

FROG CALL



THE FROG AND TADPOLE STUDY GROUP of NSW INC.

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

Email: fatsgroupnsw@fats.org.au

Frogwatch Helpline 0419 249 728

Website: www.fats.org.au

ABN: 34 282 154 794

NEWSLETTER No. 199 OCTOBER 2025



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Feature article

The Common Frog

Rana temporaria

by Garth Coupland

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Front cover: Common Frog youngsters in amplexus in Woodastwick, Norfolk, UK. Photo by Garth Coupland

Join us at our next meeting

Date: Friday 3 October 2025

Time: 7pm (arrive from 630pm)

Location: Education Centre, Bicentennial Park,
Sydney Olympic Park,
Homebush Bay, NSW

How to get there...

By car: Turn left from Bennelong Parkway onto Bicentennial Drive, then turn left onto Step Up Place and park in the P10f / Badu Mangroves carpark.

Public transport: It's a 10 minute walk from Concord West Railway Station. Walk down Victoria Ave then Bicentennial Park Pathway.

Note: The path to the Education Centre isn't well lit so please bring a torch.

Everyone is welcome!

MEETING AGENDA

6:30pm Arrival, tea and coffee, raffle tickets

7:00pm Welcome and announcements

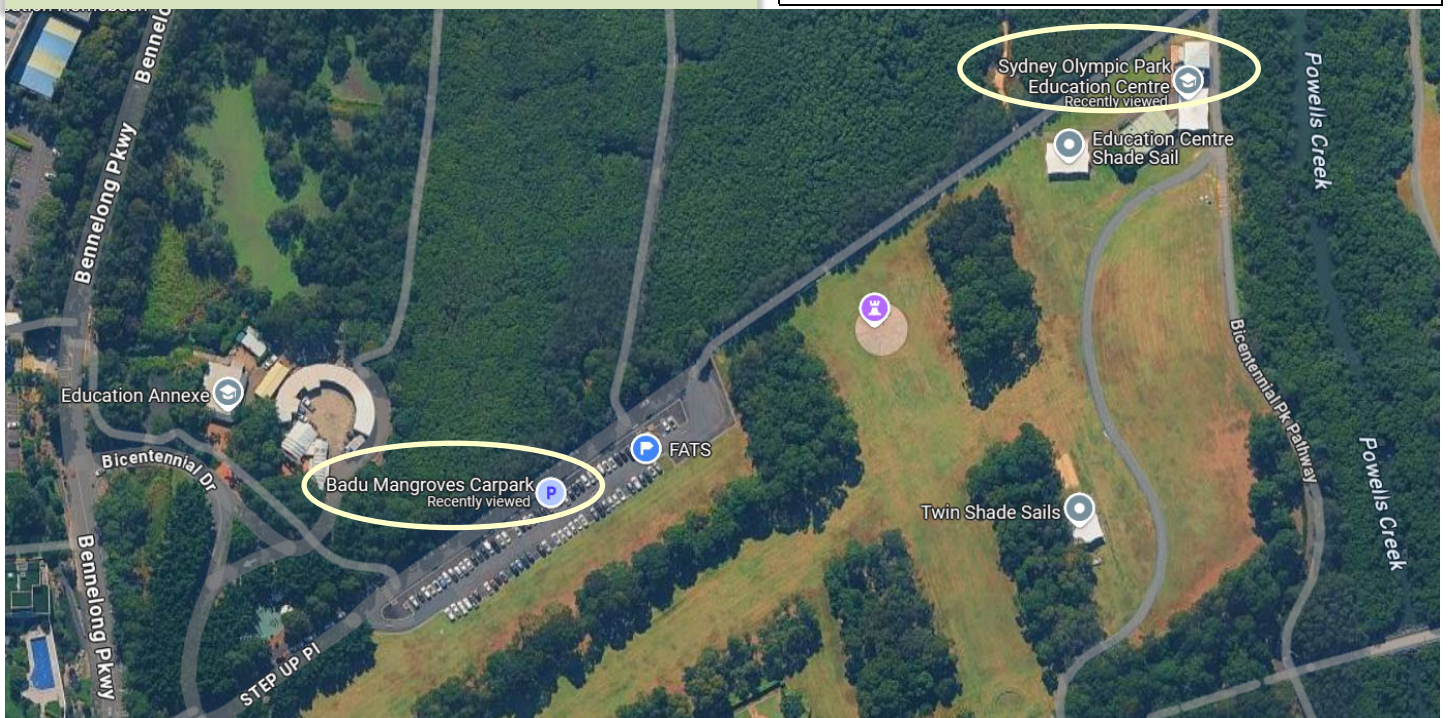
7:15pm Main speakers:

Ben Walker from UNSW talking about
"Animal sounds and their significance".

