

# FROGSHEET

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## KROOMBIT TOPS: A SKY-ISLAND OF CONTRASTS FEBRUARY 2020 FROGSEARCH TRIP REPORT



Above - December 2019. Below - February 2020 at Kroombit Creek. Credit: J.Hooper

In November 2019, the Queensland Frog Society received funding from the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action Grant to undertake surveys and monitoring for threatened frog species at Kroombit Tops, including the critically endangered Kroombit Tinkerfrog and endangered Kroombit Treefrog. For the next 3 years, QFS volunteers will be travelling to

Kroombit Tops National Park in spring and summer to conduct surveys for these and other frog species, including the vulnerable Tusked Frog. The first of these surveys was undertaken in December of 2019, when a team of 8 QFS members travelled to Kroombit Tops National Park to search for frogs under drier-than-ideal conditions (see the Summer 2020 *Frogsheet* for a summary of this trip).



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## RIC NATTRASS RESEARCH GRANT

The QFS Trust Fund was created with the purpose to help save QLD frogs through education and research by means of this Research Grant, and now stands at **\$5,176.39** (- \$1,378.21 since Autumn edition)

In February this year, QFS volunteers returned to Kroombit Tops National Park to conduct additional surveys for Kroombit's threatened frogs. As we neared the national park, the contrast in weather conditions from the December 2019 Kroombit Frogsearch became very obvious, as conditions this trip were much wetter, and far more suitable for detecting our target species!



Contrast in conditions at the barracks.  
Top - Dec 2019, Bottom - Feb 2020. Credit: J. Hooper

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**19-21 Sept 2020 - (Rescheduled) QLD Garden Expo** at Nambour Showgrounds. QFS Display & Sales.

**31 Oct 2020 - QFS Annual General Meeting.** Down-fall Creek Bushland Centre, McDowell. AGM begins 10am

Keep updated via E-news Emails & our Facebook.

## FROG QUESTIONS EMAIL

Email questions [\[at\] qldfrogs.asn.au](mailto:qldfrogs.asn.au) with your frog and toad questions

## FROG HABITAT WORKING BEES

**Bowman Park, Bardon**

First Wednesday and Sunday of each month, during the morning. Contact Phil for more info and/or visit <https://www.facebook.com/bowmanparkfroghabitatgroup/>



The contrasting view of Kroombit Tops in the distance.  
Credit: J. Hooper

Frog activity at Kroombit Tops, including around our campsite, was well up compared with December 2019 and a good variety of frogs species were heard and seen during this trip, including the elusive and highly endangered Kroombit Tinkerfrog.

## WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Samantha Coulson, Glenn Chettle, Wendy Richardson, Vanessa Lucy, Michael Russell, Matisse Jacobs, Kathryn Russell, Allison Hamilton, Sasha Bullen, Anita Smyth, Wills Family, McAlister Family & Jim Carlton.

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR POSITION VACANT

We're seeking a new Editor to produce our *Frogsheet* newsletter on a quarterly basis.

As Editor, you'll be responsible for:

- Sourcing of content for the newsletter; and
- Layout of all content in the newsletter so that it is visually pleasing and straight-forward to read.

We welcome a fresh newsletter design, too!

Please email editor [\[at\] qldfrogs.asn.au](mailto:qldfrogs.asn.au) to express your interest or request further information.





**Kroombit Tinkerfrog (*Taudactylus pleione*) Credit: E. Meyer**

During the February 2020 Kroombit Frogsearch, Kroombit Tinkerfrogs were recorded calling in low numbers at a total of 4 sites, while the Kroombit Treefrog was recorded in low-to-moderate numbers at a further 3 sites. The tusked frog, another of our target species, was recorded in low abundance at a couple of sites.



**Ed and Harry testing an automated sound recorder. Credit: J. Hooper**

Automated sound recorders which we deployed in December 2019 to capture frog calls over summer were also retrieved during our February trip to Kroombit Tops. Preliminary analysis of call recordings shows these devices have successfully captured calls of the Kroombit Tinkerfrog at a subset of sites which the species was recorded at during surveys in December 2019 and February 2020. Recordings from these devices will be analysed further to more accurately gauge the current abundance of Kroombit Tinkerfrogs at these sites.

