

FROM THE (OUTGOING) EDITOR

This issue is dedicated to our Patron, the wonderful Professor Murray Littlejohn who passed away late last year. He will be so sadly missed by so many, but his incredible legacy will live through so many of Victoria's froggers, myself included.

Right: Murray by Jenny Crofts



Our AGM will, as usual, be in March. There will be a few office positions available, including Newsletter Editor. Please feel free to reach out (ed@frogsvic.org) if you'd like to find out more or just put up your hand at the AGM.

In the meantime, thanks for your ongoing support, happy frogging and hope to see you soon.

For the frogs, and especially this time: for Murray

Lynette Plenderleith

HELP SAVE NATIVE FROG SPECIES WITH YOUR PHONE

FrogID: How an app is helping scientists save frogs

A special presentation from the Australian Museum in Gippsland.

 *at Assaggio del Forno, Coopers Creek*

**12pm
Sat 22 Feb**

 **< Register now via QR code**

 **Guest speaker**
Nadiah Roslan,
FrogID project coordinator

Tickets \$35
Wood-fired pizza lunch included

 **Email us at**
mountain.rivers.landcare@gmail.com
Hosted by Mountain Rivers Landcare

Hosted by Mountain Rivers Landcare

When: 12pm, Saturday 22 February

Where: Assaggio del Forno, Coopers Creek

Presenter: Nadiah Roslan,
FrogID Project Coordinator at Australian Museum

Cost: \$35 (ticket includes lunch)

[CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS](#)

A special presentation from the Australian Museum

TRIBUTE: PROFESSOR MURRAY LITTLEJOHN (1932 - 2024)

Teisha Sloane-Lay, Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
Nick Clemann, Zoos Victoria

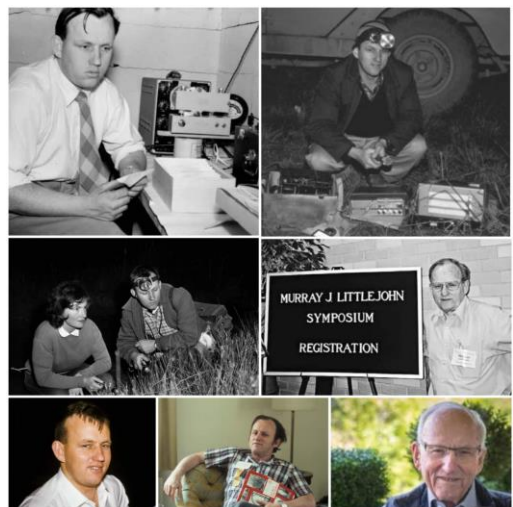
Murray Littlejohn was proud and dedicated Patron of Frogs Victoria since its inception, embracing the role with both grace and enthusiasm. He was a regular at Frogs Vic for many years, only stepping back recently due to mobility challenges. Murray remained engaged, often checking in on the organisation's progress and showing a genuine interest in current frog research and events.

Murray was a pioneering scientist whose groundbreaking work in herpetology, particularly in the field of anuran bioacoustics, transformed our understanding of amphibian communication. His intensive and sustained research on Victorian frogs began in 1959 when he joined the Department of Zoology at the University of Melbourne. There, he established and led a dynamic research team, including Angus Martin, Graeme Watson, and Peter Rawlinson. Their groundbreaking fieldwork laid the foundation for our current knowledge of the geographic distribution, biology, reproductive behaviours, life history, and ecology of Victorian frogs. Key areas of focus included the male's advertisement call and the female's response, speciation, historical zoogeography, and the dynamics of hybrid zones. This work led to the discovery and formal description of new species, the identification of species previously undocumented in the state, and significant revisions of the taxonomic classifications of others.

Beyond his scientific achievements, Murray was a beloved husband, father, and grandfather. He shared a 58-year marriage with Patsy Littlejohn and together they raised two sons. His warmth, kindness, and dedication to family were as remarkable as his contributions to science. Two frogs have been named in his honour - Littlejohn's Toadlet (*Uperoleia littlejohni*) and Littlejohn's Tree Frog (*Litoria littlejohni*).

Murray described two new species including Sloane's Froglet (*Crinia sloanei*), a small, Endangered amphibian native to southeastern Australia. He named the species after Patsy Littlejohn's uncle (and Teisha's grandfather), Ian Sloane, of Savernake, NSW, in appreciation of his practical support of Murray's field studies. Murray's legacy lives on in the continued protection of both Sloane's Froglet and the wetland habitats it depends on.

Murray's life was one of discovery, education, and dedication. His kindness, generosity and humility left a lasting impact on all who knew him. As a mentor, he inspired and guided many students and researchers over decades. His legacy will echo as vibrantly as the frog calls he so passionately studied.



Teisha and Nick were both co-founders of Frogs Victoria and close friends of Murray.

