

FROG CALL



THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP NSW Inc.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FATSNSW/>

Email: fatsgroupnsw@fats.org.au

PO Box 296 Rockdale NSW 2216

Frogwatch Helpline 0419 249 728

Website: www.fats.org.au

ABN: 34 282 154 794

NEWSLETTER No. 143 JUNE 2016

Red-backed toadlet and ventral marbling

Photos by Jilli Streit - Article on pages 6 to 10

FATS March 2016 Smith's Lake field trip



*You are invited to attend
our next FATS meeting*

Arrive from 6.30 pm for a 7pm start.

Friday 3rd June 2016

FATS meet at the Education Centre,
Bicentennial Pk, Sydney Olympic Park

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

By car: Enter from Australia Ave at the
Bicentennial Park main entrance,

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

Or enter from Bennelong Road / Parkway.

It is a short stretch of two way road.

Park in P10f car park, the last car park
before the exit gate.

Meeting Format Friday 3 June 2016

- 6.30 pm** Lost frogs needing adoption: 3 Green Tree Frogs *Litoria caerulea*, 1 *Litoria fallax*, 1 x 3 legged Striped Marsh Frog *Limnodynastes peronii* needing forever homes, available to FATS financial members. Please bring your FATS membership card and cash \$40 - \$50 donation. Your current NSW NPWS amphibian licence must be sighted on the night. Rescued frogs can never be released. Sorry we have no EFTPOS
- 7.00pm** Welcome and announcements
- 7.30 pm** Main speakers: "Frogs of South-East Asia" Jodi Rowley and "Mitigating THE impacts of road upgrades on threatened frogs in NSW" Josie Stokes
- 9.30 pm** Show us your frog images, tell us about your frogging trips or experiences. Guessing competition, continue with frog adoptions, supper, relax and chat with frog experts.

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MAIN SPEAKERS AT THE FATS JUNE MEETING

FATS will have TWO AWESOME speakers in June:



Jodi Rowley



Josie Stokes

LAST FATS MEETING 1 APRIL 2016

Jilli Streit opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Announcements included T-shirts for sale and events where we have had displays. Kathy and many FATS members have been representing our society at various fairs, eco days, schools and expos such as the Mona Vale sustainability fair and the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

FATS is not a frog dealer however we do rescue frogs that can't be returned to their original habitat. Rescued frogs are available for adoption at most meetings.

Phillip Grimm and David Potter kept the technologies ticking over during the meeting. Thanks again guys. And the FATS committee including Marion Anstis, Karen and Arthur White (who were away last meeting), Punia Jeffery, Kathy and Harriet Potter, Vicki Deluca and Wendy Grimm all chip in to make meetings run smoothly.

Marion Anstis spoke about the exciting process of listing newly discovered Australian frogs - raising the total number to around an amazing 245 in this country. *Litoria staccato* and *Litoria myola* were described in 2007. In the following years the Southern Sand Hill Frog, Tiny Toadlet, Kimberly Froglet and many other frogs were listed. She spoke about the publishing process in the Zootaxa journals and story of describing many other frogs such as *Litoria aurifera* in 2010, *Uperoleia stridera* in 2014 and *Cyclorana occidentalis* in 2016.

Henry Cook entertained us with anecdotes about frog courtship, rainstorms, turtle frogs, intrepid travels, Claret in Madagascar, the elusive aye-aye, Mexican myan ruins, the Yucatan Casque-headed tree frog and travels with his mum.

The night finished with raffles, supper (thanks Robert Wall and Wendy Grimm) and lots of chat. **MW**

FATS WEBSITE WAS HACKED

Some of you may be aware that the FATS website was hacked recently. Thanks to those who reported this to Phillip Grimm as we have now been able to undo the damage and get the site operational again. The nature of the hacking was vandalism and the FATS site became splattered with obscene language for a short time.

No private or sensitive information is stored on the FATS website (such as members names and contact details) so rest assured that your details are safe.