The deployment of sound recorders to quantify the

abundance of Kroombit Tinkerfrogs is critical to improving our understanding of the current abundance and distribution of this highly endangered species. Additional recording units have therefore been purchased by QFS for deployment at sites within Kroombit Tops National Park on the next Kroombit Frogsearch in late November/early December of this year. If you are interested in joining us for this next round of surveys and/or subsequent surveys in 2021 and 2022 then contact our Events and Initiatives Coordinator Jono Hooper for further details at [events\\_initiatives@qldfrogs.asn.au](mailto:events_initiatives@qldfrogs.asn.au).



**Feb 2020 Kroombit FrogSearch Team (left to right, back: Daniel, Coen, Jono, Ben, Harry, Tony. Front: Lee-Anne, Hunter, Mike, Saskia). Also one of the last photographed group gatherings before COVID-19 restrictions! Credit: D. McCawley**



**Contrasting conditions at Kroombit; view from above the barracks. Credit: J. Hooper**

For those of you that are unable to join us in the field, there are opportunities for QFS volunteers to support this project by assisting with the analysis of call recording from automated recording devices (more on this later). You can also experience the sights and sounds of Kroombit Tops (including calls of the Kroombit Tinkerfrog) from home by logging on to the QFS website and

accessing the 360 degree, surround-sound, virtual reality tool created by QFS member (and former QFS president) Jono Hooper. Be sure to check it out!

Dr Ed Meyer

## QFS LAUNCHES VIRTUAL REALITY FROGGING EXPERIENCE

**W**e have recently released a new interactive educational tool on our website for adults and children!

Members can explore the habitat of 11 south-east QLD frog species and find the frogs within them – right from your desktop or smartphone! There are four very different frog habitats to explore and learn about, each featuring the frog species that call them home, including several threatened species. Take a look around the 360° view of each habitat and turn up your speakers to hear the calls of each frog living there.

For the FULL experience, there is the option of viewing the habitats through a virtual reality (VR) headset. These are very affordable devices to purchase or you can make your own as a fun project with the kids – <https://arvr.google.com/cardboard/get-cardboard/>.



The tool was launched during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home orders, but with winter on it's way, why not go 'frogging' online and learn about our frogs and their natural environment with this interactive tool!

To access the tool, login to [qldfrogs.asn.au](http://qldfrogs.asn.au) using your username and password found at the top-right corner of QFS emails.

## PRESIDENT REPORT

**I**n these strange times with the COVID-19 situation I hope everyone has managed to stay well and cope with the new regime we are living under presently. Most days I have bouts of wonder about how much life has changed and then other bouts about how quickly we all seem to have adapted to most of the new restrictions. Interesting times are still ahead for all of us.

On to more mundane matters – Due to the increased expense in postal and paper costs (plus to actually save a couple of trees) the committee has decided to send out electronic receipts by email for your paid 2021 membership fees. If you wish to receive a snail mail receipt, please let Jenny know.

As the end of the financial year is nearing, I wish to take this opportunity to put in a plug for the QFS Public Trust Fund. Donations to this Fund are Tax Deductible. It is due to the generous donations of our members that we are able to maintain the Ric Nattrass annual scholarship of \$1,500. Being able to support young people in their endeavours to conduct amphibian research is one of the most valuable activities of this Society.

Jennifer Singfield

## TOTALLY WILD GOES FROGGING WITH QFS

**E**arlier this year we took Channel 10's kids show Totally Wild and host Ranger Stacey out looking for frogs in the Sunshine Coast hinterland!

The episode aired on 22 May 2020 on 10 Peach and is available to watch online at <https://10play.com.au/totally-wild/episodes/season-26/episode-103/tpv200518wzphd> at the 17 minute mark (or at the second yellow bar of the video).

**This is a friendly reminder that memberships are due for renewal for the next financial year.**

Your ongoing membership and financial support allows us to undertake the Kroombit Tops FrogSearch project and gives our local frogs a voice in the community.

