



## The Croak – Edition #3

Dear Frog Watch and Waterwatch Monitors,

Welcome to edition 3 of The Croak. The season has very suddenly changed to winter and the chilly, frosty mornings are now a common occurrence. You may have noticed that this brings about a reduction in the species that are currently calling. I know at my place, the only species I am currently hearing is the Southern Brown Tree Frog; at other times of the year I would also be hearing several other species among this noisy chorus.

The **North Central Waterwatch Frog Field Guide** is completed in draft form and is currently with a Graphic Designer getting put together and spruced-up, very exciting! We plan on having this completed over the next couple of months with a view to officially launch the new publication in September, just in time for Growling Grass Frog calling season! Keep an eye out for this one, its going to be a great resource for all the keen frog monitors out there.

The Bibron's Toadlet is at the end of its calling season, however you may still be able to locate it if you are on the look out. See Robyn's story over the page as she searches this season for this secretive little species.

### Species which are calling and mating at this time of year:

- Southern Brown Tree Frog (*Litoria ewingi*)
- Bibron's Toadlet (*Pseudophryne bibronii*)
- Eastern Common Froglet (*Crinia signifera*)
- Common Spade Foot Toad (*Neobatrachus sudelli*)
- Pobblebonk (*Limnodynastes dumerili*)
- Victorian Smooth Froglet (*Geocrinia victoriana*)

### In Recent News - A new frog species for Victoria!

You may have heard the news that the Bleating Tree Frog (*Litoria dentata*) has turned up in Victoria. This species was previously thought to only occur in NSW and QLD, but has been found at three locations along the Genoa River in East Gippsland. The nearest known population was 40kms away. Ecologist Graeme Gillespie was surveying frog populations in the area when he heard the distinctive call of the Bleating Tree Frog. As the name suggests, the call is often described as high pitched bleat, painful in pitch and volume. Hear it online if you are interested at [www.frogsaustralia.net.au](http://www.frogsaustralia.net.au). It is likely to have gone unnoticed until now because no one with knowledge of its call had been in the area during breeding season.



## *The Bibron Chaser – An account by Robyn McKay*

2011 is my third year chasing Bibron's Toadlets. I started trying to record the Toadlets as part of my studies in Conservation and Land Management at Bendigo TAFE. Melanie from the North Central CMA was very keen to support me, as there had been some initial monitoring of the frogs a few years before but no follow up.

Bibron's Toadlets (or Brown Toadlets) are a small cryptic frog that lives in woodlands or forests. They're listed as an endangered species on the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. I have found them at several sites in the Bendigo Regional Park, including Flora Hill. Other places that I have recorded their call include erosion gullies and roadsides.

They shelter under rocks, logs and leaf litter during the day, and then get busy at night time feeding on ants, beetles and mites. I have found the best time to hear their call is after (or during) rain in the evening. However, listening for frogs during rain is also one sure-fire way to get bogged!

Their call is described as a repeated short, squelching 'ar-ek'. They call from late February, through autumn. It is always a buzz to hear their call, and rewarding to know that the sites I have recorded will be added to the Atlas of Victorian Wildlife.

Bibron's males make a nest in damp dirt under leaf litter or vegetation, in an area that will be inundated. The ladies get around – mating with up to eight males – to ensure against nest failure. Once the site floods, the eggs hatch.

Some of the areas that I have previously recorded the Toadlets have been badly flooded, burnt or sprayed for locusts late last year. I have had no success recording the Toadlets in these same places this year (yet). I will keep you posted!

*~ Thanks Robyn, keep up the good work! ~*

*All the best with your own frog hunts, keep the data coming. Anyone with an interesting story or photo they would like to share about their own frog monitoring activities, please be in touch, we would love to hear from you!*

*Until next time,*

**HAPPY MONITORING ☺**

- Cass and the Team at North Central Waterwatch!



Images showing the Bibron's Toadlet and typical habitat of the species.

