

# FROG CALL



THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP NSW Inc.

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NEWSLETTER No. 111 February 2011

DECCW amphibian licences must be sighted, to adopt a frog.

Arrive 6.30 pm for a 7pm start.

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> February**

**FATS meet at the  
Education Centre, Bicentennial Park**

Easy walk from Concord West railway station and straight down Victoria Ave.

Take a torch in Winter.

By car: Enter from Australia Ave at the

Bicentennial Park main entrance,

turn off to the right and drive through the park. It's a one way road.

Or enter from Bennelong Road / Parkway.

It's a short stretch of two way road and park in p10f car park - the last car park before the exit gate. See map p4



*Litoria nannotis* Waterfall Frog Photo by George Madani

## MEETING FORMAT Friday 4th February 2011

**6.30 pm** Lots of lost White-lip, Perons, Green Tree and Fallax etc frogs needing homes. Please bring your FATS membership card and \$\$ donation. **DECCW amphibian licence must be sighted on the night.** A small number of half grown stick insects are for sale. Like our rescued frogs, these can never be released.

**7.00 pm** Welcome and announcements.

**7.45 pm** The main speaker is Ken Griffiths "A Naturalist's Wanderings through Ecuador and the Galapagos" Other speakers include Bill Koutsamanis "Use of automatic frog recorders"

**9.30 pm** Show us your frog images, tell us about your frogging trips or experiences, guessing competition, light refreshments and a chance to relax and chat with frog experts.

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Photo by Ken Griffiths snakes@bigpond.net.au www.picasaweb.google.com/naturally.wild.photography

**K**en Griffiths is our Main speaker for February. Ken recently spent a few days at Currawinya NP in Queensland. He saw a most unusual sight, a *Uperoleia*, probably *capitulata* as there were many around but possibly *rugosa*. It was actually 3 metres up a tree and still climbing. Did the tree frog chase it up?? There were literally thousands of frogs around their camp. He had never seen so many, *Caerulea*, *latopalmata*, *Rubella*, *Lim Fletcheri*, and *Uperoleia*'s. Perhaps they climb trees all the time? It was a very rough barked eucalypt so it managed to slowly crawl through the bark. *PS ED The tree frog above is alive. Its just turning its head around to look.*

### THE BEAKED TOAD



Photograph courtesy Robin Moore, ILCP

**T**he beaked toad, above, is a new amphibian species which was discovered recently in western Colombia. The toad doesn't progress from tadpoles, instead the females lay eggs on the floor of the rainforest which hatch into fully formed, but tiny, toads. In addition to discovering the toad, the group, led by Conservation International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Amphibian Specialist Group, also rediscovered several species which have not been seen for decades including a Mexican salamander, a frog from Cote d'Ivoire and a frog from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. **FATS alerted to discovery by Ruth Bieri**

### LAST FATS MEETING 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2010

**P**unia Jeffery opened the meeting and welcomed our regular attendees and newcomers.

Arthur White brought us up to date with the Cane Toad musters at Taren Point. Some 330 toads have been collected. Fortunately there have been none found in Towra Point Nature Reserve. The first sniffer

dog used in the searches was a Springer Spaniel, however he had to be expelled when it was discovered that he couldn't tell the difference between a Striped Marsh Frog and a Cane Toad. The second sniffer dog a Labrador, has been there four times but has found no toads. Now he has been sent home in disgrace having tried to mouth them (in training).

Plans for the second Roseberry Green and Golden Bell Frog pond project, funded by Sydney city Council is progressing. These ponds will help the GGBF survivors of the Botany Bay Wetlands to have an extended range, beyond one back yard.

The Sydney Olympic Park auditory surveys identified low numbers of GGBFs calling, possibly due to the rains in October causing a lull in activity on the nights of the survey.

FATS members and guests viewed the entries to the Frog-O-Graphic competition and selected the People's Choice Entry, Wendy Grimm's Crucifix Frog. Winners of the competition included entries from Talen Deluca, Brad McCaffery, Jilli Streit, Joel Cassar, Aaron Payne, Vicki Deluca, John Pumpurs, Kim McCaffery, Karen Russell, Marie Callins and Wendy Grimm.

Jilli Streit gave us a glimpse of Madagascan Herpetofauna images taken on holidays. Peter Spradbrow, who works Featherdale Wildlife Park, gave a presentation.