Although we have upgraded our security on the FATS website, we cannot guarantee that this won't happen again. If you suspect something is amiss with the website, please let us know ASAP. **Arthur White**

FATS AGM

The FATS Annual General Meeting will be held during the August meeting on Friday the 5th August 2016. At that meeting all positions on the FATS' executive become vacant and so we are seeking nominations for the following positions: **President, Chairperson, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer, Website and Facebook Manager, Field Trip Co-ordinator, Frog Helpline, Editor and Events Co-ordinator.**

If you are interested in joining the executive you can nominate yourself, or if you know of someone who you think would be interested, you can nominate them (but ask them whether they are prepared to stand before doing so). If you are not sure what the job entails ask a FATS executive or ring them and have a chat.

To make a nomination, send your nomination to me before 29 July. Don't be shy about being on the executive. FATS only works because people who are interested are prepared to devote some time to its activities. The current executive has been reappointed a number of times (and do a sterling job) - but it would be good to have some new blood.

We can only take nominations from the floor at the AGM if there are no previous nominations for that position.

If you have any issues that you would like to raise at the AGM, you can also email those to me before the AGM. **Arthur White President**

CHANGES TO DISTRIBUTION OF FROGCALL

The future: More colour, less environmental cost.

- FATS will distribute FrogCall as a colour PDF newsletter to all financial members via email. This will save printing and postal costs as well as trees.
- Please send an email to colour@fats.org.au with your name and email address so we know that we have your current email address.
- If you want to still receive a paper copy posted to you, then **you need to post** your request to FATS, PO BOX 296, Rockdale NSW 2216.
- August 2016 FrogCall will be the first emailed as a colour FrogCall PDF and not posted out as a black and white edition to those members who have an email address.
- October 2016 FrogCall and future February, April, August and October issues will only be sent as emailed colour PDF to all financial members. Those who have asked to stay with the paper version will receive black and white FrogCall by post.
- December colour editions will always be printed and posted.
- June black and white editions will be printed and posted with your membership renewal notices.
- Back issues of FrogCall are available at www.fats.org.au/frogcall.

CHILDREN AT FATS' MEETINGS

At FATS we welcome families with children, but young children sometimes find the public meetings too long or not to their interest. In the past they have been able to leave the room where we hold our meetings and run around on the lawn outside. The Security people from Sydney Olympic Park have advised us that this is not acceptable and is a security risk. In particular, what happens if a child is injured or abducted while outside? So we have been told that we cannot allow children to run around outside (especially without a parent being present).

In the Education Centre, the only space that we have where children can retreat to if they have had enough of the adult talk at the meetings is the kitchen. We are proposing to keep the kitchen area available for children to play quietly (this will also have to be supervised by a parent) during the meeting. Parents are advised to bring toys, books or some quiet activity that can amuse their children. The problem with this measure is that the kitchen is not far from the meeting hall and noise could be an issue.

Towards the end of the meeting, the children will have to be moved back into the main meeting room, as the kitchen will need to be set up for supper.

I am hoping that these changes in arrangements will work- but they will only work if parents plan ahead, have items to amuse the children should they become restless and also be prepared to supervise the children if they need to move out of the meeting room to the kitchen area.

We are looking for other suggestions to this problem. If parents have any bright ideas please let us know. We do not want children to be stopped from coming. They are the future of FATS as well as the future of this country. **Arthur White**

SAVING MARSHA

Marsha, the Striped Marsh Frog *Limnodynastes peronii* had a fight with a Croydon, Sydney, wheely bin. Her back leg was severely damaged. The Frog and Tadpole Study Group of NSW www.fats.org.au occasionally receive calls about injured frogs. Amélie and her mum called the Frogwatch helpline describing that a local frog's rear leg had somehow become wedged under her wheely bin - (trash can for our US readers). They drove it over to Monica Wangmann from the Frog and Tadpole Study Group NSW (FATS) who quickly called Exotics vet Dr Jayne Weller at the Animal Referral Hospital in Flemington, Sydney to see what could be done to save the frog.