Marion Anstis speaking on
"The multitude of new genera proposed for Australian tree frogs"

8:15pm Frog-O-Graphic competition Peoples' Choice voting.

9:00pm Drinks and supper provided. Relax and chat with frog friends and experts. Show us your frog images. Tell us about your frogging experiences.



PRESIDENT'S PAD

Spring has finally come around after a long and rainy winter. The last two months have been filled with FATS exhibitions, including Science Week events at the Australia Museum, Western Sydney Parklands, and Centennial Park. We were able to engage with thousands of people during Science Week, including lots of curious kids, observing our exhibition frogs and learning about how frogs use colour to avoid predation.

In August we had another successful working bee at our Greenacre Green and Golden Bell Frog conservation site, with many helpers attending for much needed maintenance. A big thank you to all our volunteers.

In September we attended the Lane Cove Community Nursery Open Day to celebrate 20 years of the nursery's operation.

With the weather warming up, we are excited to announce upcoming field trips to some of our favourite spots, including our biannual Smiths Lake weekend away.

Hope to see you at our next public meeting.

Sincerely, Michelle Toms, President



Michelle Toms and Matthew Vickery at the Lane Cove Community Nursery Open Day

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Kathy Potter speaks to the crowd at the 'Science in the Swamp' event at Centennial Park as part of Science Week

ANIMAL KEEPER LICENCE CHANGES

Online applications for animal keeper licences will **no longer** be processed immediately. This change is in response to legal advice NPWS has received that licences to keep and import/export native animals in NSW are being used to facilitate the interstate movement of native animals for exploitation in organised illegal wildlife trafficking. Applications can still be made online but will be subject to an assessment process prior to a decision.

Processing times for applications may take up to 28 days so please plan accordingly. This change has taken effect on **30 June 2025**. NPWS will endeavour to minimise impacts of this change to legitimate and lawfully abiding native animal keepers. For further information and contact details please visit: <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/licences-and-permits/wildlife-licences>. Your understanding and support protecting our native animals is appreciated.

2025 FROG-O-GRAPHIC COMPETITION

The FATS Frog-O-Graphic photo competition has closed! The People's Choice category is voted for by everyone present at the public meeting on Friday 3 October. Winners in other categories are decided by a panel of judges. Winners are announced at the public meeting on 5 December

FATS MEMBERSHIP

Student: \$20 Single: \$30 Family: \$40

As a member you receive FrogCall newsletters, access to field trips, meetings, frog surveys, other conservation and community events, entry to the Frog-O-Graphic photo competition, and entry to Australian Reptile Park for the Herp Societies BBQ.

If you aren't a member and would like to join, please complete the membership form on our website <https://www.fats.org.au/membership-form>

If you are an existing member and you haven't already, please renew your membership as soon as possible either via the website, bank transfer, or at the next meeting. Note: memberships are annual and are current from 1 July to 30 June each year.

Account Name: Frog & Tadpole Study Group

BSB: 082 001 Account No: 313 033 719

GREEN AND GOLDEN BELL FROG SURVEYS

FATS will be undertaking auditory surveys for the Green and Golden Bell Frog at Sydney Olympic Park over the summer. If you are interested to volunteer for the surveys please contact Arthur White at arfawhite@gmail.com for more details

IN THE HEART OF INDUSTRIAL GREENACRE, A FROG SANCTUARY TEEMS WITH LIFE

By Caitlin Fitzsimmons 28 July 2025 SMH

A small triangle of former industrial land in Greenacre is now an unlikely oasis for Sydney's endangered Green and Golden Bell Frogs. The large, charismatic tree frog species – a misnomer since it does not live in trees – is green with gold markings that glint in sunlight. Once plentiful in Sydney and all along the east coast, the Green and Golden Bell Frog was devastated by the exotic chytrid fungus several decades ago.