JOIN US AT THE FROGS VIC 2025 AGM

Frogs Victoria Annual General Meeting

The Elgin Inn, Hawthorn, 7:30pm 6th March 2023 and online on [Zoom](#).

The AGM is an opportunity for members to hear a summary of Frogs Vic's 2024 and to help direct the 2025 year. It is also the best time of year to get involved in the committee, either as a member, or by voting for the elected members. Please forward agenda items to secretary@frogsvic.org by 1st March 2025.

This year there will also be a special presentation:
"Frogs Vic, the story so far" by Founder Lynette Plenderleith.

All are welcome to attend the meeting, but only financial members are eligible to vote or be nominated to a role. You can apply for membership at www.frogsvic.org/membership. If you are a member unable to attend the meeting but wish to vote, notification of proxies can be sent to secretary@frogsvic.org before the meeting. Your proxy does not need to be a Frogs Vic member.

Officer roles open for nominations:

President
Secretary
Treasurer
Vice President
(Extra)Ordinary Members
Positions on the Events Sub-Committee
Newsletter Editor / Communications Officer

We're also always on the lookout for tech a/v support, that does not have to be part of the committee.

If you are interested in nominating for a position on the committee, please have a look at our Committee Roles and Responsibilities document on the [Committee webpage](#) for more details. Please email secretary@frogsvic.org if you would like to nominate yourself for a position. This is a great way to influence what we do at Frogs Vic and to meet and liaise with Victoria's Froggers!

Please join us Thursday 6th March 2025, from 6 pm in person - Meeting starts 7:30 pm at Elgin Inn 75 Burwood Rd, Hawthorn VIC 3122 or online from 7:30pm, [click here to join the meeting at 7:30pm 6th March](#).



Above: The inaugural Frogs Vic committee: Teisha Sloane-Lay, Nick Clemann and Lynette Plenderleith with Patron Professor Murray Littlejohn in 2018

A HISTORY OF FROG MONITORING AT THE ORGAN PIPES NATIONAL PARK

Anne-Marie McDonnell, Friends of Organ Pipes National Park

At the Organ Pipes National Park (OPNP), a unique history of frog observation and conservation has evolved over the years. The first recordings of frog species at the OPNP were made by Robert Bender in 1991. Bender consistently noted frog calls during activities such as working bees and bat box inspections until the early 2000's. This led to the valuable accumulation of a species list and calling phenology. His early observations included the consistent presence of the Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) and the Eastern Common Froglet (*Crinia signifera*), which he found to be widespread along Jacksons Creek. With the help of tools such as the Frogwatch Field Guide and Murray Littlejohn's frog call cassette, Bender refined his skills and earned a reputation for producing reliable data, contributing to the ongoing understanding of local frog populations.



Frogs of Organ Pipes National Park: Pobblebonk, *Limnodynastes dumerilii* (left); and Spotted Marsh Frog, *Lim. tasmaniensis*
Photos by Anne-Marie MacDonnell

In 2005, frog monitoring at OPNP was reignited under the leadership of Terry Lane, a passionate naturalist and dedicated volunteer. When Terry Lane first began recording frog calls in 2005, it was far from the streamlined process we see today. With no digital tools at his disposal, Lane relied on a cumbersome analogue setup. "There was paperwork and tapes, and a padded bag to put the tapes in," Lane recalls. "I carried two recorders—one to tempt the frogs to call, and the other to record the sounds."

Every two weeks, Lane would venture into the park, record frog calls, and meticulously document the conditions, including the time, location, and weather. "It was all analogue," he explains. "I had to say into the recorder, 'This is Terry Lane at the Organ Pipes National Park, at 9 PM, and the weather is X.' It was clumsy, but it was all I had."

Lane's involvement in frog monitoring began shortly after he joined the Friends of the Organ Pipes group. On a tour of the park, he noticed that there was little recent data about the frog species living in the park. With the encouragement of the Friends group, Lane took it upon himself to fill that gap by starting frog monitoring. He also became involved in Melbourne Water's WaterWatch program, learning more about the importance of water quality for frogs.

Lane identified two previously unrecorded species of frogs in the park, the Eastern Sign-bearing Froglet (*Crinia parinsignifera*) and the Striped Marsh Frog (*Limnodynastes peronii*), bringing the total number of frog species to seven.

The Endangered Growling Grass Frog became a focal point of his efforts. Despite the lack of modern equipment, Lane worked tirelessly to track frog populations, manually recording GPS coordinates whenever he heard a Growling Grass Frog call.

Continued on Page 5

A HISTORY OF FROG MONITORING AT THE ORGAN PIPES NATIONAL PARK

(Continued from Page 4)

The Decline in Frog Populations

Over the last decade, the number of frog calls and sightings began to decline. "You used to be able to hear them from the car park," Lane remembers. "But not anymore." While the water quality and overall habitat conditions in the park have improved significantly, the frog populations—particularly the Growling Grass Frog—have declined.