Despite the odds, an amputation was successfully carried out. This is one very plucky little frog and despite being a ground frog she was jumping very high WITH her injured leg and is now 'boarding' with Monica – and still jumping when the mood strikes her. A great job by everyone...

See podcast interview with Monica Wangmann by Brian Pickering Producer VETtalk.BIZ INFO-TV.COM PetBiz FOCUS VETtalk are weekly podcast stories of a general nature. Text and podcast stories help improve veterinary practices and Pets On Hold.

Naming the patient: At first Monica named him “Stumpy” however Glenn Shea and others on FATS Facebook page thought that he was actually a juvenile female. So Monica re-named her “Stumpette”. Disturbed that it sounded like trumpet or strumpet, she was renamed “Marsha”, thanks to Leschinkohl Jode another of our 1,650 + FATS Facebook page members. Marsha is still very active, jumps very high, even with only one back leg, eats well but is very shy. See <http://www.arhvets.com/meet-our-team>

We hear frogs - usually at night... but it's not very often we see them. If things keep going the way they are, with our busy urban infrastructure growth and destruction of rural and urban bushland refuge habitats, we may soon stop hearing them! You can breed them in zoos and in captivity to save a species and learn about them, but in the long term, frogs belong in our eco systems.

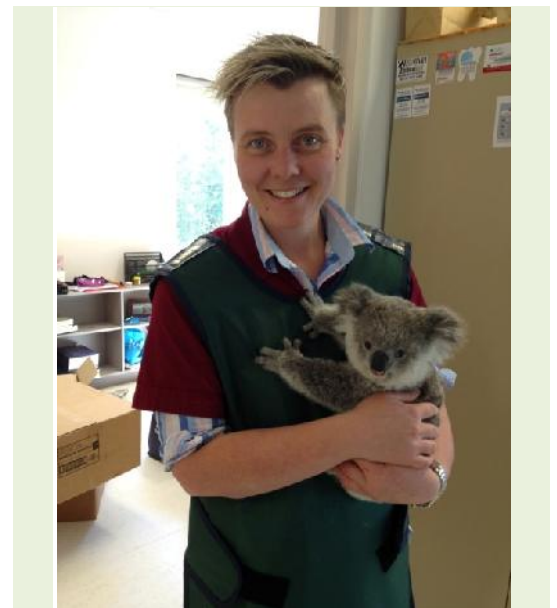
<http://www.vettalktv.com/podcasts/1088-podcast-urbanisation-threatens-our-frogs-monica-wangmann>



<https://www.facebook.com/animalreferralhospital/videos/10153373812102445/>



FATS latest frog rescue from Coles supermarket. Thank you Darren. This little, half grown *Litoria fallax* is just 1.5 CM snout to vent! Good spotting Coles.



Dr Jayne Weller



FATS AT THE 2016 SYDNEY ROYAL EASTER SHOW



Photo by Rob Burns, Frog expo entrants in the competition. (FATS were at the other end of building)

Many thanks to Sarah, Harriet, David and Kathy Potter and Ryan for all their preparation, set up work and talking to so many members of the public. The display was excellent, as always. We had loads of help from Arthur and Karen White, Monica Wangmann, Punia Jeffery, Jilli Streit and Marion Anstis. Hope I didn't forget anyone.



Robert Johnson, Punia Jeffery, Arthur & Karen White, Anthony Stimson, Brad Walker and Ernie Chan



Lt to Rt Brad Walker, Robert Johnson, Anthony Stimson, Karen White, Punia Jeffery, Ryan, Sarah Potter & Jilli Streit.



Ryan and Sarah



SOPA display



Karen Russell's frog



Punia and Karen talk to visitors



Steve Cross Expo Judges & organisers Lee Webley, Brad Walker, Fran Grant (Hawkesbury Herp Society), Peter Birch, Ernie Chan & Anthony Stimson.