Arthur White spoke about the African Bullfrog *Pyxicephalus adspersus*, one of the few frogs reported to attack people and its guarding behaviour and sharp teeth. See You Tube "Screaming Frog" or "African Bullfrog" See [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqMhEn\\_PhR4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqMhEn_PhR4) They originate in the lowland grass regions of Africa, have prominent teeth and bite. Males defend eggs and tadpoles and will excavate a channel to get fresh water to their tadpoles, when pools are drying out. Arthur had a pet one once called Pixie. The meeting ended with home-made Christmas fair, drinks and a chance to relax and chat. **MW**



Gino Fregnan's frog pond

## TAREN POINT CANE TOAD MUSTER

**O**n a wet and windy Wednesday a large group of FATS members assembled at Taren Point to assist with a monitoring project for the invasive Cane Toad (*Rhinella marina*). FATS worked with Sutherland Shire Council's Pest Control officers who have been obtaining grants in order to conduct regular surveys of the area to determine where the toads occur and how many there are.



Male Cane Toad (*Rhinella marina*) from Taren Point

Taren Point is located on the southern shores of Botany Bay in Sydney's Sutherland Shire with a mix of industrial depots and residential housing. It is this industrial area of the

suburb that is a likely entry point for the toads with large numbers of containers and building materials being trucked in every day. It is likely that the toad is hitching a ride with these materials from up north and pose a risk to local frogs in the Sydney region should they become established. The Taren Point population is perilously close to the RAMSAR wetlands of Towra Point and colonies of the endangered Green and Golden Bell Frog (*Litoria aurea*) further east on the Kurnell peninsula. The toads have also been shown to carry parasites, which pose a further risk to our local frogs.

Over several hours of surveying a range of habitats from mangroves and salt marshes through to industrial estates and suburban gardens it simply reinforces how versatile and adaptable the toads are. Due to the cold and often miserable conditions only one adult male toad was found in the urban area of Taren Point. Further Toad Musters in the warmer months later this year are likely to turn up many more toads. Following the completion of the survey we adjourned for some drinks and snacks as Matthew Greenlees from the University of Sydney demonstrated his considerable knowledge of the toad including how to distinguish

between males and females as well as a demonstration of how the toxins are secreted.

A big thankyou to Sutherland Shire Council and Arthur White for coordinating these musters and hopefully they can continue to be a successful method of monitoring and controlling these toads to ensure they don't become established and spread. **Aaron Payne**



## Saved from mining threats New Zealand's Archey's Frog

Thanks to the thousands of supporters who wrote letters to the New Zealand government ( including FATS and our donation of \$1,000 directly to the campaign ) urging them to protect the frogs. New Zealand's Dr. Phil Bishop was a vocal supporter on behalf of the frogs.  
<http://savethefrogs.com>

## CHYTRID FUNGUS, FROG RECOVERY (extracts)

**F**rogs in Australia and the United States may be recovering from a fungal disease that has decimated amphibian populations around the world, researchers say. Between 1990 and 1998, the populations of several frog species in Australia plummeted due to chytridiomycosis infection, but a recent survey suggests the frogs are re-establishing themselves, NewScientist.com reported on 10 Dec 2010. "It's happening across a number of species," Michael Mahony at the University of Newcastle in New South Wales says. There are also signs of recovery in the United States.

Barred river frogs (*Mixophyes esiteratus*) disappeared, he says, but now up to 30 of the animals have returned to streams across Australia's Central Coast. The tusked-frog (*Adelotus*) and several tree frog species (*Litoria*) have also returned there. Ross Alford at James Cook University in Townsville, Queensland, says tree frogs are also repopulating other areas of the state after their numbers nosedived. Some have even reached pre-infection levels. **Sent to FrogCall by Marion Anstis**  
<http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20827903.500-fungus-out-the-frog-resistance-is-here.html>  
<http://www.promedmail.org> <http://www.isid.org>  
**Source: Ethiopian Review forwarded by Fred Parker**  
<http://www.ethiopianreview.com/news/201002/?p=15518>



## HILARIOUS DANCING FROG MAN

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6BLYJjRncJw>

## AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION 4<sup>th</sup> December to 13 March 2011

**C**ome see the world's most spectacular wildlife and nature, photographic images. Bring your own camera. Interactive studio for all ages. 6 College St Sydney [www.australianmuseum.net.au](http://www.australianmuseum.net.au)

## ARE YOU A CARRIER?

### Phytophthora Dieback – Silent plant killer

Phytophthora (pronounced fy – TOFF – thora) is a devastating plant killer. It attacks and rots plant roots, destroying the food and shelter of many animals. It is a water mould which spreads naturally in water or roots. It is spread much further by humans moving contaminated soil or plant material, even small amounts. When you are in the bush please take care not to spread this devastating disease. [www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au)

