



## Wildlife of Western Sydney Frogs

Do you believe in frogs which eat snakes, or can change colour at will? No, it's not a hoax!

Western Sydney is home to 17 species of frog, ranging from the tiny Bibron's Toadlet to the giant Green Tree Frog. These frogs have a fascinating array of bizarre traits which adapt them to life in our local environment.

The frogs of Western Sydney's open grassy woodlands (the 'Cumberland Plain') are quite different to the large National Parks of Sydney's northern and southern suburbs. Wedged between abandoned farmland and housing estates, these woodlands and grasslands are home to a surprising diversity of frogs. This guide introduces the local frogs of the 'Cumberland Plain' and the best places to see them.

**A DISAPPEARING RESOURCE:** Sadly, land clearing and water pollution are decimating the frogs of the region, and unless laws change our local frogs may disappear before future generations can enjoy them. This makes it all the more important to get out and see your local frogs.

**TIPS FOR FROG WATCHING:** Frogs are best seen at night, particularly after rain or showers. Most woodland remnants protect at least a few species of frogs, so it is worth checking out your local patch. A filter of red cellophane over your torch will help avoid damaging animals' sensitive eyes. Make sure you have permission, keep safe, and record what you see!

While you will find many frogs in Cumberland Plain Woodland, some species are restricted to the sandy Agnes Banks soils, and others prefer the semi-permanent pools which form in the impermeable Castlereagh gravels. These gravel pools are particularly important for frogs now that most streams have invasive fish like *Gambusia* and are polluted. In general, creekline spotting is unlikely to reveal much more than the tolerant Striped Marsh Frog.

Please don't handle frogs or tadpoles – even using gloves you risk damaging frogs and transmitting disease.

**ORGANISED ACTIVITIES:** Organised Activities: The Frog & Tadpole Society ('FATS') often run outings in Western Sydney. See the website [www.fats.org.au](http://www.fats.org.au) for details. Greening Australia run the Frogs, Furies & Flapjacks Twilight Walk at Mamre Homestead, South Creek. Bookings can be made via the Homestead on (02) 9670 6178.

**HABITAT - SOIL & FIRE:** The Cumberland Plain's vegetation is driven by soils, and understanding soils can help in understanding the area's fauna. The flat clay areas support open grassy woodland of Grey Box or Spotted Gum called *Cumberland Plain Woodland*. Around Castlereagh this is covered by ancient river deposits of lower nutrient sands, silt and pebbles. This supports a shrubby forest of *Castlereagh Ironbark Woodland* on the flats, and *Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland*

on rises. Near Agnes Banks, this is further covered by wind-blown sand deposits supporting *Agnes Banks Woodland*, a shrubby community of *Angophora* and Scribbly Gum. Beside the Hawkesbury-Nepean and alongside major creeks, recent river sediments support *Alluvial Woodland* dominated by Forest Red Gum or the endangered Camden White Gum.

The fertile Cumberland Plain Woodlands and grasslands are the best habitat for many open-woodland specialists. However, these communities have suffered the most from clearing, and many of the woodland fauna are now found only in the large remnants of the less fertile, shrubbier Castlereagh and Agnes Banks Woodlands. Originally, grasslands and grassy glades were a key part of all these communities, but clearing and the suppression of fire has made grasslands the rarest habitat type in the region. A number of species rely on grasslands, so those that remain are well worth a visit.

The vegetation preferences of each species are noted in the text (where known). These can be correlated with the habitat colour coding on the map to give a better idea of the species distributions.

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** The legal status (if any) under NSW law is listed for each species.

**REPORTING RARE WILDLIFE:** If you think you have seen any of the species indicated in **RED** you should report your findings. Knowing where these species are helps community and government protect them. If possible, take a photo and record the nearest street address.

You can report your sightings to the Western Sydney Wildlife Record [westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com](mailto:westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com)  
Injured wildlife should be reported to WIRES on 1300 094 737

### ABBREVIATIONS:

[...] denotes future Park or Reserve (not yet open to public)

Protected Lands	Other Public Lands
NR Nature Reserve	RP Regional Park
NP National Park	RES Council Reserve

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Photographs donated by: Alan Kwok: **AK** / Bidgee: **BJ** / Dean Lewis (<http://dl.id.au>): **DL** / 'Eyeweed': **EW** / George Cruiser: **GC** / Gordan Smith: **GS** / Greg Miles: **GM** / 'Greg the Busker': **GB** / Gus McNab: **GMc** / Jean-Marc Hero: **JMH** / Jonathan Ayres: **JA** / Ken Stepnell/OEH: **KS** / 'LiquidGhoul': **LG** / Lindy Lumsden: **LL** / Michael Jarman/OEH: **MJ** / Narawan Williams: **NW** / NSW Office of Environment & Heritage: **OEH** / Peter Ridgeway: **PR** / Peter Street: **PS** / Rosie Nicolai/OEH: **RN** / Retama: **RT** / Ray Williams: **RW**

