



## North Central Waterwatch Frog Monitoring Program

In light of the huge success Melbourne Water has had with its Frog Census program, which has generated invaluable frog distribution data and helped raise community awareness of frogs and their plight, North Central Waterwatch has developed its own regional Frog Identification and Monitoring Program.

The major aims of this project are to raise people's awareness frog species that live in the North Central region and to increase current understanding of their distributions. By raising awareness of frog species, their life cycles, preferred habitats, breeding habits, feeding patterns and threats to their survival, North Central Waterwatch hopes to foster an interest in frog conservation among the community.

The program focuses on developing frog identification and surveying techniques among participants, as well as alerting people to some of the issues affecting frogs in our region and beyond. North Central Waterwatch will be offering information and training sessions, monitoring equipment and technical support through this program.

Each species of frog has a characteristic "call" that can be used to identify them in most cases - sometimes the calls can be very similar between species and other means of identification must be used. Survey participants will use digital voice recorders - provided by North Central Waterwatch - to record frog calls, note certain site characteristics and other information which is then returned to North Central Waterwatch for analysis. All frog distribution data collected by North Central Waterwatch volunteers will be stored on a central database then forwarded to relevant management authorities, providing them with valuable frog distribution information.

Participants can conduct surveys at any time – providing availability of equipment — with advice provided regarding the most appropriate times and places to survey. We have also created a range of frog identification sheets to help participants get to know the species of frog they are most likely to find in the North Central region. Please visit <http://www.vic.waterwatch.org.au/inform.php?a=7&b=625&c=626> to view these resources.

**Growing Grass Frog**  
*Litoria raniformis*

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

<p><b>Adults</b> Colouration of the Growing Grass Frog ranges from brown, dull olive to bright emerald green on its back, with brown, golden, black or bronze spots or lines. Large warts, skin folds and tubercles (lumps) cover the back. Down the spine a pale stripe can be seen, while a dark streak runs from the snout, over the eye and tympanum (membrane covering the ear entrance). Above this a skin fold of pale cream runs down towards the</p>	<p>white, granular belly, and almost fully webbed toes. This species can reach between 55 and 100mm in length.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko@frogs.org.au)</p>
<p style="font-size: x-small;">Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko@frogs.org.au)</p>	<p><b>Tadpoles</b> Tadpoles are large and dark in colour. However as they develop they become yellow along the body wall and iridescent green over the spine and brain.</p>
<p style="font-size: x-small;">Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko@frogs.org.au)</p>	<p><b>Eggs</b> The pigmented eggs are large and often attached to vegetation in fluid clusters that will usually fragment and sink. These clusters are often laid in a broad single layer at the edge, or in shallow areas, of water bodies.</p>

groin. Below the eye to the base of the arm runs another pale stripe. Both the groin and back are bright blue, sometimes with yellow flecks. They have a

**Bibron's Toadlet**  
*Pseudophryne bibronii*

DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS

<p><b>Adults</b> Bibron's toadlet is a small and secretive frog, which like all members of its genus tends to walk instead of hop. This species has the unusual life history trait of depositing eggs directly onto the land in small burrows constructed by the male. The tadpoles then develop within the egg capsule itself. Following late autumn and winter rains, these burrows are either inundated by rising water levels or the egg capsules are washed into small ponds, puddles and seeps. Adults grow to approximately 30mm in length. They are brown to black above, with darker flecks and occasionally possess reddish spots across their back.</p>	<p>There is often a bright yellowish spot on the vent, and sometimes a yellowish stripe on the lower back. The underside is a coarsely marbled pattern of dark brown and white. The skin is smoothly warty above, and smooth or slightly granular on the belly. The toes are unwebbed. Bibron's toadlets may roll onto their back if frightened.</p> <p><b>Tadpoles</b> The tadpole of this species is dark brown in colour with clear fins finely flecked with black or brown. Primarily benthic feeders, tadpoles can be found in small temporary ponds, puddles and seeps across its range.</p> <p><b>Eggs</b> Eggs are slightly pigmented, spawned in loose clumps, and are often coated in soil or mud. They are usually laid in a moist cavity under leaf litter, rocks and logs, and hatch when the burrows are flooded. Eggs are laid singly, up to four minutes apart. Females produce between 100 and 230 eggs per breeding season, and usually deposit a portion of their eggs within the burrow of several different males from the calling population over several nights.</p>
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Dorsal view (Lydia Fucsko@frogs.org.au)

Ventral view (Lydia Fucsko@frogs.org.au)

**Please contact the North Central Waterwatch Regional Coordinator, Leigh Mitchell, on 5440 1829 if you are interested in participating in this new program or wish to find out more.**