Dr Arthur White from the Frog and Tadpole Study Group holding a Green and Golden Bell Frog. Photo by Janie Barrett

“When I grew up in Sydney, every kid had Green and Golden Bell Frogs in their backyards, but then in the late '60s, early '70s, the big die-off happened,” said Frog and Tadpole Study Group president Dr Arthur White. “I was about 17, and I lived near Eastlakes wetlands, so I went out to count them and documented the extinction in real time. I was so shocked that something like that could happen and no one seemed to care.” White later published his data in scientific papers and went on to become a herpetologist (amphibian scientist) and environmental consultant.

Five years ago, Strathfield Council was scratching for ideas about what to do with a derelict pocket of land, wedged between two concrete companies, a canal and the railyards, and overrun with lantana, cestrum and other weeds. White suggested creating habitat for Green and Golden Bell frogs, which had lived on the site until the 1990s when the old brick pit was filled in for redevelopment. Council eventually greenlit the project. It took several years to clear the land and construct the frog sanctuary – two shallow basins filled with bulrushes with three artificial ponds, one

for the adult frogs, one for the babies so they are not eaten by their parents, and one with brackish water to help manage the chytrid fungus. Netting over the top of the ponds protects the frogs from opportunistic ibises, and the habitat has also attracted common eastern froglets.



Dr Arthur White standing in a basin that is part of a frog sanctuary on former industrial land in Greenacre. Photo by Janie Barrett

To attract the Green and Golden Bell Frogs, a primary colonising species that can move large distances to seek out fresh sites, White and other volunteers had to advertise. “Once we had the site set up, we’d come in here every night, on dusk, for two hours with these amplifiers, and we’d blast bell frog songs out towards Bankstown, over the top of the factories and everything,” White said. “Five weeks later, the first bell frog turned up here.”



Coxs Creek, a canal that runs alongside the Greenacre frog sanctuary, is a tributary of the Cooks River. Photo by Nic Walker

Cooks River Alliance senior engagement officer Jason L’Ecuyer said the canal that runs alongside the site is Coxs Creek, part of the catchment for the Cooks River, an intensely urbanised river that flows south to Botany Bay. L’Ecuyer said the wider context for the project was the global movement to revalue and rehabilitate urban waterways and surrounding

ecosystems. A lot of people in the areas where the Cooks River looks like a river are really confused as to why it's so difficult to revive an urban river like the Cooks," L'Ecuyer said. But if you asked anyone around [Greenacre] where the Cooks River is, I doubt anyone would be able to tell you ... and most people wouldn't even know that Coxs Creek is here because it's been so concreted and channelised."

Dr Jodi Rowley, a curator in amphibian and reptile conservation biology at the Australian Museum and conjoint associate professor in the Centre for Ecosystem Science at the University of NSW, said Green and Golden Frogs had lost 90 per cent of their range. They were now near threatened at international level, vulnerable nationally, and endangered in NSW.

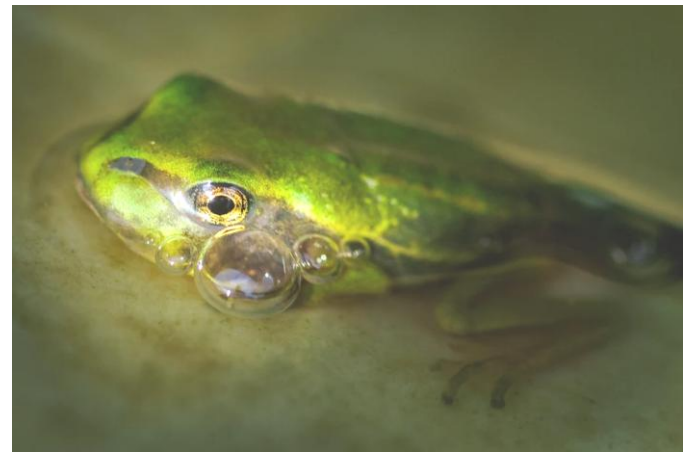


Jason L'Ecuyer from the Cooks River Alliance and Dr Arthur White from the Frog and Tadpole Study Group show one set of three artificial ponds covered in bird netting.
Photo by Janie Barrett

"Prior to the 1980s, the frog used to be so common that it was used in dissections at universities and high schools, and people used to catch it to feed it to their pet snakes, so it was certainly a really common and familiar species," Rowley said. "Because it can tolerate human disturbance a bit, it was around people's backyards and in the golf courses. It's a large frog that sun bakes ... so it would sit on reeds out in the open, it's beautiful, and it has a very distinctive call as well, so they were pretty easy to notice."