## SYDNEY ROYAL FROG & REPTILE SHOW



## ANIMAL KEEPERS FAUNA RECORD BOOKS

**A**mphibian keepers record books are due by 30 April 2011. All fauna record books must be returned. No statements will be accepted as in past years. Penalties will apply to licensees whose book is not received by the Department by 30 April 2011. FRBs are only accepted by post to the postal address below. A \$5.00 book replacement fee (payable by credit card only) applies to licensees who have lost or cannot find their book and need a replacement in time to submit by 30 April 2010. Enquires please contact Wildlife Licensing and Management Unit P.O. Box 1967 HURSTVILLE NSW 1481 (02) 9585 6406 Email: [wildlife.licensing@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wildlife.licensing@environment.nsw.gov.au)



Marion Anstis *Cophixalus zweifeli*, Cape Melville nursery frog

**T**he Sydney Royal Frog & Reptile Show will join the all-time favourite animal competitions at the Sydney Royal Easter Show and become an official Sydney Royal Competition in 2011. With 'Sydney Royal' attached to its name, the Competition which has been run for the past five years, will become the largest of its kind in the Country.

Non-venomous snakes, lizards, and frogs will be judged by independent judges and the best of the best rewarded. Showcased in the Wynne Pavilion, Easter Show visitors will have the opportunity to come face-to-face with these exotic creatures.

Prizes will be awarded in each category as well as accolades for Grand Champion, Runner up to Grand Champion, the heaviest frog, the highest placed youth keeper, and a people's choice award. The Frog and Reptile competition will be held on Wednesday 27th April 2011 in the Wynne Pavilion This Competition is self-administered by Wild Australia Expo – [www.wildexpo.com.au](http://www.wildexpo.com.au) Sent to FATS by Ruth Bieri register interest at [info@wildexpo.com.au](mailto:info@wildexpo.com.au) <http://www.sydneyroyal.com.au/FrogReptile.htm>



### FROG ROCK

**H**ere is a rock I have walked past a few thousand times but the other day I was taking a photo nearby and must have looked at it differently and it hit me - looks like a frog! Maybe it doesn't to others I thought so I sent it around some friends and they had no trouble with frog rock so I am sending it to you just for fun. It is on the Great North Walk track through the mangrove boardwalk at the end of Buffalo Creek Reserve on the edge of Lane Cove National Park.  
**Graham Weule**



Frog rescue by FATS member Michelle Toms

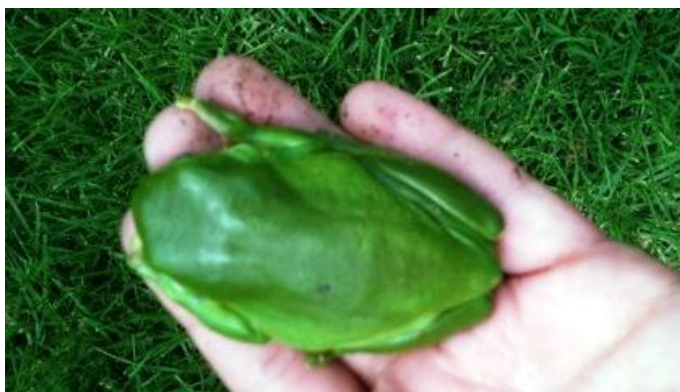


Before surgery (above) after surgery & antibiotics (below)



Photo by Margaret - Nowra seaboard  
 Green and Golden Bell Frog found in her vegie patch

Green Tree Frog *Litoria caerulea* Bell River Estate Winery  
 Mitchell Hwy near Wellington, photograph by Morgan Banks



Frog surgery, *Litoria lesueurii* on the road at Otford



Resting, post surgery, before release Well done Michelle



## A FROG-FRIENDLY GARDEN

**W**hile frogs today are much less plentiful than they used to be in many places, pockets remain in surprising places. Riding my bicycle to work I sometimes hear, above the roar of the traffic, *Crinia signifera* calling from beside the Gore Hill Freeway in Naremburn. By creating a frog-friendly garden, enthusiasts in cities like Sydney hope to tap into these population reservoirs and create a mini-environment where frogs can prosper and provide enjoyment. When we think of frogs in a built environment we often think of ponds and running water but if you don't have the resources or room for a pond, simpler solutions may suffice to enable them to visit and breed. The following isn't a comprehensive guide to a frog-friendly garden, but may give novices some ideas how to start.

### Factors to take into account

Frogs can be noisy, usually while trying to attract a mate, and even an enthusiast (let alone an uninterested neighbour) may find their persistent calling at mating time overwhelming. Frogs can broadly be divided into tree (climbing) and non-tree dwelling families. Different water features may be appropriate depending on the frog species you are seeking to attract.

