

PRESIDENT REPORT by Rod Pattison

I would like to thank all the members of the Society for having the confidence in me as your President. I will endeavour to fulfil the role to my best ability. Of course I am only one link in the chain and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the rest of the hard working committee and members for their support. It has been great to finally have good rain after such a dry spell. I dusted off my gumboots, threw the headlamp on and headed out for several good nights frogging. So far this season QFS has been busy with stalls, talks, answering phone calls etc. Although slowing down for the Christmas break, it will surely become busy again with the start of the New Year. The two camps (Goomburra and Stradbroke Island) we have held this season were quiet in terms of frogs but successful in terms of getting away for the weekend, in the company of fellow froggers. With a little rain and local knowledge of the QFS members, the Goomburra camp found the *Kyarranus kundagungan* (photo page 12) an unforgettable experience even for the most seasoned frogger. The camps offer a first hand experience of frogs and if you can find the time we welcome all members to join us.

On the political front QFS is engaged in the fight to save the Green thighed frog habitat at Joyner from being developed. It appears that mankind can put a man on the moon but is almost powerless to stop the destruction of the biodiversity of our own planet. 2005 is the start of the decade of Education for Sustainable Development as proclaimed by the United Nations. Water conservation, Waste minimisation, Energy Efficiency and Biodiversity, which of course includes our environmental indicator- frogs and their habitats will be the focus.

I still have meetings to attend but at this stage the developers' plans have been submitted to Council and the fate of the colony is still undecided. By the next Frog sheet we will know the outcome one way or the other.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Until next time keep those headlamps shining and good frogging to all.



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Most of the Co-ordinators now hold the “Frogs of Brisbane” poster and you can pick up your FREE (to members) poster from them.

Diary Dates



- Jan 22-23** QFS Camp Out to Mt Barney. A great site for a huge variety of frogs. Phone Rod or Stefan for details.
- Feb 7-11** Australian Society of Herpetologists SPARNZ Conference at Sprinwood. Contact Jenny for details.
- Feb 26-27** QFS Camp Out to Mt Archer. Please confirm with Rod or Stefan as bookings are required.
- Mar 19-20** QFS Camp Out to O'Reilly's. Please confirm with Rod or Stefan as bookings are required.
- April 10** Green Day - CJ Greenfield Park, Freeman St., Richlands. (this date may change to April 22 please contact Jenny for info) 10am – 1 pm
- April 17** Green Day - Parkland, Gowan Road, Stretton. 10am – 1pm
- May 15** Green Day - Kalinga Park, Park Ave. Wooloowin. 10am – 1pm

QFS will have the display and sales at the Green days.

New Members

The Queensland Frog Society Inc. welcomes the following new members:

June Tupicoff, Anthony James, Rebecca Willis, Annette Darcy, Sue Ayres, Anne-Marie Dineen, Karyn McWhinney, Klaus Gurra, Christine Burgess, Lorraine Harbison, Matthew Upton, Keitha D'Arcy, Janice Eckhardt, Glenn & Lisa Hagate.

Coordinators Reports

Caboolture

This past year I have lived two lives, one at Narangba, the other at Rainbow Beach whilst completing our house there. The result, lots of travel. Conclusion: easy and maybe lazy (?) way of frog ID is travel on roads in natural areas! This is something I have observed at Frog Society weekend trips, where usually you camp at some distance from where you know the frogs are! So I have some hints!

Hint 1: Drive at night.

Hint 2: Sit in the front and look out!

Hint 3: Don't run over the frog!

Hint 4: Slow down and stop when you see frogs to correctly identify the species.

The last hint is the one that seems to so far elude me! Like many I seem to always have places to go, need to get home to feed the kids etc. So I find myself attempting to identify the type of frog by its leap (as this is all I can manage to observe). For example the rocket frogs with graceful long jumps, or ground dwelling frogs with short jumps. This is no way perfect, and I still desire to one day have the time to stop and rather than smell the roses, say hello to some frogs!! Good luck with your endeavours on frogging. P.S with all this wonderful rain lately, I popped down to Burpengary Creek, a supreme favourite of mine to hear several species including: *Litoria gracilentia* (Graceful Tree Frog), *Crinia parinsignifera* (Beeping Froglet) and my favourite, *Mixophyes iteratus* (Giant Barred Frog). Can't wait for the rains to continue....