Rowley said chytrid fungus eats the keratin in the frog's skin – used for breathing and drinking – and mouth parts of the tadpoles, and that it hit some frog species harder than others. Frogs are some of the most threatened animals worldwide. Rowley said more than 40 per cent of all amphibian species were threatened with extinction, and Australia had already lost at least four, and probably closer to eight species of frog. Rowley said Sydneysiders could help by keeping their

cat inside, having a frog pond in their garden, and joining citizen science efforts to count frogs such as through the museum's Frog ID app or the iNaturalist website.



A Green and Golden Bell Frog at the sanctuary on a former industrial site in Greenacre.

Photo by Nic Walker

<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/in-the-heart-of-industrial-greenacre-a-frog-sanctuary-teems-with-life-20250722-p5mgyn.html>

THREE NEW PERUVIAN FROGS SPECIES

By Daniel Graham 27/6/2025

Scientists have discovered 3 new frog species high in the cloud-shrouded Andean peaks of the Cordillera de Huancabamba in northwestern Peru. The three frogs *Pristimantis chinguelas*, *P. nunezcortez* and *P. yonke* were found during a series of tough expeditions led by Peruvian herpetologist Germán Chávez between 2021 and 24. The team spent these years trekking through moss-covered forests, wet páramo (montane vegetation) and steep mountain trails, often in areas with no road access and rapidly changing weather. Their findings, published in the journal *Evolutionary Systematics*, show just how rich and under explored the Andes remain.

Thanks for sharing Sandra and Mick Banks



***P. nunezcortez* – the smallest of the three new frog species. Credit: Germán Chávez**

THE COMMON FROG

Rana temporaria by Garth Coupland

*I gazed into the valley, on one of those nights,
When the city of Anura shows two thousand shining lights.*

I heard the city purring, as a monster's sleeping breath.

The city of Anura, is restoring me to faith.

I gazed into the valley, at a thing I thought was lost.

The city of Anura does not appear without a cost.

I had travelled to the far side where I learned of second sight,

And found the city of Anura in the darkness of the night.



***Rana temporaria* male 8/3/20 West Runton Norfolk**

Cryptic colouration is a speciality of amphibians and reptiles. In order to find them you have to learn to find meaning in the shapes, textures and colours that your eye rests upon. The above poem is cryptic too, its meaning obscured, but only because I need to tell you a story in order to make sense of it.



***Rana temporaria* frenzied males killed female
Common Toad *Bufo bufo*
12/3/2021 West Runton, Norfolk**

I do not remember when I first encountered the Common Frog. I never have found, and therefore must conclude, that it never or rarely occurred in the central area of the village of Reedham, Norfolk, where I lived my first eight years; this part of the village being dominated by the sand-loving Natterjack Toad. It is almost certain that I first met the species in the Highlands of Scotland where my family holidayed every Summer. One very early acquaintance was a completely grey specimen with its foot below the ankle missing. This was found in my school pal

Jewson's old swimming pool. I brought the strange-looking creature home and put it in my outdoor Natterjack enclosure. Even partly disabled it escaped quickly, to be seen no more.



***Rana temporaria* tadpoles basking in sunshine
13/4/2021 West Runton, Norfolk**

In my case Common Frogs were never easy to find. They are generally nocturnal and I would be lucky to ever come across one at night. On mild, wet nights, particularly during February and March, they can be seen on roads, often mashed flat by unseeing drivers of motor cars. Please keep your eyes open for them! Walking through wet meadows or along marshland dyke edges sometimes produced a frog or two. Occasionally, over the years, I would be lucky and happen upon a colony of frogs during their short breeding season. At this time they are active during the day and will expose themselves to danger during the desperate race to breed. With their blue-tinged throats inflated, the males call, push and shove and amplex with the females amongst the egg-masses; those familiar mounds containing the black dots of life within.