FATS FIELD TRIP 4-6 MARCH 2016



Leaf-tailed gecko All photos in this article are by Jilli Streit

How was the trip?" Asked my colleague, "Dry eh?"

"Yes, dry and warm, perfect for snorkeling. The night were very dark - moonless - glittering with stars as you can imagine, excellent conditions for the Astro-photographers who had brought loads of lenses with them. They got great shots too. Linda's photo of the Milky Way was exquisite. Hardly any frogs though! There were a few whirring tree frogs *Litoria revelata* out and about in their bright yellow mating colours. Astonishingly some frogs were covered in parasitic flies! Karen got a memorable photograph of the parasites sucking red blood from a little yellow tree frog!"

It really was extraordinary to think that frogs were a delicacy for these parasites. The flies lay their eggs under the skin of the frogs. The eggs turn into maggots and then burst out of the frogs' skins, as flies. My colleague's face had blanched noticeably, so I changed the subject.



Namkhai and angle headed dragon

"We found a few other things," I said. "Spiders, two snakes, an angle-headed dragon, a red-backed toadlet and a couple of dozen bats!"

I tried to contain my enthusiasm at this spectacular haul, but he winked conspiratorially, "Don't worry," he whispered, "I won't tell anyone!"

And then, as he turned to go, I thought I heard him say, "Double, double ..."

It reminded me of a little ditty that, as far as I can recall, goes like this:

*Huddle, cuddle, hats and stubble,
Fire burn and sausage sizzle.
Fillet of a Gold-crowned snake,
On the barby boil and bake,
Eye of eel and toe of frog,
Ear of bat and loin of hog,
Adder's tongue and March fly's sting,
Lizard's tail and nightjar's wing,
Brew a charm to ban all trouble
Fill FATS trips with beer and bubble.*

(Apologies to William Shakespeare)



Seal rocks where we found the eagle rays

It is true that Smith's Lake never disappoints. If there aren't many frogs there are always other things to amaze. This time it was the Eagle rays *Myliobatis australis* at Seal Rocks that put on an unforgettable show.

Not far from the shore at the rocky end of Second Bay, uncountable numbers of Eagle rays were seen swimming in a graceful choreography. "There must be a hundred of them!" Punia proclaimed. "They just kept coming, swimming slowly around and around in a big circle."

“I’ve never seen anything like it before!” Michelle said. “It is one of those moments that you just won’t forget.” Luckily, Michelle took some footage with her underwater camera so everyone got to see the Eagle Ray Spectacular!

Aware that the lack of rain would keep most frogs species holed up during the field trip, Arthur had the foresight to bring along some harp traps to catch bats. Harp traps roll up neatly and fit into large PVC pipes that travel on Arthur’s roof rack. The harps get their name from the fishing line strings that are tied in a double layer over an aluminum frame, reminiscent of a harp.

The frames are installed in a bat flyway and sit up high on tubular legs. When a bat hits the harp the loosely strung strings stretch and the bat slides down, unhurt, into the soft cotton and plastic bags that are suspended below to hold it.

With the warm weather there were plenty of insects on the wing and the bats all went out for dinner. Most of the bats that we trapped were quickly released, but a few were brought into camp in white calico bags, for observation. These photogenic little creatures caused a great scrum of happy camera snapping.



Lesser long eared bat

There are more than a dozen species of micro bat living in the Smith’s Lake area and we caught three different kinds. The largest of the three was a lesser long-eared bat *Nyctophilus geoffroyi*.



Josie Stokes with lesser long eared bat and snappers

The lesser long eared bat is greyish in colour and endemic to Australia. It is a medium sized vesper bat found in woodlands and mangroves as well as agricultural and suburban areas. The Smith’s Lake ecosystem with its moist forest and wallum swamp is a perfect environment for this evening bat. Like most micro bats, the lesser long eared bat is insectivorous and during our field trip there were lots of grasshoppers, spiders and moths about. This particular little bat detects its prey with eyesight and echolocation. It flies quite slowly, using its vision as well as its long ears to catch both sight and sound of its quarry. It can also hover and has been seen diving right down to the water’s surface then launching itself straight up again. It tends to be solitary and often roosts alone under the loose bark of native trees!