Pauline

Ashgrove

Nice to see the gardens and bushland respond to the great rain we have had in November. In my garden, the Tusked, Striped Marsh and Eastern sedge have responded well but so far I have not heard the Gracefuls which is a worry. I would be interested to hear whether other people have heard them this year.

I noticed that "Phil's Creek" in Bowman Park has had a good flush out and I will go and see if the frogs have spawn. A lot of the ponds there have been taken over by bulrushes but that shouldn't worry the Tusked and Striped Marsh frogs.

Have a great Christmas.

Jenny Holdway

Gold Coast

Seasons Greetings to all, well since the last report we have had our big move out to Tallebudgera Valley. It is quite a change from suburbia. Definitely too much work mowing a few hilly acres without a ride on, haven't even finished mowing the lot once and it is already long enough to start over.

Since we have been here I can say that I was happy to hear frogs around from day one. There have been Emerald Spotted Tree Frogs *Litoria peronii* calling nearby, as well as Eastern Sedge Frogs *Litoria fallax* with some paying a visit to the water pots that got placed along the path between the garage and the house. A few Tusked Frogs *Adelotis brevis* seem to have taken up residence amongst the bromeliads and clamshell that are around the big tree which is also in the same area. I have seen Broad Palmed Frogs *Litoria latopalmata* around the house as well as hearing Graceful Tree Frogs *Litoria gracilentia* when we had a huge downpour of rain, and of course there are Green Tree Frogs *Litoria caerulea*.

I'm sure that there are at least a few others out there and I guess that at some point I should actually have a decent look to see what others are around, maybe even in the rain. I guess that's one of the joys of being a frogger. There are unfortunately plenty of Cane Toads around as well.

I have had one injured frog, Henry, come in to care with a cut leg and some mild abrasions after he was found loitering around the Ford dealership. He has healed quite well and is due to be released shortly.

Karen has had three orphaned wallaby joeys in care, Curly, Larry and Mo. Curly is a golden swamp wallaby and Larry and Mo are redneck wallabies. All three are due to go to other carers for pre-release. Unfortunately I haven't been able to get a pre-release yard built here in time. She also has an orphaned Koala Joey, Ellie-May, in care at the moment.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Shane

Lockyer Valley

It rained and then it rained again.

The Lockyer Valley is looking green and for a couple of nights the frogs were deafening! On two mornings I had spawn in my pond and now tadpoles are munching on the algae. Thank you to all the new members who came along to the Goomburra camp. We had a ball and hope that we will see you all again at the next camp/s. I have been busy with South East Qld Western Catchment Group (SEQ WCG) and would like any members in the Lockyer valley who are interested in doing some frog surveys to give me a call. If any member would like photos of some of the frogs we see at our camps please send my an email and I will forward the files.

Lawrence Pearce

Cooloola Region

The Cooloola region is also looking wonderful and green. What was once a brown, cracking, crispy piece of land we called our block is now beautiful and lush once again. So lush that I can't get hubby off **my** ride on! We've shared our swimming pool with the Ornate Burrowing frogs, Striped marsh frogs, Scarlet sided pobblebunks and most recently Broad-palmed rocketfrog (thanks to Rod's expert id by phone). We are also enjoying the sounds of the Graceful treefrog, and have the Green treefrogs plopping around on the roof, around the yard and in our bedroom regularly. And how lucky can I be to have one of my true favourites, the Stoney Creek frog close by too! Some more rain would be very welcome here to fill up the water-courses and tanks. Wishing you all a wet and wonderful froggy festive season.

Leanne

Stradbroke Island trip report

by Shelley Mills

We all had a blissful time at Stradbroke Island. The weather was great and we camped right on the beach (Adder Rock).

All of us really enjoyed swimming at the beach and brown lake, It was so relaxing, what a special place.

There was not too much frog activity Saturday night although we did see & hear, *Litoria nasuta* (Striped rocket frogs) *Litoria fallax* (Eastern sedge frog) and *Uperolia fusca* (Sandy gungan) and of course no shortage of cane toads.

All I can say is I am looking forward to future frog camps and It would be great to see some new faces!