As you can't introduce foreign frogs to your garden, consider if there may be frogs in your vicinity that might migrate to your frog-friendly environment. You may notice tadpoles in nearby water bodies, or hear frogs calling. Frog number build up after breeding and they tend to migrate looking for new territory when it's wet. During dry periods they stay close by their known water sources. It may take a good downpour get frogs in the mood for breeding, and that is generally when they are most easily seen or heard. In prolonged dry periods it can be difficult to know what is around. Patience is required!



**Figure 1.** A simple frog pond set up, suitable for climbing frogs

### Pond, or raised water feature

Generally any frog can access a pond (unless its suitably fenced), whereas a raised water feature may be accessible only to tree frogs. Within Sydney a pond will almost certainly attract Striped Marsh Frogs which may dominate the feature at the cost of other frogs. The same frogs won't be able to get into a raised water body, provided it is more than about 0.7 m above any surface they can jump from. Tree frogs can climb up even smooth vertical surfaces to reach water or hiding spots. A pond doesn't need to be very big or deep – more important probably is the landscaping.



**Perons metamorphs January 2011**

A frog should not feel too exposed in its vicinity, so a border of plants and rocks is helpful, as is vicinity to additional herbage. A membrane available from hardware stores will seal the bottom, and pond weeds and plants will provide an attractive and protective (for tadpoles) addition. Keep in mind safety where young children have access. A raised pond can be improvised from something as simple as a couple of plastic tubs (one upside down for the base), again from the hardware or two-dollar shop. Slightly more sophisticated is the old bath tub picked up beside the road on rubbish collection day. A cleaned ½ wine barrel works too.



**Figure 2.** A half wine barrel can be accessed by tree frogs but not ground dwellers.

## Hiding places

Ground dwelling frogs, as their name implies, need hiding spaces at or near ground level such as under leaf litter, in rock crevices, under wheelie bins, etc. Tree frogs prefer crevices or hollows a metre or more above ground level. PVC conduit (say 40 mm internal diameter and 0.5 – 1 m long) taped vertically to a tree or post can be an ideal home for a tree frog. A square of black plastic (eg builders plastic) taped over the bottom end can help provide a small water reservoir in the base which can make the residence more attractive for a frog. If several are put in different positions, a frog can find one that suits it best for warmth and access. A favourite for frogs in our garden are plastic hanging baskets with a hole in the side that provides access (and drainage) to the basal water reservoir.



**Figure 2. These hanging pots with a basal cavity and large access hole are a favourite habitat for tree frogs. They contain moisture, and the frog(s) can move to the sunny or shaded side of the cavity for temperature control.**

## Metamorphs

The emergence of the metamorphs can be one of the most rewarding times you'll have, as they transition from water to terrestrial environments. If you have non-climbing frogs make sure they have easy (sloping) access from water to land. The metamorphs may take several hours basking on the edge of the water while making the transition, and are most vulnerable to predation at this time. The presence of nearby cover will help reduce their exposure.



**Figure 3. Perons tree frog metamorphs basking after emergence from the water before moving on into the vegetation**

## Rewards

Knowing frogs enjoy your garden is reward in itself. Adding to the pleasure are neighbourhood children visiting to see your frogs and tadpoles, your neighbour putting a sign on his mailbox to warn the postie to take care of the resident frog, and the passerby, hearing your frogs call, asking what he can do to get frogs in his garden too!

**Andrew Nelson [awnelson@optusnet.com.au](mailto:awnelson@optusnet.com.au)**



**Figure 1. PVC conduit provides another favoured hiding place for tree frogs and can be attached to posts or trees. Several frogs may occupy the same home.**

## Tadpoles

The water features provide opportunities for frogs to bathe, but more importantly, to breed. This will normally be during the warmer months, and egg laying is usually triggered by rainfall. This may not happen every year. The tadpoles can usually look after themselves, but survival and growth may be assisted by feeding. Softened (slightly cooked or frozen) lettuce leaves are a favourite and discarded outer lettuce leaves can usually be obtained free from your fruiterer and will be voraciously consumed by older tadpoles. Tadpoles will usually metamorphose the same season, but if the eggs are laid late in the summer, they may over-winter before metamorphosing next Spring.



## CANE TOADS ARE EVOLVING INTO SUPER INVADERS (extracts)

**S**cientists have demonstrated a "runaway evolutionary effect" that is speeding up Australia's cane toad invasion. This explains why the invasive toads have increased their rate of spread so dramatically, the researchers say. They found that toads living at the very edge of their range were "super-invaders" - able to move beyond the boundaries of this existing habitat.