***Rana temporaria* 12/3/2021 West Runton, Norfolk**

Usually not seen by folk as many individual frogs in an embryonic state, frogspawn, to most, is simply a slippery clump of jelly to be put in jam jars for observation of development and then tipped into a ditch – if lucky. Worse than this, frogspawn is often ignored completely as people allow their dogs to run and splash amongst it to retrieve sticks thrown thoughtlessly into ponds whilst on country walks. These ponds are home to countless creatures and I ask the dog-keeping world to refrain from allowing

your dogs to enter the homes of the newts and frogs and other such aquatic wonders. I fear that with much asperity I have given vent to my anger on folk who, when the breeding frogs and eggs are pointed out to them, still display a completely non-caring attitude; as if the World were only created for their use or enjoyment.



***Rana temporaria* 8/3/20 Beeston Common, Norfolk**

Of course, when I caught frogs to place in the amphibian pond that I had built, this was for my enjoyment. Am I a hypocrite? I believe that my interactions with other species have always been based upon a deep respect, a quest for knowledge and an insatiable interest bordering on love. I feel that this is the only way that humans should react with other species; other than leaving them and their habitats completely alone! Scientific knowledge gained through respectful study may help us understand how our species is affecting others and possibly prevent some negative outcomes of our interactions with them. With this in mind I hope that my selfish pursuit of knowledge of other species can be used in ways that benefit them. But, in the end, I have to admit that my studies and interest and interactions with other species are entirely selfish at the beginning.



***Rana temporaria* in amplexus
12/3/18 Beeston Common, Norfolk**

Unless one has diving equipment our view of frogs will always be whilst they are terrestrial or from above

the surface of the water. During the Spring of 2019 providence presented me with an opportunity to redress this situation. Some 80 frogs had been saved from a 'development' site in Norfolk and I was allowed to pick some prize specimens from the buckets in order to photograph them underwater in a specially prepared, habitat tank. How different from one's normal view! There they were, croaking, swimming and hanging in the water displaying the use of those wonderfully webbed hind feet and giving full frontal and ventral views that I had never experienced. My photographs revealed the intricate, skeletal structure of their digits showing through the skin. This I had never seen before.



**Ringland, Norfolk *Rana temporaria* 15/4/2019
ABOVE swimming female with nictitating
membrane underwater BELOW female underwater**



I observed the nictitating membrane, the third eyelid, being employed. This transparent lid is folded under the lower lid and moves across the eye when the frogs are swimming through water plants. This affords protection to the eye but allows sight to continue. Contrary to what I had read on this subject, the frogs generally only used the membrane whilst actually swimming and usually removed it from the eye when stationary underwater. The top and bottom lids cannot be closed independently, as with our eyelids. These only close when the eyeball is withdrawn into the skull, such as when swallowing a meal, where the eyeball pushes the meal down the throat.

On the subject of feeding, during the Summer months

of my youth, in those days of my amphibian and reptile enclosures, my daily routine was to collect living, invertebrate food for the frogs and toads in my walled, pond habitat. After dark I would stand by the pond's edge with a torch, seek out my batrachian acquaintances and feed them worms, slugs, and various arthropod species. After a while I simply shone the torch upon the edge of the pond and frogs and toads would swim across the water or hop from the herbage to join each other at the table. Having read of how unintelligent these creatures were I found it remarkable how quickly they learned. Not all that is in print is true or anywhere near the truth!

Over the years I have learned of and experienced levels of intelligence and sensitivity in other species that are generally unacknowledged. I think that since the end of our hunter-gatherer times we have lost connection with, knowledge about and understanding of other life forms. Most people are so involved in only the human world that they forget that we are part of Nature as much as the other species. And so, the all-pervading attitude of most humans now is that we are separate from that other thing – Nature. This is a complete fallacy and this belief is partly responsible for our ineptitude to realistically create strategies that could prevent Humankind from suffering a certain and ultimate destruction at our own hands.

Enough philosophy! Let us return to the City of Anura



Common Frog *Rana temporaria* 15/4/2019
Ringland, Norfolk ABOVE swimming male
showing employment of nictitating membrane
underwater BELOW juvenile female underwater



Mousehold Heath is a large area of woods, Gorse and Bracken that lies on the Northeast side of Norwich, surrounded by suburbs. In the middle of the heath, in a hollow, lies Vinegar Pond. During late February or early March, depending on certain circumstances, countless Common Frogs breed in the pond. I learned of this on my return from Australia and it was here that I discovered the City of Anura.



