESUME** that the fieldtrip will be proceeding. You need to positively confirm the status of the fieldtrip. As is highlighted in each newsletter, this is entirely **YOUR** responsibility. **I DO NOT** ring this information through to participants. This coming season we hope to provide advice on the club's website, so you may check there first. Regardless of how you do it, you need to independently check whether the fieldtrip is proceeding or not.

My apologies to those newer members who were inconvenienced last season. Hopefully, this should clarify our fieldtrip procedures. If there are any queries, please contact me. Regards, **Rob Wall.**

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INSURANCE DISCLAIMER FATS has public liability insurance for its various public functions. 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 & people who attend field trips.

FATS MEETINGS commence at 7pm, end about 10pm and are usually held on the first Friday of every EVEN month February, April, June, August, October and December, at Building 22, RANAD, off Jamieson St, Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush Bay (accessible by car, train or bus). We hold 6 informative, informal, topical and practical meetings each year. Visitors are welcome. We are actively involved in monitoring frog populations, 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.**