Chocolate Wattled Bat and Little Forest Bat



The second species of bat we trapped was a little forest bat *Vespadelus vulturnus*. The little forest bat, which is also a vesper bat, is only found in South Eastern Australia and Tasmania. It is probably one of the most commonly sighted of all the micro bats but has similar features to several other small bats.

Little forest bats are tiny - most of them can fit into a matchbox, and weigh less than 4 grams. They have a wingspan of ca. 15 cm and are considered to be Australia’s smallest mammal. Little forest bats find their prey by echolocation. That is, they emit rapid pulses of ultrasound that are usually too high-pitched for us to hear. They eat their food, such as mosquitoes, flies and ants, while in flight. Sometimes they catch larger prey, like grasshoppers, in their wing membranes and take them back to their roosts to eat there. They roost in male only and female only colonies. A single pup is produced at the beginning of summer. When the weather cools down these

petite little bats go into a torpor becoming inactive to save energy.

Karen White and Praying Mantis



tiny – between 5 and 10 grams, with short broad ears and small fleshy wattles at the corners of its mouth.

Like the little forest bat, the chocolate wattled bat roosts in segregated colonies of males and females and hibernates through the cold months of the year. Interestingly, they are the last bat species to enter hibernation but the first to appear in the spring.

When we released the bats we took them back to the trap sites, warmed them up so they could fly then watched as they circled once to get their bearings and flitted off to their roosting spots.



Folding up the harp trap to take home

On Friday night we drove in our familiar convoy of cars, this time to the Grandis. Arthur had brought along some walky talkies so that the convoy could stay together. “This is Arthur, lead car, are we all ready to go? Over.”

“This is Emakiri, third car, ready! Over.”

“This is Miguel, last car, just need a pit stop, we’ll catch up. Over.”

“Karen speaking, lead car, we’ll wait for you, over!”

Besides being great fun the radios were helpful so that if the lead car spotted something on the road it could alert the cars behind. It also meant that no one got lost.

The Grandis was tall and stately, the forest around it was mostly dry. An angle headed dragon *hypsilurus spinipes* was spotted clinging to a mossy log. A red-backed toadlet *Pseudophryne coriacea* showed up rusty-orange in the leaf litter of the creek bed. Its “ark ark” call gave its location away and Josie and Peter gently turned over the leaves and forest detritus until they found it.

Pseudophryne coriacea is a small ground dwelling frog found along the coast from just north of Sydney to South-eastern Queensland. It has stunning markings, an orange-red dorsal surface with a thick black line that runs all the way along its body separating its red back from its starkly marbled black and white ventral surface.

In the *Pseudophryne* species, the male stays at the nest site with the eggs. The tadpoles hatch after heavy rains flood the site. They then develop rapidly into toadlets before their small, ephemeral pools dry up again.

Bat harp in the bat flyway, Arthur releasing the bats



The third bat in our harp trap was a similar looking bat to the little forest bat, enchantingly called the “Chocolate Wattled Bat” *Chalinolobus morio*. This little bat is named for the colour of its rich dark brown fur. It too is

Suddenly there was a racket in the creek bed. The children had discovered little lights glowing and winking up on the rocky walls. The warmth had brought the glowworms out! Bioluminescence is the strategy the female larvae employ to attract mates. The kids quickly discovered that as soon as they shone a torch on the insects to see what they looked like, the glowworms immediately turned their lights off and disappeared!

After all this excitement young and not so young froggers headed back to camp. In the mean time, some keen FATIES went off to see what else this warm, dry night might yield. Sure enough, they were not disappointed and, late in the evening; they brought back two beautiful little snakes.