Fascinating frog finding by Island volunteer Rottnest Island Authority

ROTTNEST Island volunteer and frog researcher Courtney Wheatley doesn't mind spending hours in the water in the chill of winter nights studying the tailless amphibians – it's all in the name of science. And his findings have made it worthwhile. He has discovered that frogs on the Island have changed their growth rates to achieve metamorphosis before the water body dries up or salinity levels become too great for survival.

Mr Wheatley (58) has been volunteering on Rottnest for three years, and is one of hundreds of West Australians who give generously of their time to the Island and its 500,000 visitors annually. He started his volunteering association with Rottnest as a voluntary guide to which he committed at least two days a week guiding plus assuming the roles of secretary in his first year and vice president over the last two years.

“During this period I have also been closely involved with the training of new guides and conservation work on the Island's extensive military heritage and its replica pilot boat,” he said. “I am also a board member of The Rottnest Island Foundation which is very interesting work.” Mr Wheatley, of Wembley Downs, has managed to fit his volunteering in with his busy working life. His career has revolved around working with livestock, initially as a stockman then wool buyer and self employed stud stock breeding consultant. He also works in the private corporate field as company director and project manager for engineering technology enterprises.

Mr Wheatley's interest in studying frogs stems from an interest in the ecology in which we participate and his love of animals and the bush. “I began studying frogs in September 2002 and assisted with the RIA's five-year Biodiversity Survey a month later,” he said. “The data we are collecting from the Biodiversity survey is mainly of reptiles and frogs. This data is being collated and analysed by the RIA Senior Environmental Officer and will be presented in a scientific paper. “I began the frog research project because I observed that likely frog habitats appeared to be degraded through the high stocking density of Quokkas around these low lying, natural seepage areas. “I approached the RIA with a proposal to monitor and record significant events and habits of any frog populations that I might find. In order to gain an RIA Research Permit I had to first gain a CALM permit to observe and handle frogs within specific guidelines.”

There are three species of frogs on the Island - *Litoria moorei* – Western Green Tree frog (motorbike frog), *Heleioporus eyrei* – Moaning frog, and *Crinia insignifera* – Sandplain Froglet (squelching froglet) - all of which are found on the mainland.

Mr Wheatley said all the fresh water habitats in which frogs were found on the Island were ephemeral and hence particularly dependent upon total rainfall, spread or consistency of rainfall, water table levels and soil type. Salinity levels could also impact negatively on some sites. He said these conditions imposed great survival pressures on fertilised eggs and tadpoles. Fertilised eggs of the burrowing frog can perish before being exposed to sufficient moisture for the hatching of tadpoles and active tadpoles can perish as water bodies dry up due to retreating water table levels. “The burrowing frog tadpoles also require special rain events coupled with high water table levels for the ‘in-burrow’ hatchlings to swim and muscle their way from burrow opening to the water body. “The ultimate challenge for the tadpole is to achieve metamorphosis before the water body dries up or salinity levels become too great for survival. “The tadpoles on Rottnest Island appear to have altered their growth rates quite dramatically from those of the same species on the mainland (the Island has been separated from the mainland for approximately 6,500 years). “Some are metamorphosing in approximately 25 per cent of the time taken on the mainland and one species appears to hibernate in moist conditions under the dried out, hard surface during the six months of no surface water over the summer period and emerging the following winter to grow.”

Monitoring begins with the first heavy rains (April/May normally) and continues until the waters subside and/or evaporate (October normally). Observations are required twice a week and begin after dark and in the busiest period can take up to six hours per night. Mr Wheatley said the relative dry conditions on the Island and the porosity of the subsoil and in cases, salinity levels, associated with most of the frog breeding habitats combined to create a fragile breeding environment. Despite this situation, observations indicate at present there are substantial numbers of frogs on the Island, particularly the Sandplain Froglet and the Moaning frog. “In 2002, no tadpoles were observed to survive to metamorphosis as the spring was very dry and the waters dried up quickly,” he said. “However, in 2003 which had consistent rain until October, a large number of tadpoles were observed throughout the season and many were observed to reach metamorphosis. “Observations seem to suggest the high numbers of Quokkas which feed at the breeding sites and the resultant dung accumulation are not detrimental to the breeding of frogs, although study of the water nutrient quality and algae content of some sites may provide a different conclusion.”