And when toads at the frontiers bred, their offspring inherited this ability to move quickly into new territory. This phenomenon, which scientists have termed the Olympic Village Effect, has been proposed before, since these same scientists observed that the toads at the edge of the range had bigger front legs and stronger back legs - all the better to jump and to invade new areas.

In this study, the researchers tested the effect, essentially setting up a cane toad race Dr Ben Phillips from James Cook University in Queensland, Australia collected cane toads from four different populations.

He captured ten toads from the core population in northern Queensland, and ten from each of three populations that were increasingly distant from this point. He took the toads to a facility in the appropriately named Middle Point near Darwin, where he fitted them with radio tags and then released them. The tags enabled the scientists to follow the toads' progress. As Dr Phillips expected, toads that were collected from the edge of the range were much faster movers.

All in the genes To confirm that this increased strength and speed had a genetic basis and could be inherited, Dr Phillips studied a generation further. He allowed toads from the same population to breed. Then he set up another radio-tagged toad race, this time between these captive-bred offspring. Toads that had parents from the edge of the range won the dispersal race, revealing that they inherited their speed and strength from their parents. The faster moving toads even reproduced more quickly. But this could point to a chink in their biological armour. "They have to be trading something off to do that," Said. Dr Phillips "And one of the things we suspect is that they're trading off their immune systems." Since the bigger, faster toads spread and breed so quickly, they are likely to leave any endemic diseases and parasites behind them because toads that move so quickly are likely to be disease-free. This could mean that they and their offspring have less natural immunity. If this is the case, it could

help scientists develop some sort of biological defence against the toads. "If you re-introduce [these] parasites at the edge of the range, perhaps you could slow down the invasion," said Dr Phillips He and his colleagues plan to study the creatures in more detail in the hope of pinpointing some of these biological weak spots.

Cane toads were introduced to Australia in 1935, to north tropical Queensland to control sugar cane pests. They failed to do this, but succeeded in becoming one of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) top 100 invasive species. Their range now extends through most of Queensland and into Australia's Northern Territory. The work was published in the Journal of Evolutionary Biology. **By Victoria Gill Science and nature reporter, BBC News sent in by Andrew Nelson** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth\\_news/newsid\\_9096000/9096795.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/earth/hi/earth_news/newsid_9096000/9096795.stm)



Wallum Froglet (underbelly)- photo Grant Webster

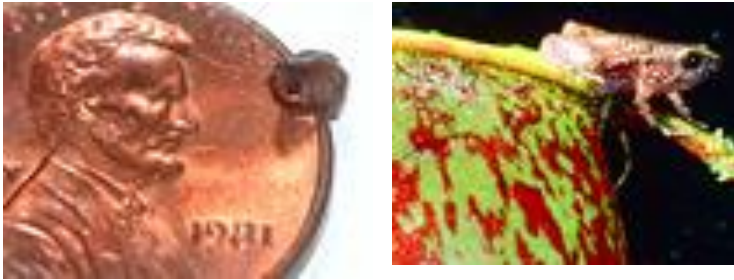
## AHS FIELD TRIP INVITATION

**T**he Australian Herpetological Society has been collaborating with NPWS / DECCW to survey the biodiversity of herpetological fauna at the old Air Services Australia site in Cranebrook, Western Sydney. The habitat is very similar to that found on the ADI site and contains significant portions of remnant Cumberland Plain. The AHS have invited FATS members to help them with their survey work on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> February. The invitation includes an afternoon foot survey (3-6.30pm) followed by a BBQ (supplied) and then night survey (7.30 – 10.00pm). **Meeting Point:** Gate at roundabout on Vincent Road, Cranebrook. (UBD map 143, P4) **Meeting time:** 3pm or 7.30pm depending on sessions being attended **What to bring:** dinner provided, BYO drinks. **NOTE:** places limited, all participants must rsvp at least 24 hrs in advance . All participants will be required to sign a code of conduct agreement prior to field trip commencement.