Gold-crowned Snake

The first one, a gold-crowned snake *Cacophis squamulosus* was coiling itself *charmingly* through Karen's fingers. This slim little terrestrial snake was caught not far up the road from where we had seen the glowworms. Gold-crowned snakes sniff out lizards and frogs for a meal. The yellow ring on its head looked just like a circlet of gold. Although mildly venomous, these snakes are not considered dangerous to humans, a fact I had already guessed by the ease with which Karen was handling it.



Eastern Small-eyed Snake *Cryptophis nigrescens*

The other snake, an Eastern small-eyed snake *Cryptophis nigrescens* was rather a different matter. Peter, who opened the reptile box for me to get a better look said;

“Make sure you keep your hands well clear of the this one, they are capable of lightening fast strikes and are recorded to have caused at least one death.”

The small-eyed snake is an elapidae, that is, it belongs in the same family as the death adder and the king cobra. In other words, venomous, with a strongly myotoxic venom and not to be trifled with! The myotoxic venom causes severe muscle necrosis and is delivered through enlarged hollow fangs from glands located on its upper jaw.

Normally, small-eyed snakes feed on other snakes. They also like lizards and dragons but tend to leave frogs alone. The snake at the field station was active and beautifully fat, with its glossy black back and its shell-pink belly, it hardly looked dangerous! The next evening both snakes were released at the site of their capture.



Photo Jill Streit Trapdoor spider sitting in its burrow!

The dry weather had also brought the spiders out. Their eyes glistened and flashed in the grass and along the earthy embankments. At one spot in the forest there were large brown trapdoor spiders, every few meters, sitting at the entrance to their silky tunnels and ready to jump on any beetles, cockroaches or skinks that wandered past. At a glance, trapdoors are very similar in appearance to funnel web spiders. Both spiders burrow ca. 40 centimeters into the bank. The funnel web's burrow is distinguished by a surrounding mat of fine white silk and radiating trip lines that alert the spider to the presence of prey. Trapdoor spiders, on the other hand, only make a narrow rim of silk around the entrance to their tunnels but both spiders are highly successful ambush predators.

On evenings like this, mature male spiders leave their tunnels and go off in search of mates. Females never range far from their tunnels, especially if they are guarding an egg cocoon or a host of tiny spiderlings. After hatching, the baby spiders stay in the tunnel for some time and their mother regurgitates food for them. When an insect or even another spider walks past the trapdoor's entrance it pounces, injecting a fast-acting venom into the prey, and then drags its meal back into its burrow.

We left the spiders in their holes and went in search of the frogs that we knew must be there. We heard a few Striped Marsh Frogs *Limnodynastes peronii* calling and some Eastern Dwarf Tree Frogs *Litoria fallax* but on this field trip

most frogs simply preferred to stay at home and wait for rain.



Lace monitor in the kitchen at Smith's Lake, photos Jill Streit



Well, perhaps there were not as many frogs as we would have liked but, all in all, this was a fabulous and unforgettable Field Trip to Smith's Lake, once again. **Thank you Arthur and Karen!**
Jilli Streit



Photo Peter Smith *Litoria citropa*



Perons Tree Frog Photo Corinne Gaston



Marion Anstis and Henry Cook, last FATS meeting's speakers, Photo Phillip Grimm



Unwinding at the end of the last FATS meeting, Photo Phillip Grimm

INTERESTING FROG WEB SITE

<http://www.sgaonline.org.au/frog-ponds/>

Sustainable gardening

FATS MEETINGS commence at 7 pm, (arrive from 6.30 pm) and end about 10 pm, at the Education Centre, Bicentennial Park, Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush Bay. They are usually held on the **first Friday of every EVEN month** February, April, June, August, October and December but not Easter (Good) Friday. Call, check our web site, Facebook page or email us for further directions. We hold 6 informative, informal, topical, practical and free meetings each year. Visitors are welcome. We are actively involved in monitoring frog populations, field studies and trips, have stalls at local events, produce the newsletter FROGCALL and FROGFACTS information sheets.

All expressions of opinion and information in FrogCall 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.