Penni FletcheHughes at RIA WA & Louise Allan-Johnson

Toads here to stay, warts and all

by Brian Williams

Courier Mail Saturday 13th Nov, 2004

TOADS: They have a face that only a mother would love but, wow, are they successful.

Scientists expect the relentless spread of these critters will continue until they populate about a 10th of the continent.

And it could get even worse.

CSIRO wildlife and ecology division's Tony Robinson said yesterday if predictions of climatic change were correct, many more people would have toads in their back yards.

And unless an effective means of eradicating them was found, they would be here to stay.

"In the end it might be that we have to either come up with a biological control or accept the toad as part of the Australian landscape" Dr Robinson said.

The South American amphibian (*bufo marinus*) has populated about half of Queensland and moved into northern NSW and the Northern Territory, where it has been reported well past Katherine, about 300km south of Darwin, and along the Daly River.

The advance of the creature is creating concerns about the damage they will do to the Kakadu wetlands.

Toads compete with other wildlife for food and most animals that attack them die from poison they secrete from glands on their backs.

Dr Robinson said toads were expected to populate as far south as Port Macquarie in NSW and across the top end of the NT and WA.

If any toads were transported accidentally to the Perth region, they would also find good breeding conditions there.

If climate change predictions come to fruition, toads are expected to make it past Sydney and progress into South Australia.

Toads were released into the Queensland canefields in 1935 in the hope they would control the cane beetles. They hardly touched the beetles but took to everything else.

Prolific breeders, the 100 toads originally brought into the country bred into 60,000 in six months.

Oddly, people from Brisbane to north Queensland argue that numbers in long established toad habitats have dropped markedly in the last 30 years.

Natural Resources Department vertebrate pest committee executive officer Frank Keenan said there were many theories about this, including that the numbers had not dropped but people used to seeing them simply did not notice them as much.

Another theory is that any invasive species builds up a big expansion front before reaching equilibrium. It is also thought that natural diseases and parasites might be catching up with them.

Mr. Keenan said the most likely cause of any reduction was simply long dry spells.

"I personally think there are fewer around than back in the wet '70's," Mr. Keenan said.

While there have been some short-term control measures, the long-term strategy is to find a natural virus or develop a contagion that would kill them off.

Raising Questions About Amphibian Declines

In studying the dramatic recent global decline of frog and salamander populations, researchers increasingly cite emerging diseases as major causes. Among these, one particularly mysterious new pathogen, the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* appears to be especially lethal, having been implicated in massive declines and waves of extinction in Central America and Eastern Australia.

A report published today in the October 4 issue of The Public Library of Science, includes findings that may give important new clues concerning this pathogenic organism's behavior in the wild, and a step towards understanding how it spreads.

The paper, written by Arizona State University biologist Richard Retallick, Hamish Ian McCallum from the University of Queensland, and Richard Speare from James Cook University, finds evidence for the persistence of the fungus in surviving populations of *Taudactylus eungellensis*, a species that had suffered a massive decline.

The species largely disappeared from rainforest streams in the mid-1980's, but surviving remnant populations sampled in the mid-1990's show the continued presence of the fungus in 15% to 18% of the sampled frogs. Later investigation showed that infected frogs had similar survival to uninfected frogs.

"This shows that frog populations can persist with an endemic infection of the chytrid fungus," said Retallick. "The presumption until now has been that when a population is hit by this pathogen it is wiped out. It doesn't appear to be that simple.

"In Central America and Eastern Australia, the same pattern has occurred – the frog populations have been healthy and all of a sudden there is a crash and some species are wiped out entirely. In Eastern Australia several species crashed to extinction, among them the Northern Gastric Brooding Frog, which lived in the same environment as *T. eungellensis*." Retallick said.

T. eungellensis populations crashed but survived in remnant colonies totaling about five percent of the original population. The decline was not directly observed, but the remaining populations were studied in the mid-1990's and appeared to have stabilized. Frog toes taken to identify and study individual frogs were later found to show evidence of the fungus.

"We found chytrid on apparently healthy frogs, and some of these frogs were recaptured later," Retallick said. "Our records show that frogs with the fungus can persist for three years, but we don't know whether these frogs coexist with the fungus during that time, or clear it and then live as normal healthy frogs. Understanding that would give us some insight into how the fungus operates in the wild."