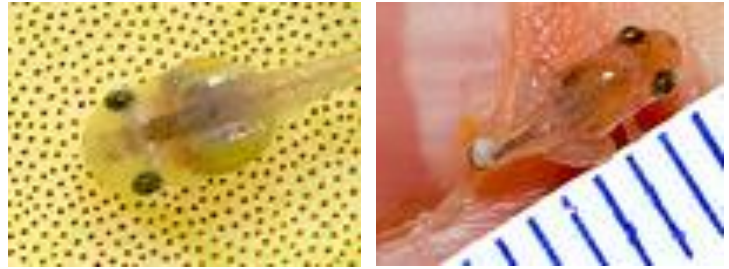
**RSVP: Matthew McCloskey 0410 087 267**



**PEA-SIZE FROG FOUND**

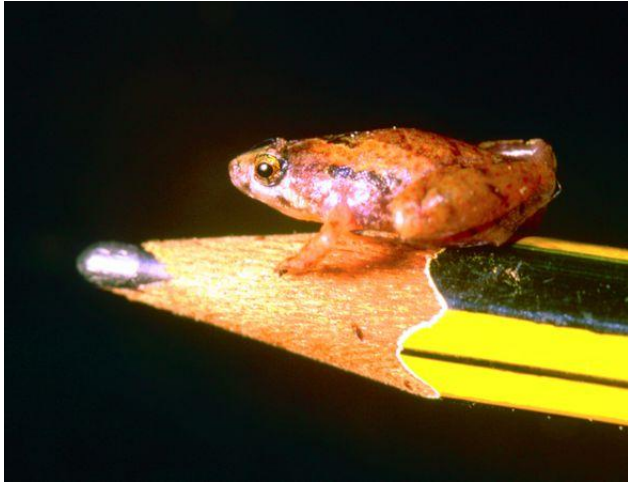


**WORLD'S SMALLEST FROG**



**LET'S GET FROG DISSECTIONS OUT OF EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE USA BY 2014**

**F**rog dissections are unethical and unnecessary. Furthermore, they are contributing to the depletion of wild frog populations and the spread of harmful invasive species and infectious diseases. As many alternatives to traditional frog dissections now exist, it is inexcusable for schools and universities to continue their frog dissection programs and thereby directly contribute to the decline and extinction of amphibian populations and species.



Photograph courtesy Indraneil Das, Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation

**PEA-SIZE FROG ON PENCIL PERCH**

A newfound, pea-size frog, *Microhyla nepenthicola*, sits on the tip of a pencil. One of the smallest frogs in the world, the species was spotted inside and around pitcher plants in Malaysian rain forests on the island of Borneo (map), which is divided among Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The new species was announced Wednesday, but the frogs have been hiding in plain view for more than a century. "I saw some specimens in museum collections that are over a hundred years old," co-discoverer Indraneil Das said in a statement. "Scientists presumably thought they were juveniles of other species," said Das, a herpetologist at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak in Malaysia. "But it turns out they are adults of this newly discovered microspecies." **National Geographic 25 August 2010 from Andrew Nelson**



SAVE THE FROGS! has initiated a campaign to get frog dissections out of every public school in the USA by 2014. That is not a lot of time, considering the huge number of schools that currently dissect. With your help though, we can achieve our goal! In 2011, we want 200 USA public schools to abandon their dissection programs: help us make it happen! See <http://www.savethefrogs.com/actions/dissections/>



*Thank you to the many FrogCall supporters. Your articles, photos, media clippings, webpage uploads, membership administration, mail-out inserts and envelope preparation, is greatly appreciated. Special thanks to regular newsletter contributors, including Lothar Voigt, Robert Wall, George Madani, Karen & Arthur White, Wendy & Phillip Grimm, Brad & Matt McCaffery, Grant Webster, Marion Anstis, Pania Jeffery, Fiorella, Andrew & David Nelson, Al MacDougall and Bill Wangmann.*



Photo by Grant Webster *Phyllorhina richmondensis* 2009

**ELEPHANT ECOLOGICAL ENGINEERING  
'BENEFITS AMPHIBIANS' (extracts)**

**E**lephants can create more complex habitats that can support more biodiversity. Areas heavily damaged by elephants are home to more species of amphibians and reptiles than areas where the beasts are excluded, a study has suggested. US scientists recorded 18 species in high damage areas but just eight species in unaffected habitats. Elephants are described as "ecological engineers" because they create and maintain ecosystems by physically changing habitats. The findings have been published in the African Journal of Ecology.

The team from Georgia Southern University, US, carried out its study in Ndarakwai Ranch, a 4,300-hectare site of mixed savannah woodlands (dominated by two Acacia species) and open savannah in North-East Tanzania, between August 2007 and February 2008.

Frogs' best friend They wrote: "Eighteen herpetofaunal (amphibians and reptiles) species... were sampled in areas of high elephant damage. Medium damage areas were comprised of 12 species, while areas of low damage had 11

species. The study's findings could affect the way certain habitats are managed in the future "The control site (fenced area) had the lowest species richness with only eight species."

