

Litoria aurea

Green and Gold Bell Frog

For the first time over the five years of the Frogwatch Census, a record of *Litoria aurea* was detected. This species was detected at one site during the October Census. One individual was detected at the site. The location of the site is not publicly available.

Habitat Requirements

Litoria aurea is mainly associated with semi-permanent or permanent water including marshes, dams and stream-sides, particularly those containing bulrushes (*Typha sp.*) or spikerushes (*Eleocharis sp.*). According to a study by White and Pyke (1996), their optimum habitat includes water bodies which are unshaded, free of predatory fish *Gambusia holbrooki*, have a grassy area nearby and diurnal sheltering sites available such as vegetation and / or rocks.

More recently however, this species has frequently been found in disturbed sites such as disused industrial sites, brick pits, mines, recently cleared bushland or council tips.

Status and Distribution

The Green and Gold Bell Frog (*Litoria aurea*) is listed as Vulnerable on the ICUN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) Red List; nationally vulnerable under the EPBC (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation) Act; and is listed as an Endangered Species under the NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act.

In the 1960s the species was considered to be widespread, and was distributed from the NSW north coast to eastern Victoria, including the Hunter Valley, southern highlands and Monaro districts of NSW and the ACT. From about 1978 to 1981, this species virtually disappeared from the ACT and Southern Highlands region and until a few years ago was thought to be extinct in the region. In coastal areas, their distribution is now patchy.

Researchers believe that the declines were most likely due to the amphibian *chytrid* fungus, but that the spread of exotic fish, combined with habitat loss and climate change are also likely to be contributing.

Prior to the Frogwatch finding, there was only one known population observed near Captains Flat. Researchers from the University of Canberra will be following up the finding at this important new site and hopefully will find some clues to help reverse the specie's decline.

References:

- Osborne, Will. pers. comm. November 2006.
White A. W. and Pyke G. H. 1996. Distribution and conservation status of the Green and Golden Bell Frog *Litoria aurea* in New South Wales. Australian Zoologist 30 (2): 177-189. Cited in NPWS Green and Golden Bell Frog Species Profile, available at: http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/PDFs/tsprofile_green_golden_bell_frog.pdf .
DEWR, 2007. The Action Plan for Australian Frogs - Recovery Outline No. 1: Green and Golden Bell Frog. Available at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/action/frogs/7.html> .
AmphibiaWeb: Information on amphibian biology and conservation. [web application]. 2006. Berkeley, California: AmphibiaWeb. Available: <http://amphibiaweb.org/>. (Accessed: Mar 6, 2007).



Litoria aurea.

Photo above: A. White www.fats.org.au

Photo below: www.en.wikipedia.org