"We see them more than we hear them these days, but the numbers we see don't equate to the numbers we recorded back in the start of the program," Lane reflects.

New Efforts and the Future of Frog Conservation

The Friends of the Organ Pipes group remain deeply committed to preserving frog species in the park. Recently, the group secured a grant from Greater Western Water to purchase five advanced acoustic recorders, which will enable consistent, automated monitoring of frog calls across the park.

These new recorders will be instrumental in mapping the locations and populations of the Growling Grass Frog and other species. With this data targeted habitat restoration plans can be developed to protect and boost frog populations.

Frog Species of the Organ Pipes National Park

Over the years, OPNP has been home to seven species of frogs: **Common Eastern Froglet** (*Crinia signifera*), **Spotted Marsh Frog** (*Limnodynastes tasmaniensis*), **Eastern Sign-bearing Froglet** (*Crinia parinsignifera*), **Striped Marsh Frog** (*Limnodynastes peronii*), **Southern Brown Tree Frog** (*Litoria ewingii*), **Pobblebonk** (*Limnodynastes dumerilii*) and **Growling Grass Frog** (*Litoria raniformis*).



Growling Grass Frog, *Litoria raniformis* by Anne-Marie McDonnell

Frog monitoring at the Organ Pipes National Park has a rich and evolving history. From humble beginnings with tape recorders and handwritten notes to the introduction of acoustic technology, the efforts to track frog populations have always been driven by a passion for conservation. As new technologies enable more efficient monitoring, the goal remains the same: to protect and preserve the frogs of Organ Pipes National Park.

Anne-Marie has just been elected the Vice President of the Friends of the Organ Pipes. You can follow the FOOPs on Instagram at @foopsnp

ORGAN PIPES CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO SURVEY FROGS

As frog monitoring continues in the park, there is an opportunity for those interested in frog conservation to get involved. The Friends of the Organ Pipes group is actively seeking volunteers to help listen to the recordings and identify frog species.

If you're interested in being part of this important project, please reach out to the Friends of the Organ Pipes at frogs.organpipes@gmail.com. Your involvement could help make a significant impact on the future of frogs in the park and beyond.



Above: Murray Littlejohn records frog calls, 1996

THANKS TO OUR 2024 SPEAKERS

[Samantha Wallace](#)

[Kevin Newman](#)

[David De Angelis](#)

[Jeff Hughes](#)

[Matt Clancy; Justine Holmes; Jeff Hughes; Sue Bendel; Sam Wallace; Dan Guinto](#)

[Ellen Cottingham](#)

[Stephen Frankenberg](#)

[John Gould](#)

Frogs Vic could not hold events without the generous speakers who share their time, energy and expertise. We thank you!



Left:
Patron Professor Murray Littlejohn delivers the Keynote at the Frogs Victoria launch in August 2018

AROUND THE (PIT) TRAPS

[Frogs kick back against lethal fungus](#)

[First Nations scientist highlights ecological importance of frogs on FrogID Week](#)

[How can we help endangered species?](#)

[Endangered froglet central to King Valley farmers' fight against solar farm](#)

[Grassroot volunteers help record astounding diversity in Victoria's grasslands](#)

[Eight-year-old citizen scientist captures rare Growling Grass Frog call in the Yarra Valley](#)

[Environmental water to Ryan's Lagoon wetland has the frogs singing](#)

[Justice for frogs](#)

SHOW US YOUR FROGS!

Have you got an idea for a talk? It doesn't have to be scientific, it doesn't have to be long, it just has to be about frogs!

We are looking for speakers for 2025 and would love to see you talk. Please email events@frogsvic.org

MISSED AN ISSUE OF POBBLEBONK?

Check out the [newsletter page](#) of the FV website. All of our previous issues are published there.

WANTED: TECH-TYPE PERSON, FROG KNOWLEDGE OPTIONAL!

If you have a technological touch and want to help out with the a/v side of things, please give us a shout at info@frogsvic.org. When it comes to technology, we're very good herpetologists!



GOT MEMBERSHIP?

Frogs Vic membership fees:

- Pay for speakers' dinners, drinks and gift
- Pay Frogs Vic admin costs

Thanks to everyone that supports us financially. We could not continue to operate without you!

If you are not a member and would like to help support Frogs Vic, it's easy to sign up at www.frogsvic.org/membership Current pricing is \$40 Full Membership / \$20 Concession.

Have something you'd like to contribute to Pobblebonk? If you have an idea for a newsletter article, or a photo you'd like us to include, please email the editor: ed@frogsvic.org

Reproduction/republishing of articles:

To reproduce Pobblebonk, the Frogs Victoria Newsletter material in any form, you must receive express permission from the author and/or photographer, give them full and appropriate credit and include a note that the material has been reproduced from Pobblebonk, the Frogs Victoria newsletter. If possible, please also include a link to our website frogsvic.org and/or our logo (available for download from the website). You must not sell material from Pobblebonk, the Frogs Victoria newsletter.