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FATS ON FACEBOOK: FATS has over 1,617 Facebook members from almost every continent. Posts vary from husbandry and frog identification enquiries to photos and posts about pets, gardens, wild frogs, research, new discoveries and habitats from all over the world. The page included dozens of information files.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FATSNSW/>

RESCUED FROGS: seeking forever homes are at our meetings. Please contact us in advance if you wish to adopt a frog. Cash donation required. FATS must sight your current amphibian licence. Licences can be obtained from NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Office of Environment and Heritage. We request you join FATS before adopting a frog. This can be done on the meeting night. Sorry we have no EFTPOS.

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wildlifelicences/GettingAnAmphibianKeepersLicence.htm>



Thank you to the committee members, FrogCall supporters, meeting speakers, Frog-O-Graphic competition entrants, events participants and organisers David, Kathy, Sarah and Harriet Potter for an enjoyable year. The FrogCall articles, photos, media and webpage links, membership administration and envelope preparation is greatly appreciated. Special thanks to regular newsletter contributors, Robert Wall, George Madani, Jilli Streit, Karen & Arthur White, Andrew Nelson, Wendy & Phillip Grimm, Henry Cook, Marion Anstis and Bill Wangmann.



FROGWATCH HELPLINE 0419 249 728

FATS COMMITTEE CONTACTS

FATS MAILING ADDRESS: P O Box 296 Rockdale NSW 2216

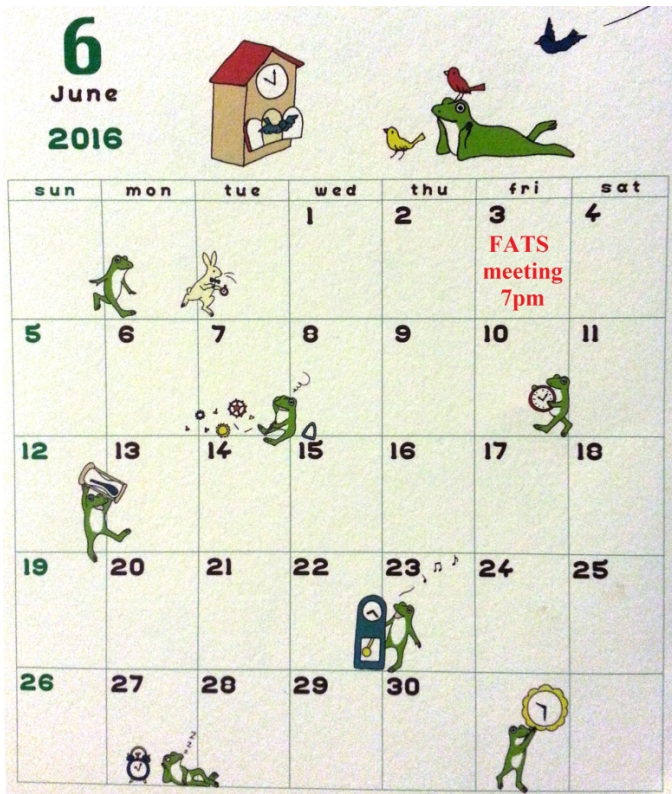
Arthur White	President	ph/fax (02) 9599 1161	larthur@tpg.com.au
Marion Anstis	Vice President and chairperson	(02) 9456 1698	frogpole@tpg.com.au
Wendy Grimm	Secretary	(02) 9144 5600	wagrimm@tpg.com.au
Karen White	Treasurer	ph/fax (02) 9599 1161	larthur@tpg.com.au
Phillip Grimm	Memberships, Website & Facebook Manager	(02) 9144 5600	phigrimm@gmail.com
Kathy Potter	Events Coordinator	0403 919 668	kathy@the-pottery.org
Robert Wall	Field Trips Convenor	(02) 9681 5308	rjw2008@live.com.au
Lothar Voigt	Frogwatch Helpline	(02) 9371 9129	lotharvoigt2@gmail.com
Monica Wangmann	Editor	0418 992 766 / 02 9797 6543	monicawangmann@gmail.com
General Committee members Andre Rank, Jilli Streit, Punia Jeffery and Vicki Deluca			



Photo George Madani – *Litoria rothii*



Litoria wilcoxi photo George Madani



Thank you Naoyuki for such a pretty calendar!