In the paper, the scientists concluded that difference in abundance and species richness in the damaged areas was probably a result of engineering by elephants, generating new habitats for a diverse array of frog species. "Craters and coarse woody debris formed by uprooted and broken trees [increased] the number of refuges against predators," they observed. They added that the locations were also favoured by insects, which were an important food source for amphibians and reptiles. "Therefore, the abundance and diversity of prey may be important factor that attracted these species of herpetofauna to elephant modified areas."

Dr Schulte explained the team decided to carry out the study in order to identify effective indicator species that offered an insight into the health of the region's environment. The findings had implications for habitat and wildlife management strategies. **23 October 2010 By Mark Kinver Science and environment reporter, BBC News sent by Andrew Nelson <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11607299>**

**INSURANCE DISCLAIMER**

FATS has public liability insurance for its various public functions. This insurance does not cover FATS members, it covers the public and 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 pm, end about 10pm **at the Education Centre Bicentennial Park, Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush Bay** and are usually held on the **first Friday of every EVEN month February, April, June, August, October and December (but not Good Friday)**. Call, check our web site or email us for further directions. Easy walk from Concord West railway station and straight down Victoria Ave. Take a strong torch in Winter. By car: Enter from Australia Ave at the Bicentennial Park entrance and drive through the park (one way road) or enter from Bennelong Rd/Parkway. It's a short stretch of 2 way road and park in p10f car park (the last car park before the exit gate). Turn off to the right if entering from the main entrance. We hold 6 informative, informal, topical and practical free 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 writer, photographer, 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 sources must be always fully acknowledged.

**FROGWATCH HELPLINE**

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Please send articles for the FrogCall newsletter to 38 Albert Pde Ashfield NSW 2131



# THE CASTLE HILL REPTILE EXPO

**CASTLE HILL SPORTS STADIUM  
Fred Caterson Reserve - Gilbert Road  
9.00am to 5.00pm Sunday 13 Feb 2011**

FOR MORE INFORMATION & VENDOR BOOKINGS CALL ADRIAN Ph. 0428 816722  
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## TINY FROG IS LOSING GROUND

**T**he WESTERN CHORUS FROG :  
Agricultural land dug up for housing and farm ponds and ditches replaced by drainage systems could spell the end for a tiny frog living near the river. Only 2.5 centimetres long, the western chorus frog, *Pseudacris triseriata*, has three dark lines along its back and can be heard -a loud, creaking call -in early spring.

It lives no more than 250 metres from its water site, but those sites are disappearing at such a rate that in 2000, the frog was declared endangered in Quebec and in 2008, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada listed it as threatened.

"They live in the wetlands on the South Shore from Ile Perrot to Boucherville," says Tommy Montpetit, project manager at the environment information centre of Longueuil, "but they're threatened by habitat loss. ... Instead of having ponds for these little frogs, we've gone to major drainage systems, so there's no water left around agricultural fields and so the frogs disappear." Montpetit is working with a number of South Shore municipalities -with help from the Fondation de la faune du Quebec and the federal habitat stewardship program -to save the tiny frog. Longueuil, for example, is working to create a "refuge faunique" where the frogs can be protected, and viewed in an educational setting. **By Donna Nebenzahl, The Gazette 30/10/2010 HerpDigest.org: The Only Free Weekly Electronic Newsletter That Reports on the Latest News on Herpetological Conservation, Husbandry and Science Volume 10 Issue 47 11/5/10 (A Not-for-Profit Publication) Publisher/Editor Allen Salzberg**

## FROG INTELLIGENCE?

**W**ith those cute but expressionless eyes, it is hard to imagine that frogs actually have recall or can think about what to do in a situation. But they do exhibit some interesting behaviours on occasion. Possibly the best example I have ever seen occurred when we were located at Reservoir Road in Manoorra in which a frog was able to learn a route, find access points and know where to go in an emergency, and get attention for itself.

Just as a support measure, if I saw any frogs in the yard, I would bring them in, give them a few bugs and put them back outside. This was a repetitious event in that the same door was always entered, down a short hallway and turn left into the bathroom. The frog would be placed on the benchtop, given a few bugs and returned via the same path to the kitchen door.

One small Common Green tree frog in particular came to enjoy this routine and turned up around 7:00pm almost every night for several months. It was always near the back door and I would bring it inside. Two amazing evenings showed just how much information these animals retain.

One night, I was at a meeting and the house was locked up. I returned at 10:00p and turned on the light as I entered the bathroom. There was 'froggy' sitting on the benchtop waiting for breakfast. This was impressive considering that the frog had to find some kind of hole to get inside (there happened to be one in the bottom corner of the door) and make its way to the usual benchtop where it waited a few hours for my return.