Details on how to renew will be sent via email.



## EASTERN SUBURBS COORDINATOR REPORT

The restoration of the two frog breeding ponds at Hawthorne Park is so far a success. It has been a long 18 month project to get past all of the council barriers to meet the staff who can actually make a difference.

Last month I met onsite with the local BCC habitat officer Daryl Evans and one of his parks and maintenance colleagues whose name now escapes me. It was agreed that the ponds were worthwhile to be rehabilitated with digging out all of the wood chip mulch that had filled in the ponds for the last several years and substantial replanting.

Nothing seemed to happen for several weeks and so one Sunday afternoon I went down to the park with shovels in hand and spent three hours digging out a 2m x 2m x 50cm hole in the centre of the original pond site. There was the more than usual 'Covid19 out walking' traffic on the adjacent path and some people stopped to talk to the oddly dressed, dirty, sweaty, man digging a hole in the park and I spruiked the Frog Society prompting the BCC to act on the dilapidated ponds.

The next morning I got a call from Daryl asking me if I knew anything about the pond being dug out and confessed to my Sunday excavations. He was very grateful for my efforts as it saved them some time and I also confirmed that another part of the council was not also doing work on the site.

The two ponds have now been dug out again by the BCC and signage installed that the site is being rehabilitated. The next steps will be lining the ponds with river stones and planting out in depth to protect the ponds from their only known predator – people.

I will keep you updated with progress.

Peter Crofts

## BROOKFIELD COORDINATOR REPORT

Hi all,

We are starting our working bees again at Bowman Park and will be following COVID-19 safe guidelines. Please contact me if

you would like me or the Secretary to send them to you.

We will plan for some weekend working bees during the rest of 2020 and I will let you know when this will take place in advance.

If you are not on my email list please let me know that you are interested in helping out at Bowman Park, Bardon. Cheers, Phil Bird

## AND THE RAIN CAME - RIGHT ON QUE! MARY RIVER COORDINATOR REPORT

It was suggested that we change the month, or extend the period, for Find a Frog in February after the hottest, driest February on record in 2017. It happened to be the first time we held FFF and only about 400 records came trickling in over the month. Luckily we didn't have other years to compare the records to, so it seemed perhaps a passable outcome and a good practice run.

Then came 2018, with rain, with better preparation and better uptake by the community of the Mary River and coastal catchments. And then came over 2,300 records of our fine froggy friends! In 2019 around 1,300 records were submitted; less due to lower and patchy rain across the program area. But we didn't expect the frog traffic of February 2020! Having finalised the data we can report that a whopping 6165 records (2500 from one person who monitored her property every day during February!) were submitted. We now know that we are generating a useful dataset by sticking to a particular time of the year. The good and bad conditions for frog detection tell their own story of persistence in adversity (we hope) and proliferation when conditions are most favourable.

Most people from this part of the world know that rain = frogs. Or rather, rain = frog noise! We are lucky to live in a sub-tropical region that typically receives good rainfall during the warmer months, where a variety of ecosystems and habitats still remains and where the resultant species richness of frogs is relatively high (around 45 species – compare that to Ireland's two species!). Many of the species we encounter have adapted to variable rainfall conditions and respond quickly to reproduce following events that create

temporary water bodies. Not many species rely on waterways with permanent, flowing water however, they too respond to the sniff of rain.

But it's not all about the number of frogs. What's interesting is that this year there was a jump in the number of species reported. Two new species were recorded; the vulnerable *Litoria onlongburensis* (Wallum sedgefrog) and *Litoria brevipalmata* (Green-thighed frog). More records (about 380) were also submitted through FrogID from 146 Find a Frog group members through their phone app.

