

2. METHODS

Frogwatch participants attended a Frogwatch Seminar in the lead up to the Frogwatch Census. Two introductory seminars were held where volunteers 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.

Approximately 40 Frogwatchers attended a field trip to Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve where they gained extra experience in identification techniques, estimating abundance and identifying important habitat components. Experts from Environment ACT and the University of Canberra lead the field trip and provided valuable advice about amphibian ecology and behaviour, and monitoring tips.

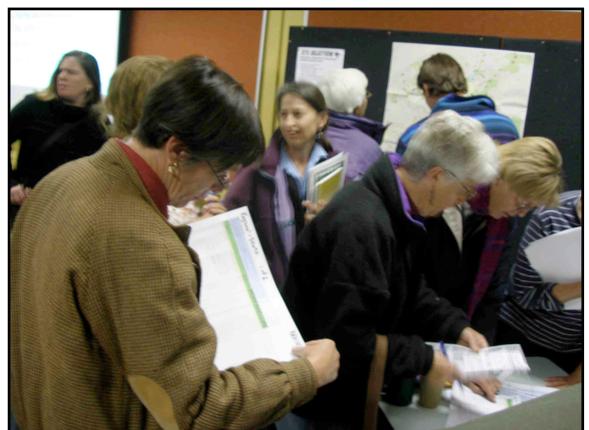
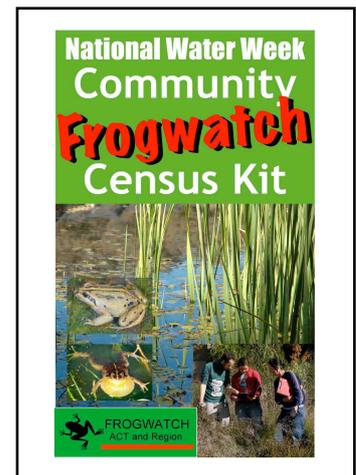
All participants received a copy of the Frogwatch Kit, which contained:

- 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;
- a list of available frog resources;
- procedures for monitoring frog calls;
- Frogwatch field data sheets;
- contact details and feedback forms;
- an audio CD - "Frog Calls of the ACT and South East NSW" 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 one of thirty 'Key Frogwatch Sites', that are selected as priority sites for annual monitoring. Prioritising these sites ensures that they are consistently and comprehensively monitored from year to year. This ensures that Frogwatch data will be sufficiently statistically robust to provide for in-depth analysis in the longer term. Monitoring at other Frogwatch sites was also permitted and encouraged to allow for the inclusion of already established Frogwatch sites and participant interest in particular sites.



Frogwatch participants at an Introductory Training Seminar, September 2006



Frogwatchers selecting their monitoring sites



Frog calls and other details were then observed and recorded at sites across the ACT and region during the Frogwatch monitoring period in October 2006. During the Frogwatch Census week, 15 - 21 October, all Frogwatch sites were monitored on at least one occasion. To increase the statistical reliability of the data, participants were encouraged to monitor on more than one evening during this week, and Key Sites were monitored on at least three evenings during the week.

At each site Frogwatchers recorded details about:

- Site location;
- habitat;
- vegetation;
- weather conditions; and
- frog species observed.

These details were recorded onto official field data sheets. Participants took tape recordings of the sounds present during the early evening at their site. Even if there were no frogs calling, the data were collected and submitted. This information was then sent to the Frogwatch Coordinator for confirmation and processing. Photographs of Frogwatch sites were also submitted to the Frogwatch Coordinator.

All audio tapes were checked for accuracy of identification by the Frogwatch Coordinator. A number of the tapes were also checked by staff from Environment ACT Wildlife Research and Monitoring and the University of Canberra to confirm unusual species or calls that were difficult to identify.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY CONTROL

The data collected for the 2006 ACT and Region National Water Week Community Frogwatch Census has undergone a strict process that ensures the quality of the data is very high. The quality control procedures employed include:

- Monitoring of calls at all sites was undertaken on at least one evening between 5 - 31 October 2006, during the first 2 hours after dark.
- Audio recordings were taken at all monitoring sites. These recordings were then used to confirm identification of species and the number of frogs calling. This data was assessed by the Frogwatch Coordinator. Unusual or difficult results were investigated by the Environment ACT Wildlife Research and Monitoring Unit and University of Canberra staff. Any data that has not been confirmed is not included in this report.
- Detailed information about Frogwatch procedures and guidelines were provided to all participants at the Frogwatch training events, and in the Frogwatch Kit. A copy of the Frogwatch Kit can be provided by contacting the Frogwatch Coordinator.