***Rana temporaria* in amplexus 12/3/22**
Mousehold Heath, Norfolk

In order to reveal the cryptic meaning of the poem at the commencement of this chapter, let us start by looking at the taxonomy that leads us to the Common Frog. It goes like this:

KINGDOM - Animalia (animals as opposed to plants and fungi).

SUB-KINGDOM - Metazoa (multi-celled animals).

PHYLUM - Chordata (notochords).

SUB-PHYLUM - Vertebrata (backbones containing spinal chords).

CLASS - Amphibia (which includes other orders such as Urodela or Caudata – the newts and salamanders - amphibians with tails).

ORDER - Anura or Salienta (amphibians with no tails when adult).

FAMILY - Ranidae (true or typical frogs as opposed to other frogs such as tree frogs or typical toads).

GENUS & SPECIES - *Rana temporaria* (the Common Frog of Eurasia).

And so we now see what the City of Anura might be!

I paid a huge price to emigrate and live in Australia for five years. The cost was measured in monetary terms, but also by the emotional turmoil that eventually brought me back to Norfolk - homesickness is a gentle term for grief. I left my grown, mature and wonderful children behind. However, along with my goods and chattels, I brought back the skill of second sight, learned from friends of the same herpetological persuasion as myself. This skill is the using of a powerful torch, placed between one's eyes, where its beam is reflected back by the

eyes of nocturnal creatures. Frogs, mammals, birds, fish, moths and spiders are revealed instantly by their eyeshine. Before, they would have been quite invisible to me in the darkness. The poem's cryptic camouflage should now be slipping off somewhat like a snake's sloughed skin!

I took my headtorch to Mousehold Heath on the first mild, damp night of Spring hoping to see frogs. My journal entries inform me that this was on 22 February 2018 and 9 March 2019. I have also noted that both the Common Frog and Common Toad require only a few minutes of light drizzle to bring them forth at this time of year if the temperature is above nine degrees. On the above occasions the frogs were everywhere and I found it fascinating how every individual was oriented towards Vinegar Pond as they emerged from holes in the ground and from under the leaf-litter. Some were already in amplexus. The migration to the breeding water had begun.



Female *Rana temporaria* 9/3/2018 Mousehold Heath, Norwich, Norfolk



***Rana temporaria* males 8/3/19 Beeston Common, Main Pond, Norfolk**

But it was on 10th March 2018 that I went to Vinegar pond at night. Standing on the hillock above I looked down with my head-torch penetrating the blackness. I heard the purring of hundreds of male frogs croaking together. I saw some two thousand eyes reflecting light as if I were gazing down on the city of Las Vegas in its desert valley below. It was beyond magical; a singular experience never to be forgotten. My faith was restored in that I knew that this beautiful and wondrous species would survive Man's reign on Earth and was doing well in our cities even if not so well in the countryside.



***Rana temporaria* in amplexus on land 12/3/2018 Beeston Common, Norfolk**

In Norfolk, the Common Frog will breed between mid-February and mid-March. They breed over a period of days rather than weeks then disappear from the water. Generally, the same spot is used in a pond, dyke or lake year after year. This, I believe, is due to the need for sunlight, shallow water or copious, surface water plants. I presume that warmth is important for egg development, although I have seen one colony breeding in a completely tree-shaded pond in Swanton Novers wood, in North Norfolk, which is contrary to the former conclusion. Different locations, even on the same heath, will have frog-breeding colonies at different times during the overall breeding season. The two ponds on Beeston Common, Norfolk, is a good example. The reason for this is a subject for discussion. Although mild, damp weather will bring frogs out and heading for their breeding sites, it seems that it is not the trigger for spawning. I think it is something in the water that the frogs detect, algae possibly, that commences egg-laying. Other theories abound and can be read about in other literature, but the fact remains that each colony has its own, as opposed to a universal, breeding time.

On sunny days during mid-April, after a successful breeding, a marvellous sight may be encountered around the edges of waters where frogs have spawned. Countless thousands of tadpoles, in swarms, are seeking the warmth offered by the shallows to apparently bask in the sunshine. There you might also find a Grass Snake helping itself to a snack while the bounty lasts.