2016 FATS

FROG-O-GRAPHIC COMPETITION

In 2008 FATS conducted our first Frog-O-Graphic competition. This proved very successful as we have many creative people in the group. So start photographing. We look forward to seeing your entries.

FATS members' 2016 Frog-O-Graphic competition opens

1st May and closes 31st August, 2016

- Junior and Senior Best Frog Image,
- Junior and Senior Best Pet Frog Image,
- Junior and Senior Most Interesting Image,
- People's Choice.

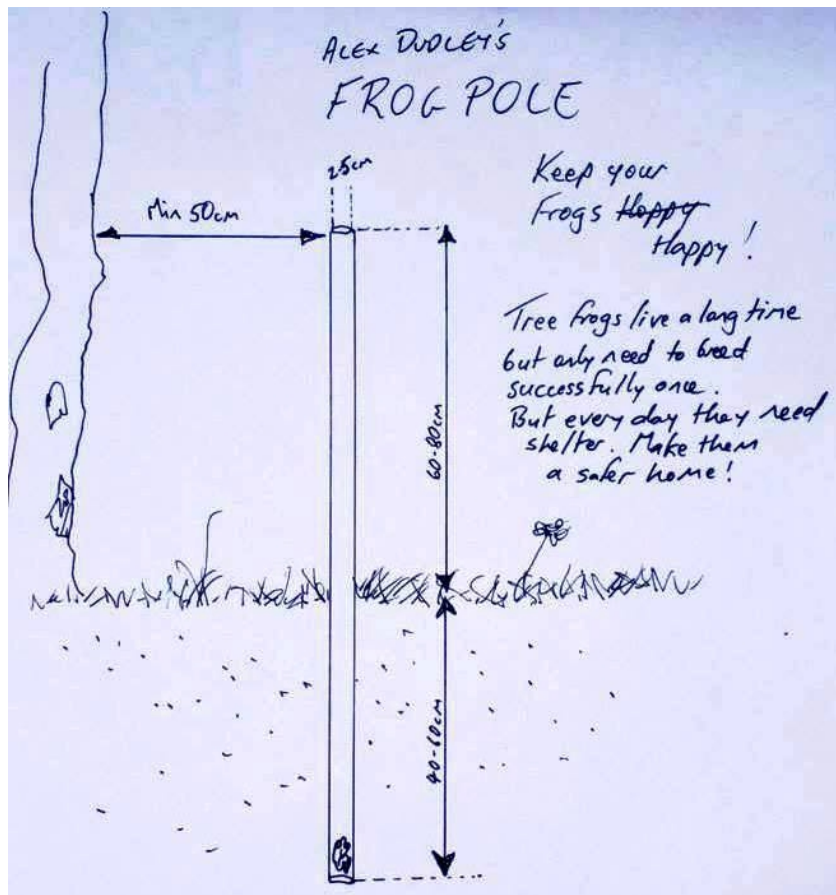
Category winners to be decided by a panel of judges. People's Choice will be decided by everyone present at our 2nd December FATS meeting. All entries are by email to photos@fats.org.au Please state: your name, confirm that you are a financial FATS member, age if under 18, whether the image is of a pet frog and contact phone number. Maximum six entries per person. Maximum attachment size 6 MB.

Fabulous prizes will be awarded for each category. Entries must be original and your own work. The winning entries may be featured in FrogCall, FATS 2017 calendar and other FATS publications.

Arthur White



ALEX DUDLEY'S FROG POLE



The idea is to provide tree frogs with a safe place in the general absence of hollows, where they have a humid microenvironment and access to a thermal gradient which allows them to escape extremes of climate, which is why having the pole go well into the ground is critical.

Alex Dudley active FATS Facebook member :-)