

ACT and Region Frogwatch Program
Community Frogwatch Census Report
October 2007

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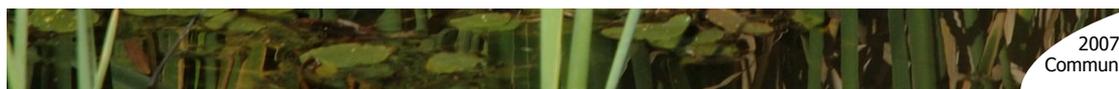
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Printed on recycled paper.

Frog photos on front cover (clockwise from top left): *Limnodynastes dumerilii*, J.C. Wombey. *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*, J.C. Wombey. *Neobatrachus sudelli*, J.C. Wombey. *Litoria verreauxii*, J.C. Wombey. *Crinia signifera*, J.C. Wombey. *Litoria peronii*, P. Sloane.

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1. ABOUT FROGWATCH

The ACT and Region Frogwatch Program is a community frog monitoring program which conducts a Frogwatch Census in spring each year. This report presents the results of the 2007 Frogwatch Census.

ACT Frogwatch was initiated by the Ginninderra Catchment Group in 2002, when over 40 volunteers monitored frog calls at 29 sites. Since then the program has expanded dramatically to provide an annual snapshot of frog species and abundance in the ACT and surrounding NSW region. In 2007, approximately 200 volunteers participated in the Census, monitoring at 160 sites. An amazing total of 377 field data sheets were completed and submitted in 2007.



Frogwatch volunteers at the Mulligan's Flat field trip

Frogs 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.

Frogwatch information helps to identify future community monitoring and action priorities that will create a more frog friendly ACT and region.

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 the ACT Government'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 with 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 provide support for the protection and creation of high quality habitat; and
- ensure that Frogwatch participants do not contribute to the spread of frog pathogens.



2. METHODS

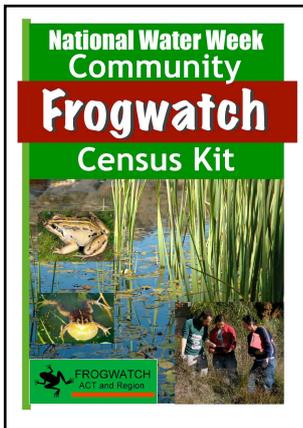
Frogwatch participants attended a Frogwatch Seminar in the lead up to the October Census. Introductory seminars were held where volunteers learnt about the different frog species in the region, their mating calls, basic safety and site selection guidelines, procedures for preventing the spread of potential frog pathogens, frog identification techniques and procedures for undertaking and recording Frogwatch observations.

Some 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. Will Osborne from the University of

Canberra lead the field trip and provided valuable advice about amphibian ecology and behaviour, and monitoring tips.



Frogwatch Training Seminar, September 2007



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

- The Frogwatch monitoring plan;
- information about frog species of the ACT and region, including habitat information and identification tips;
- pathogen control guidelines;
- procedures for monitoring frog calls;
- a list of available frog resources;
- Frogwatch field data sheets and other 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.

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.



4. FROGWATCH SITES

A total of 160 Frogwatch sites were monitored during October - November 2007. 118 of these were located within the ACT border, while the remaining 42 sites were in the surrounding NSW region. Figure 1 shows the locations of Frogwatch sites. Appendix 1 provides details of the site codes, names and locations of all of the Frogwatch sites.

Figure 1. Site locations, Community Frogwatch Census 2007