**Cover photo:** Leaf-green Tree Frog *Litoria phyllochroa*, © Jean-Marc Hero  
**Text:** Peter Ridgeway

The Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority (HNCMA) was formed to help protect the natural values of the Hawkesbury-Nepean and ensure it continues to be a healthy and productive catchment. This brochure is one of a series of brochures on the fauna in western Sydney to raise awareness, promote landcare / bushcare, and protect biodiversity.  
[www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au)

## Wildlife of Western Sydney Frogs



Catchment Management  
Authority  
Hawkesbury-Nepean



PS

**Bibrons Toadlet (lowland form)** *Pseudophryne bibronii*

Formerly common, approaching regional extinction. Lays in damp areas out of water, eggs wash into temporary pools after rain. Star Park, [Edmonson RP].  
Call: Low 'creaking' like a heavy door opening



RT

**Common Froglet** *Crinia signifera*

Common in damp habitats, especially degraded creeklines. Highly variable appearance.  
Call: Rapid repeating 'creek'



PR

**Green and Golden Bell Frog** *Litoria aurea*

Endangered (NSW). Formerly common; last wild populations now approved for clearing (St Mary's Leagues; Riverstone Growth Centre); volunteers maintain captive population in suburban Riverstone. Similarly rare in eastern Sydney (e.g. Sydney Olympic Park).  
Call: three-part call - like motorbike changing gears



PS

**Green Tree Frog** *Litoria caerulea*

Formerly common, now rare. Large - will take snakes and mice. Government study recommended listing as an endangered population in western Sydney. Prefers open habitat with regularly wet pools: [Vineyard]; [Shanes Park]; Riverstone.  
Call: Low 'crawl' (summer)



LG

**Bleating Tree Frog** *Litoria dentata*

Widespread and becoming abundant in suburbs; deafening numbers call in summer; Scheyville NP.  
Call: like a bleating lamb (summer)



LG

**Eastern Dwarf Tree Frog** *Litoria fallax*

Reedy areas near creeks or reedy dams; can change colour for camouflage; Scheyville NP; [Shanes Park].  
Call: High pitched 'ree eek eek' (spring & summer)



LG

**Broad-palmed Frog** *Litoria latopalmata*

A terrestrial species preferring grassland surrounding dams; uncommon in reserves. Key population in Western Sydney RP needs better protection; also Mulgoa NR.  
Call: Sharp repetitive 'yap' (spring & summer)



LG

**Peron's Tree Frog** *Litoria peronii*

A common & widespread species with distinctive emerald spots, especially on golf courses.  
Call: Loud descending chuckle (spring & summer)



JMH

**Leaf-green Tree Frog** *Litoria phyllochroa*

Reedy areas beside creeks & streams. Last known regional population is in Western Sydney Regional Park where threatened by development.  
Call: Squelch-like repeating 'eek' (spring, summer, autumn)



LG

**Tyler's Tree Frog** *Litoria tyleri*

Uncommon but widespread tree-dwelling frog in grassland/pasture near permanent pools. Also rare inhabitant of woodland reserves - e.g. Castlereagh NR. Readily distinguished from similar *Litoria peronii* by call.  
Call: Fast repetitive 'rark rark rark rark' (spring & summer)



EW

**Verreaux Tree Frog** *Litoria verreauxii verreauxii*

Widespread & common terrestrial frog of Cumberland Woodland (uncommon in Castlereagh woodlands); Mulgoa NP; Scheyville NP.  
Call: Repeating series 'ree ree ree...'



OEH

**Pobblebonk** *Limnodynastes dumerilii grayi*

Once common, now extremely rare e.g. Windsor Downs NR (2004) and Camden Park (2009).  
Call: 'Pobblebonk', like a banjo being struck, after rain any time of year



JMH

**Ornate Burrowing Frog** *Limnodynastes ornatus*

Uncommon - Castlereagh soils. A burrowing, water-holding species - often far from water.  
Call: "unk...unk...unk" during summer



RN

**Striped Grass Frog** *Limnodynastes peronii*

Common & widespread near permanent water.  
Call: 'tok...tok' like tennis ball being hit



KS

**Spotted Grass Frog** *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*

Common & widespread near permanent water.  
Call: Fast series 'brrrt... brrrt... brrrt'



PR

**Giant Burrowing Frog** *Heleioporus australiacus*

Vulnerable (NSW). A large species; last known regional population (Riverstone) approved for development.  
Call: Owl like 'hoo...hoo...'



PS

**Smooth Toadlet** *Uperoleia laevis*

Widespread & common although poorly known.  
Call: A deep 'eeek' sound

**Want to help protect Western Sydney's fauna?**

Join your local landcare or bushcare group. For information, contact the Regional Landcare Facilitator at the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authority, Penrith.

P: 02 4725 3050

W: <http://www.hn.cma.nsw.gov.au/landcaregroup/>

or speak to your local Council or National Parks and Wildlife Service office.

Have you seen these animals?  
Please report sightings of **RED** species to [westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com](mailto:westernsydneywildlife@hotmail.com) to help us protect our wildlife.