

Frogsheet Highlights - Spring 2000

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FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT - Ric Natrass

I thank the members, former executive and the new executive for the faith they have shown in entrusting me with the president's role over the next 12 months. It is however, only one role in many and there have been many members who have helped to build the solid foundations upon which the Queensland Frog Society now stands. We have grown from the fledgling Brisbane Frog Society of Lex' years and the focus he provided with his Frogs of Brisbane book. Our aims and objectives, refined and well enunciated during Peter Crofts' time, are ethically and morally modern. We are financially very secure, and hosted our own national symposium, a legacy of Ruth's steady hand. Recently we burst onto the international frogging scene, presenting our own paper at the Amphibious Diseases conference during Gordon's term. These are very hard acts to follow and as the F111 screamed overhead, dumping fuel in a long conical blaze during the AGM dinner, I wondered whether the membership really knew what it was doing. The next 12 months will tell. You will be the judges. But in the company of Rod, Jenny, Pam and you, I feel a lot safer than I might do in other circumstances.

Let the rains begin!

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Naturesearch Training

NatureSkills course

Sept 19, 21 6-9pm

Sept 23 9am-4pm

Qualifies you as a NatureSearch team leader

Frog I.D. and survey techniques.

Nov 21, 23, 6 - 9pm

Nov 25, 9am - 4pm

Qualifies you to be an accredited frogger for NatureSearch. Both courses are available for everybody not just NatureSearch volunteers.

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PUBLIC EDUCATION REQUIRED - By Jodi Jardine - Central Queensland

The last few months have been very exciting and challenging up here. One of the biggest challenges I face is one in which you are only too familiar with; people moving frogs and tadpoles around. I've had people bring tadpoles from Brisbane. A family brought 'their pet frog' from Bowen to Gladstone (it died). Another lady proudly told me how she breeds frogs and lets them go all around the place. I offered her information and reasons why this is not a good idea; she was not interested, 'she knew all about frogs'. Other challenges include people putting salt on windowsills to keep the frogs off. I'm told, "it works well, they don't come back". Were you aware that frogs make good Barramundi bait? I believe this is common practice. People pulling frogs eggs out of ponds and killing frogs "because they thought they were toads" exists here as well. Education is definitely required in this district.

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Keelback Devours Cane toad

Earlier this year, Bernie Wilson, a keen frogger and QFS member, found a keelback snake in his Sheldon garden. The snake was in the process of eating a cane toad. Bernie and his family watched this phenomenon for approximately two and a half hours. The toad appeared to have been rendered

inactive although it was puffed up. The snake began to ingest the toad by working one back leg into its mouth. The other back leg caught on the mouth and prevented further swallowing. At this stage, the snake regurgitated the toad and took both back feet into the mouth. It then began the task of swallowing the toad. We were able to watch the waves of muscular action pass along the length of the snake, as it laboured to get the body into the mouth.

Thank you Bernie for the opportunity to see this predation of a cane toad, and for the photos of this action. Have we any other readers who can share with us an unusual froggy story?

Ruth Wait

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Froggers hop to it at Toowoomba meeting

From Toowoomba Chronicle 31/7/00

Brachtracologists gathered at Laurel Bank Hall in Toowoomba on Saturday to talk over their shared love. They were all members of the Queensland Frog Society and, rather than go under their lesser-known latin moniker, they prefer to be called froggers.

Guest speaker was Toowoomba based Queensland Parks and Wildlife Officer Mr Peter Sparshott who told society members how to make a frog-friendly pond using suitable plants. Mr Sparshott said there were about 30 frog species found around Toowoomba and the Downs though none were unique to the region. However the Green Thighed frog, common in New South Wales, was first identified in Queensland at Ravensbourne in 1970. "In fact three months ago that species was recorded in the Helidon Hills," Mr Sparshott said. "It got us froggers into a bit of a frenzy."

He said frog populations were a good indicator of overall environmental health because frogs were so dependent on the aquatic ecosystems' health during their early life.

Anyone wanting to establish a frog-friendly garden pond should reproduce what occurred naturally by selecting native plant species.

A good method was to make a range of habitats with sheltered and sunny areas with rocks in which frogs could shelter. That will in turn attract other animals such as lizards. Lizards in turn attract birds.

AMPHIBIOUS DISEASE CONFERENCE

Held in Cairns at the end of August, the main part of the conference continued over 4 days - 2 days

where scientists, researchers, academics etc. presented their papers on what is currently known of the chytrid fungus and ranavirus. The following 2 days covered workshops and brainstorming issues. Listening to representatives from the UK, USA, Spain, N.Z, Uruguay and many parts of Australia was awesome - to discover just how wide spread this fungus is - saddening - 43 of our species plus the Cane toad have been affected. Unfortunately no one had any real solutions, but it is gratifying to see the networking being done to try and get one. A representative from the banana industry was also there to seek out a solution for the frogs that accidentally leave the farms - they want to keep them, of course. I was pleased, but rather nervous to present a paper which Ric Natrass & Kate from QPWS put together, covering what QFS is involved with as a community group. Unfortunately the only other community group was FrogWAtch from WA. We did not sit on our bottoms the whole time either - we had time to go frog searching and I'm happy to say I saw 6 rainforest frogs including the Waterfall frog *Litoria nannotis* and the Lacel-lid *Nyctimystes dayi*, plus a python.

I would like to thank Ric and Kate and Rick Speare, Harry Hines, Jean Marc Hero and Stan Orchard for their help while I was up there, to name a few.

One message was very clear after those 4 days - it seems that water may be one way these diseases are spreading and tadpoles are known to have the spores in