Some interesting submissions:

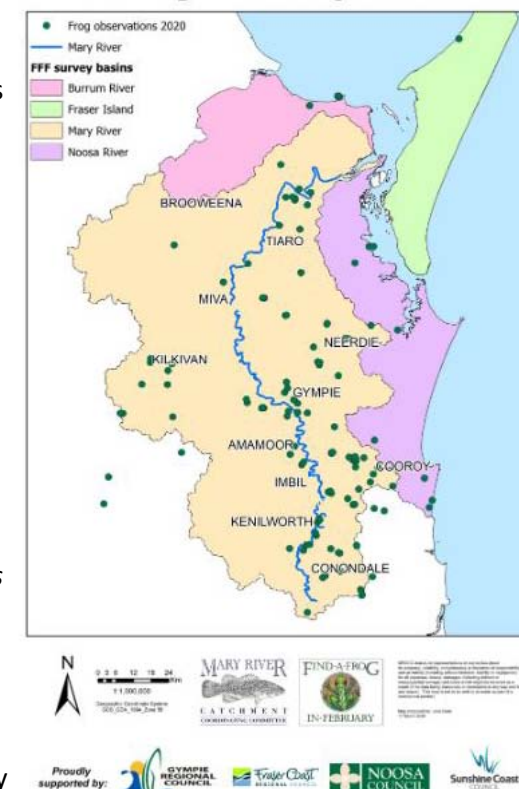
- *Litoria pearsoniana* along Fat hen Creek west of Gympie
- Many, many, many *Adelotus brevis* at the headwaters of Baxter Creek at Mapleton school
- *Crinia tinnula* at Poona
- *Mixophyes iteratus* found by Noosa High School students on Belli Creek
- Many people wondering what the lovely little toadlets are that have red speckles on their back – Cane toad metamorphs!
- *Litoria onlongburensis* east of Gympie and Noosa national park on the Sunshine Coast – a Noosa Councillor submitted that one!
- About six different colour and pattern variations of *Litoria fallax* from the one location near Bauple – colours, spots, lines and different combinations of all.

And it seemed to me that there was a disproportionately high number of *Litoria caerulea* (Green treefrog) metamorph records coming in this year, mostly from the coastal swamp zones; a good year for them.

Perhaps what stirs a coordinator of a citizen science program as much as seeing the resultant great in-

Year	Frog Finders	Number of surveys	Number of locations	Frog records	Number of species	No. threatened species
2017	79	88	68	438	22	3
2018	142	218	128	2,358	23	4
2019	83	127	90	1,368	22	2
2020	193	232	146	6,165	28	5

Find a Frog in February records 2020



crease in knowledge, is knowing that there are so many people out there, from all quarters who have enthusiasm to go out at night, record what

they see or hear and send it in. And even more, this year, was the response from schools and bushcare groups who took up the guided challenge to start a monitoring site and commit to surveying there each year. Four schools and three groups have been the pioneers for the FFF monitoring program and we hope to add to that each year until we have many, many participating. The data from monitoring is vital to determine what is 'normal' responses of populations to seasonal conditions, and being alert to unusual trends. With the breeding and developmental window narrowing with prolonged droughts over the past several years, some species

that we consider 'common' may in fact find it hard to persist in the long term. This is especially so for short-lived species.

The local councils of the program area support the MRCCC to deliver Find a Frog in February each year and we are immensely grateful (Sunshine Coast, Noosa, Gympie and Fraser Coast Councils).

Participating schools included Mapleton State School, Noosa District High School, Gympie East State School, and Tinana State School. Participating groups included Belli/Cedar Catchment Care Community, Perigian Bushcare and Poona Bushcare.

Eva Ford (MRCCC) - Coordinator for the annual Find a Frog in February citizen science program



#qldfrogs

Each newsletter features a selection of photos by our keen Instagram followers who tag their QLD frog photos with #qldfrogs! Tag yours to be featured here.



Green Treefrog (*Litoria caerulea*) by @ashleighjm93



Great Barred Frog (*Mixophyes fasciolatus*) by @sonnyroyalphoto



Whirring Treefrog (*Litoria revelata*) by @mccall wildlife photography

## NEXT EDITION

Thankyou to those of you who contributed to this newsletter.

**Deadline for Spring *Frogsheet* contributions is  
20 August 2020**

If undelivered, please return to  
**QLD Frog Society Inc**  
**PO Box 7017**  
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**SURFACE MAIL**



Frogsheet - Spring 2020  
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