Head-torching has truly opened my eyes to the behaviours of nocturnal animals. Also, of course, to the behaviours of diurnal creatures during the hours of darkness. I can now confidently visit a site and find frogs if they are there. Through the Winter their presence is revealed by eyeshine as they do not hibernate completely and can be seen abroad in milder weather. Even one eye, under a leaf, at a distance of two hundred yards, will give away a hidden anuran and lead me straight to it, defying its cryptic colouration as a defence against discovery.

All images in this article are by Garth Coupland

GLASS PYRAMIDS HELP REVIVE SOUND NOT HEARD SINCE 1980S IN CANBERRA

By Michael Dahlstrom Environment Editor 31/7/25



A small native animal with a distinct engine-like call is returning to Canberra. Around 180 glass frog saunas will be placed around Canberra's wetlands. Back in the 1980s, if you were living in Australia's capital, you would have heard bands like Cold Chisel, the Divinyls and INXS blasting on the radio. While most people remember their music, there's a natural sound that echoed through the night but has been largely forgotten — the startling motorbike-like call of a small native frog.

Canberra is famously a transitory city that attracts workers for stints in the public service, and most people living there in 2025 have probably never heard a green and golden bell frog. It's considered locally extinct in Canberra, and it's vanished from 90 per cent of its entire natural range, which extends from Queensland to Victoria. Excitingly, there's a major plan underway to reintroduce it to Canberra later this year.

How building glass pyramids could protect newly released frogs. One of the main problems the newly released frogs will face is a disease associated with chytrid fungus, which has caused the extinction of six other native species and dramatically reduced numbers of several others. There are high-tech solutions in the works, like genetic engineering resistance in amphibians, but a team from the University of Canberra is trialling something more analogue to protect the green and golden bell frogs it plans to release. Because the fungus thrives in colder environments, the plan is to build infrastructure at 15 sites to keep the frogs warm. This will involve building tiny glass pyramids, which will act like "frog saunas" to raise the temperature inside by trapping heat from the sun. Stacks of bricks that are painted black to store even more heat will be placed inside, giving the golden bell frogs somewhere to hide. Jarrod Sopniewski, an amphibian researcher at the University of Canberra, explained that if the frogs spend a long period in the cosy saunas, the fungus will be killed off. "Green and golden bell frogs really like bricks for some strange reason. Whether they're actively seeking out the heat or just looking for a safe

place to be, we don't know for sure," he said. The first frogs will be reintroduced in late November or early December at existing wetlands. In total, they plan to build 180 saunas and place between nine and 18 at each location. To help improve their chances of survival, 60 satellite ponds will be dug into the landscape, and salt will then be added to the water because it's known to kill off chytrid. "Hopefully the frogs will find these little salt baths and treat themselves when they're sick," he said.

Why introduce rare frogs into a city? It's not just chytrid that's caused problems for the frog. Habitat destruction and fragmentation, along with the introduction of invasive mosquito fish, have also contributed to its decline. "That fish is particularly bad for this frog because it likes to eat their eggs. And obviously if all the eggs are eaten, we don't get any frogs," Sopniewski said.



Salted satellite ponds will be dug around Canberra for the frogs to bathe in. Source: Jarrod Sopniewski / Simon Clulow

While reintroducing wild frogs into an urbanised environment may seem counterintuitive, it's hoped doing so will help excite the public about their natural environment. "The more people know about frogs, the more they tend to like them, and the more they care about them. So that's good for the frog," Sopniewski said. The Reintroducing Green and Gordon Bell frogs to Canberra project is funded through an Australian Research Council grant. It's led by the University of Canberra and supported by Healthy Waterways ACT and the ACT Government. On August 14, the university will be running a as part of National Science Week.

Forwarded to FATS by Graham Pyke.



GGBFs were common around Canberra in the 1980s. Source: Ewen Lawler

UPCOMING EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

We offer field trips in warmer months where members can visit different locations to see frogs in the wild. While we usually see frogs on field trips, they are wild animals and can be difficult to see depending on weather. Please book your place in advance by contacting field trip coordinator Robert Wall on 9681 5308.