The researchers found a steady rate of infection from year to year, but a higher rate of infection in samples taken during the cooler seasons, leading the researchers to speculate that temperature may be a factor affecting the virulence of the fungus and/or the ability of the frogs to survive it.

While the Gastric Brooding Frog went extinct, and *T. eungellensis* suffered its severe decline, yet another species in the area, *Litoria lesueuri*, was apparently completely unaffected by the fungus, despite a high rate of infection in that species. This suggests that some species may tolerate the pathogen, which raises questions about how the disease persists and spreads from frog to frog and region to region.

"*T. eungellensis* seems to have been 'lucky' in terms of having at least survived the fungus," Retallick noted, "but another species living beside it -- the Gastric Brooding Frog -- wasn't. If you do have a situation where all the frogs get infected and die, does the fungus die out too, or does it persist elsewhere in the environment?"

"We don't yet know how or whether the fungus gets around in the environment and one possibility is that resistant species of frogs carry it around," Retallick said. "Because *Litoria lesueuri* populations carry high levels of infection of this fungus and the frogs show no sign of distress, this species may very well be a reservoir for the fungus."

Secretary's Snippets

I know I'm hogging the Secretary's page, but I have something to say, and here's a good place to do it....

I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the Committee, Co-ordinators and members who send in reports, stories, pictures, fantastic kids page, etc. etc. We wouldn't have a newsletter if you didn't send us your bits and pieces. So thanks again and keep up the good work!

Now we all have a story to tell about a frog. Eg., how we first became interested, where a frog has surprised us, our first up close encounter with one, how we rescued one, etc.

How many of you have had a frog land on your face while you've been asleep? Not me, but I know someone who has.

How many of you have gone out in the pouring rain, got drenched to the bone, mud on your clothes, scratches on your body, leeches in your boots – and found a frog! And smiled and cheered! Yep, its great, isn't it?

So please send your story to us by email or post. We'd love to hear from you! Please encourage your children too!

Leanne

Donations Accepted

The Queensland Frog Society Inc. may receive tax deductible donations of \$2.00 or more, property and bequests. Your donations will assist in research, education and helping to save our frogs. Cheques may be made payable to:
Qld Frog Society Public Trust Fund

*The wonderful colour heading on the Frogsheet has been printed for QFS free of costs by
ASCOT PRINT & DESIGN P/L
Phone 3266 6666*

Websites

Frequently asked Cane toad questions - www.austmus.gov.au/herpetology/faq/cane_toad.htm

How about a frog quiz?
<http://www.sheppstc.org.au/education/frogs/facts/quiz.html>

QFS Trust Fund



Balance is \$4921.19



The Qld Frog Society would like to wish you all a very hoppy, safe, jolly and joyous Christmas and New Year.

September 06, 2004

AUTHORITIES have captured a rogue cane toad in Darwin's central business district but do not believe the find signals a large-scale invasion of the pests.

The male toad was found in a garden of a city residence today, Parks and Wildlife said.

"The toad found today is what we call a hitchhiker," wildlife conservation officer Keith Saalfeld said.

"It's more likely the toad arrived in town by stowing itself away on a vehicle and hitching a ride into Darwin."

Cane toads have marched across Australia from Queensland, where they were introduced in the 1930s to kill pests in the cane fields, to northern New South Wales and across into the Northern Territory.

The front line of toads is near the town of Adelaide River, about 100km south of Darwin.

They are expected to arrive in Darwin this wet season, he said.

The poisonous toads have already ravaged the world heritage-listed Kakadu National Park and east Arnhem Land, killing everything from crocodiles to quolls as they head north to Darwin.

Frogs and toads are our companions on earth, as they have been for countless centuries. They live in the stories and myths of almost every human culture, taking on almost every role conceivable, from the trickster, to the devil, to the mother of the universe. The human imagination, with its need for meaning, its hunger for stories, casts and recasts frog and toad as major characters in the unfolding story of the world. But as human population growth destroys more and more of their habitat, as their numbers diminish from causes still mysterious to us, we hear less and less from these companions. What richness will our stories lose when we no longer hear these spirit voices at all, not because we have lost our fascination for them, but because the woods and ponds are literally silent and empty? Who will populate our mythologies when these creatures are gone? Perhaps we will be left with only one story: the story of loss.

