



# Frogwatch

ACT and Region  
National Water Week  
Community Frogwatch Census Report

***October 2004***

Produced by the  
Ginninderra Catchment Group



environment ACT  
CHIEF MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT

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National Water Week  
Community Frogwatch Census Report  
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# 1. ABOUT FROGWATCH

The ACT and Region National Water Week Community Frogwatch Program is a community frog monitoring program which conducts a Frogwatch Census in spring each year. This report presents the results of the 2004 Frogwatch Census.

ACT Frogwatch was initiated in 2002, when over 40 volunteers monitored frog calls at 29 sites. In 2003 the program expanded dramatically to provide a snapshot of frog species and abundance in the ACT and surrounding NSW region. In 2004, the popularity of the Frogwatch Census has continued to grow, with over 230 volunteers monitoring at close to 140 sites.

Frog species are widely recognised as indicators of environmental health and their presence can indicate good water quality and the availability of high quality habitat. Conversely, the absence or decline of frog populations can indicate unhealthy or degraded catchments.

The information collected will help to identify future community monitoring and action priorities that will create a more frog friendly Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment.

The aim of the program is: *To conduct an ACT and Region Community Frogwatch Census that will generate significant information about the presence and abundance of frog populations in the region.*

## **Census Information Objectives**

- Increase understanding of frog distribution and abundance;
- increase knowledge and understanding about the health of our wetlands and waterways;
- monitor the impacts of bushfires and drought on our local ecosystems and catchments;
- monitor the impacts of bushfires on local wildlife and track recovery rates;
- provide supplementary information to Environment ACT's Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit's professional frog monitoring program; and
- continue the collection of important frog monitoring data to enhance previous studies.

## **Community Capacity Building Objectives**

- Provide an exciting, hands-on opportunity for community members to engage in natural resource management (NRM);
- provide opportunities for community involvement in wildlife monitoring;
- provide CAMPFIRE (Community Assessment Monitoring Program for Fire Impacted River Ecology) and Waterwatch groups the opportunity to broaden their monitoring activities;
- increase community capacity to understand a range of important environmental issues such as biodiversity, problems of introduced species, water quality, habitat loss and other impacts on natural ecosystems;
- facilitate community monitoring and evaluation of NRM on-ground works, e.g. wetland development, willow removal and revegetation projects;
- increase awareness of frog populations and their habitat requirements; and
- ensure that Frogwatch participants do not contribute to the spread of frog pathogens.



## 2. METHODOLOGY

Frogwatch participants attended one of three Frogwatch Seminars where they learnt about the different frog species in the region, their mating calls, basic safety and site selection guidelines, procedures for preventing the spread of potential frog pathogens, frog identification techniques and procedures for undertaking and recording Frogwatch observations.

All participants received a Frogwatch Kit, which contained:

- The Frogwatch Monitoring Plan;
- A list of frog species of the ACT and Region, with descriptions of habitat and calls;
- Pathogen Control Guidelines;
- Frog Facts!;
- Frog Resources;
- Procedures for Monitoring Frog Calls;
- Field Data Sheets;
- Contact Details and Feedback Forms;
- An audio CD - "Frog Calls of the ACT" by Ederic Slater;
- A Frogwatch Thermometer; and
- A blank cassette tape.

Each participant or group then registered their Frogwatch site(s). Participants were encouraged to monitor at the same site as previous years, or to select useful sites that had intrinsic value to the program. For example, a Waterwatch monitoring site, a newly constructed wetland area, an environmentally sensitive or bushfire affected area, proposed restoration sites, farm dams, or a site in which they have a particular interest.

Frog calls were then monitored by community volunteers at sites across the Upper Murrumbidgee according to the following guidelines:

	Season	Dates	Time of Day	How Often	Duration
<b>Minimum monitoring:</b>	Spring	National Water Week 17 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2004	During the 2 hours after dark (i.e. between about 7:30 - 9:30 pm during October)	On at least one evening during National Water Week	Tape recording of frog calls for 2 - 5 minutes
Extra monitoring:	Spring	7 <sup>th</sup> October - 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2004	During the 2 hours after dark (i.e. between about 7:30 - 9:30 pm during October)	Monitoring at the same site on a number of evenings during the specified dates is desirable.	Tape recording of frog calls for 2 - 5 minutes

Participants were encouraged to conduct their monitoring on more than one occasion at the same site to increase the statistical reliability of the data. They were also encouraged to monitor during the 1 - 3 days following rainfall, if possible.