The real demonstration of thought occurred a few weeks later when I noticed that 7:00pm came and went but the frog wasn't around. It didn't turn up at all that evening and I retired probably around 1:00am. At 4:00am, I heard a frog barking a distress call and jumped up to check on the patients in the frog room. The sound wasn't coming from there however - it was coming from the lounge room. I ran into the lounge, turned on the light and there was 'froggy' sitting in the middle of the floor. As I approached, I could see that it had been attacked by a cat. I prepared a tank setup and placed the frog in the tank to be attended to when I got up. The frog stopped barking once placed in the tank.

This event increased my pre-existing empathy for these seemingly "blank" animals as this frog had to know how to get back here, how to get inside, how to get my attention, and even to know that it would receive help if it came to me. Just goes to show that these creatures deserve more appreciation than they are getting! **by Deborah Pergolotti, Cairns Frog Hospital <http://www.fdrproject.org.au/index.html>**

**Ed: Deborah is seeking funds to upload more frog disease treatment information on the web site - Donations desperately needed**

## FIELD TRIPS

*Please book your place on field-trips; due to strong demand, numbers are limited ph. 9681-5308 .*

Be sure to leave a contact number. Regardless of prevailing weather conditions, we will continue to schedule and 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

**12<sup>th</sup> February 7-30p.m.**

**The Watagans.**

**Leaders: Brad and Matt McCaffery.**

**Note:** Our December fieldtrip to the Watagans was cancelled due to wet and impassable roads. As this is an exceptional frogging site, we have asked Brad and Matt to re-schedule this trip, to which they have kindly agreed.

Take the F3 north. Travel approximately 83km and take the Morisset / Cooranbong exit. Turn right and drive 2km to the cnr. of Mandalong Rd and Freemans Dr. *Ecological succession* is an important scientific concept. Over time, especially after some major disturbance event such as fire or logging (or simply a windthrown tree in the rainforest), there is a gradual shift from bare open ground to more complex vegetation. This is often accompanied by a subtle but continual change in the local fauna. Scientists now believe that some animals, including some threatened species, are pioneer species that flourish immediately after a major disturbance event. These species may simply benefit from more open environments or may take advantage of less competition. Conversely, other animals will prefer the more densely vegetated communities that only develop over time. This weekend, we will look for evidence of ecological succession and with an emphasis on frogs, we will discuss successional stages in our bushland environment and how it influences the species we may find at a site. Brad and Matt possess a fine understanding of the different habitat requirements of frogs. Tonight they will pass on some of their vast field-work experience and will explain what to look for when searching for frogs.

**This concludes our 2010/2011 Spring/Summer Fieldtrips Programme. Our next Spring/Summer Fieldtrips Programme re-commences in September.**

**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 and by attending agree to; a release of all claims, a waiver of liability, and an assumption of risk.**

### SMITHS LAKE FIELDTRIP 15 - 19 OCT 2010.

**U**p until our weekend, Spring had brought a somewhat mixed bag of weather conditions, ranging from unusually cold days to days of intermittent rain. FATS members have pretty much seen Smiths Lake in all its various shades of weather. Or so we had thought. This weekend was dominated by wild, gusty and howling winds which at times swept through the field station with the noise of a roaring train. Trees doubled over, and tumultuous waves loomed up on the usually placid Smiths Lake.

Thankfully, the sturdy construction of the University field station meant that we were afforded a safe haven and somewhere nice to sleep with protection from the elements. Going out into the field was another matter. Fortunately, Arthur had a few ideas up his sleeve, and knowing the Smiths Lake area intimately, made a few strategic decisions to visit locations which were afforded protection due to the surrounding lay of the land.

The choice was a masterstroke. We picked up some sought-after species. On our approach, we were greeted with the promising calls of *Litoria chloris*, which we took as a sign that this may prove to be a good night’s frogging after all. We then ticked off such prizes as *Adelotus brevis*, *Pseudophryne coriacea* and *Mixophyes fasciolatus* amongst others. In no time at all we had already accumulated a good frog list. FATS fieldtrips never let the weather get in the way of good frogging!

Back at camp, Arthur uncovered one of the local swamp snakes *Hemiaspis signata*, quite a beautiful representative of the serpents. The weekend continued with birthday parties, more frogging and checking out the local birdlife. A good weekend tally of frogs, reptiles and birds.

Many thanks to Arthur and Karen White for once again organizing and leading the annual Smiths Lake fieldtrip. Thanks also to the University of NSW for again making their wonderful field-station complex available to the FATS Group. **R.W.**