From http://www.exploratorium.edu/frogs/folklore/folklore_4.html



The Amazing Adaptable Frog

Imagine traveling back through time millions of years to the age of the dinosaurs. Pterodactyls glide above a soggy marsh. Nearby, a colossal 80-ton Brachiosaurus munches on a tree. On the ground at its feet, something strangely familiar hops by: a frog.

Surprised? Few people realize just how ancient frogs are. For 190 million years, the ancestors of modern frogs have roamed (if not ruled) the earth, looking much the same as they do today. The secret to their success is their amazing adaptability.

As amphibians, frogs have one webbed foot in each of two worlds. The advantages of this double life are clear to see: Are land predators giving you trouble? Dive into the water. Not enough to eat in the pond? Hop out and see what they're serving on shore.

Frogs have evolved to live in an astounding variety of climates. They can be found just about anywhere there's fresh water, from the desert to the Arctic, on all continents except Antarctica. Though they thrive in warm, moist tropical climates, frogs also live in deserts and high on 15,000 foot mountain slopes. The Australian water-holding frog is a desert dweller that can wait up to seven years for rain. It burrows underground and surrounds itself in a transparent cocoon made of its own shed skin.



To learn more about the wood frog, visit ["Cold-Blooded Solutions to Warm-Blooded Problems."](#) Photo courtesy of Dr. Kenneth Storey.



Ichthyostega, prehistoric predecessor to the modern frog, lived 370 million years ago during the Devonian Period. Sometimes referred to as "the first four-legged fish," skeletal remains of this earliest-known amphibian were first discovered in East Greenland. Illustration by Khristine A. Page.

Like all amphibians, frogs are cold-blooded, meaning that their body temperatures change with the temperature of their surroundings. When temperatures drop, some frogs dig burrows underground or in the mud at the bottom of ponds. They hibernate in these burrows until spring, perfectly still and scarcely breathing. Wood frogs can live north of the Arctic Circle, surviving for weeks in a frozen limbo state. This frog uses glucose in its blood as a kind of antifreeze that concentrates in its vital organs, protecting them from damage while the rest of the body freezes solid.

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The Mary River Catchment Frog Forum held at the Bellbunya Lodge, Ghurella, had a great roll up for their frog information day.

Naomi Doak from the Griffith University began the morning by informing us about the declines in the global frog populations. A huge 36% of our frog species in Australia have been affected by viruses, environmental factors, global warming etc. Interestingly Australia, America, Africa and Spain have all been infected with chytrid fungus.

Next up came Ed Meyer with his great karaoke rendition of some of the frog calls heard around the local area. Ed also gave us lots of information on how to successfully identify frogs.

Harry Hines spoke to us regarding the research needs relevant to the Mary River Catchment area, as well as the globes needs for research for now and the future. I sat on the edge of my chair as Greg Czechura gave us his recount from the 1970's of the Southern Gastric Brooding frog and the Mount Glorious Torrent frog - now both extinct. It's hard to believe that the Mount Glorious Torrent frog was thick on the ground back in the early 70's. This goes to show us that it is extremely important as froggers to never discount the seemingly large populations of some species of frogs at this time.

Back in the early 70's nobody thought there was any need to study the Brooding and Torrent frogs as they seemed to have such a strong hold in the Conondale and Blackall Ranges.

Lastly, Eva Ford, one of the people directly involved in the Mary River Catchment Committee, explained about their efforts of repairing the waterways and river banks of the Mary River Catchment area, in a hope to return highly grazed areas along the banks of the Mary River and its tributaries, back to the way Mother Nature had intended it to be.

The big message I got from the day, was to educate and bring awareness into our communities using frogs as a barometer to indicate the state of our delicate environment.

This Christmas, how about we send Chrissy cards of frogs wearing Santa caps, as well as talking to our friends and relies, while carving the Christmas turkey, about the importance of our froggy friends. May the festive season endow everybody with many new frog sightings and stories.

Cheers!

Trish Espin (Northern Sunshine Coast Co-ordinator)

Red & Yellow Mountainfrog



This photo is of *Kyarranus kundagungan* (Red & Yellow Mountainfrog) found on the Goomburra camp out.

If undeliverable, return to
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