❖ **Saturday 11 October 2025** **Dharawal National Park** **Leader: Michelle Toms**

On this trip we will visit Maddens Creek at Darkes Forest. Common species sighted are Blue Mountains Tree Frog, Eastern Banjo Frog, Stony Creek Frog, and Leaf Green Stream Frog. The Blue Mountains Tree Frog breeds in fast flowing water which is an uncommon breeding strategy for Australian Frogs. This attractive species has bright markings, with splashes of green and red, and varying levels of 'freckles'. Tonight, we will learn how to identify frog calls and locate frogs using a variety of methods.

Michelle has a Master of Environmental Science and works as an Environment and Sustainability Manager. This is her local site where a great variety of frogs, reptiles, and mammals are often found.

❖ **Friday 31 October to Sunday 2 November 2025** **Smiths Lake** **Leaders: Karen and Arthur White**

This is an overnight field trip to the UNSW field station at Bungwahl. Over two nights we will visit a number of locations including Wallingat National Park. We often see a great variety of species of frogs, reptiles, and birds. This is a popular field trip and it does book out. To reserve a spot, please email Karen White at white.kazzie@gmail.com by 3 October with the names of all people attending and which night you will arrive. Karen will advise if your request has been successful and send further details. To complete your booking, payment must be received in full by Monday 13 October. Please note payment is non-refundable. **Cost: \$25.00 per person, per night.**

❖ **Sunday 30 November 2025** **Annual Herpetological Societies BBQ** **Australian Reptile Park**

The Australian Reptile Park will host the Annual Herpetological Societies BBQ. Free entry for FATS members. RSVP by 10/11/2025 to sales@reptilepark.com.au with name, phone number, and number of people attending.

❖ **Saturday 10 January 2026** **Watagans National Park** **Leader: Michelle Toms**

This area is known for its large population of mixophyes, including the Great Barred Frog and Giant Barred Frog. These will be our target species for the night, and we are likely to see several of these super-sized beauties and their tadpoles. Tonight, we will learn about the differences between tree frogs and ground frogs, looking at adaptations that make each unique to their habitat. This is Michelle's favourite site where, in addition to frogs, we often see snakes, legless lizards, gliders, kingfishers, and an array of interesting invertebrates.

❖ **Friday 24 January 2026** **West Head, Kuringai National Park** **Leader: Rhys Cairncross**

Strategies for "waiting out" unfavourable conditions or conserving energy are common in the animal world. Some mammals, and only mammals, hibernate for long periods of time. Body temperature is lowered to maintain a dormant state, thereby conserving valuable energy. Most famously, bears wait out the harsh winter months until the Spring season, affording greater food opportunities. Torpor is a similar energy-saving strategy, but is maintained only for a shorter period, usually on a nightly or daily basis. Torpor is found widely across a range of smaller mammals such as micro-bats. It is also common amongst small birds living in high, cold mountainous environments. Frogs use the slightly different strategy of aestivation ("*as-ti-va-tion*"). Frogs, particularly those of the arid region, remain motionless for long periods of time, only to emerge when conditions are suitable. Frogs, it seems, unlike bears, are rather aware of their surrounds at all times. Tonight, we will look at the subtle differences between *aestivation*, *hibernation* and *torpor*. Rhys will discuss, with his specialist knowledge of our arid frogs, how these energy-saving strategies permit animals to survive in hostile environments, which they would otherwise be precluded from.

Rhys is currently undertaking his PhD and works as an ecological consultant. Tonight, he is taking time off from his monitoring work with the arid frogs of the Simpson Desert to show us his favourite frog site in Sydney. Rhys is also an experienced photographer of wildlife and will be on hand to answer any questions on taking better frog photographs.

Note: Rain is generally ideal for frogging, however in the event of uncertain conditions ie storms, hazardous rain, strong wind, bushfires, etc. please phone Robert on 02 9681 5308 to confirm the field trip is going ahead. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Please wear enclosed shoes that can get wet (gumboots are preferable), and bring a torch, warm clothing and raincoat. Please be judicious with the use of insect repellent as frogs are sensitive to chemicals. All fieldtrips are strictly for members only. Newcomers are welcome to take out membership before the commencement of the field trip. All participants accept that there is some inherent risk associated with outdoor field trips and by attending agree to: a release of all claims, a waiver of liability, and an assumption of risk.

