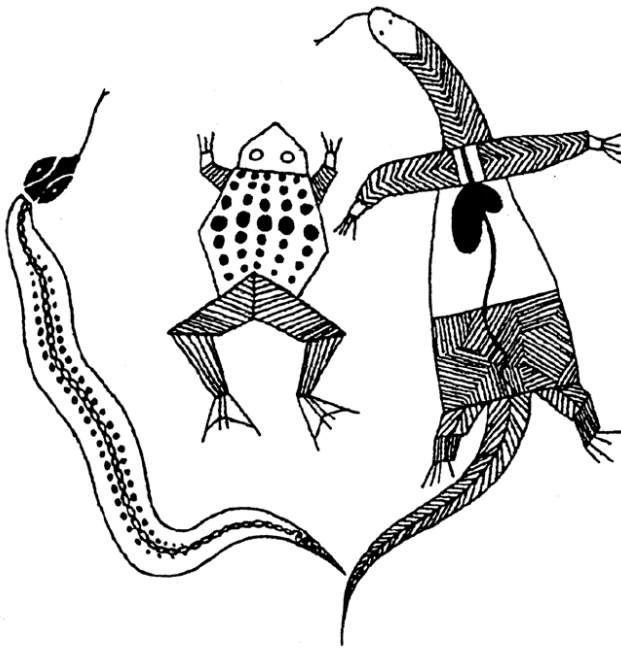


THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF
HERPETOLOGISTS
INCORPORATED



NEWSLETTER 42

History of Office Bearers

Formation Committee (April 1964):- MJ Littlejohn (Convenor); State Reps IR Straughan (Qld), FJ Mitchell (SA), HG Cogger (NSW), G Storr (WA), RE Barwick (ACT), JW Warren (Vic), AK Lee (Editor).

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Please direct all membership enquiries to the Treasurer, Glenn Shea. Membership forms can be downloaded from the ASH web site. Newsletter feedback can be given to Deb Bower. All other enquiries should be directed to the Secretary, Frank Lemckert.

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President's Report



It is with great pleasure that I took on the role of President of the Australian Society of Herpetologists at the meeting in Albany in December. I am very grateful for the opportunity, and the recognition from my peers that the position implies. This year, 2008 marks the 30 anniversary of my first ASH meeting, which was held at the Mintaro Institute Hall and Martindale Hall in the mid-north of South Australia. That was the first year of my PhD.

I am also very grateful to be able to serve ASH with the help of Glenn Shea (Treasurer) and Frank Lemckert (Secretary), who were also elected at the Albany meeting. The three of us have met frequently since December as we come to grips with management of the Society. Two issues have been high on our agenda. Firstly, for various reasons, we have not fulfilled our legal requirements to maintain our status as an incorporated society over the last few years. We have been working hard to rectify this situation so that our incorporation is not jeopardised. Glenn has done a superb job of sorting through the accounts, most of which were left in good order by previous treasurers and we anticipate meeting our obligations, including the backlog, soon.

Our second priority has been the Newsletter. Thanks to Marc Hero and his team, the Newsletter was brought into the electronic era, but there has not been an issue since 2003. I have received considerable feedback about a Newsletter, and it is clear that there is a big demand by members of ASH to be informed through a Newsletter. Deb Bower has taken on the role of Editor, which is something that deserves the thanks of all members. It is important that every member provides Deb with as much help as possible, so that we can restore the Newsletter to its former glory, and better. One issue of considerable debate is whether the Newsletter should be electronic, or in hard copy. We have decided to provide it electronically to those who prefer it that way, and in hard copy to others.

Congratulations and thanks are due to Paul Doughty and his team for the success of the Albany meeting. There was an incredible turnout of members and friends, with concurrent sessions needed to fit everyone in. I came away with the overwhelming impression that I no longer know the names and relationships of our lizards as molecular methods change the face of Australian systematics, especially for the Agamidae and Gekkonidae. We voted at the meeting to accept the offer from SRARNZ to run the next meeting as a joint meeting in New Zealand. The dates have now been set – 16-19 February, 2009 near to Auckland. More details will be forthcoming.

Finally, the big event for the herpetological community this year is the 6th World Congress of Herpetology, to be held in Manaus, Brazil, in August. There will be a big contingent of ASH members there. ASH should have an information stand there, where we will have copies of this Newsletter to give away. If you are going to 6WCH, please be prepared to serve on our stand for a short while.

I hope that this Newsletter is a welcome (re)addition to your herpetology, and please send comments and suggestions to Deb.

Mike Thompson
President



ASH Update

The 2008 conference was held in Albany and eventuated into a most enjoyable and informative get together.

We met in a virtuous location, which was evident by the onsite *Egernia kingii* and *Morelia spilota*, despite the cold snap.

Plenary talks were much anticipated by Harry Butler, who many of us grew up watching; Steve Donnellan, a hero of the trees; and Aaron Bauer, Lord of the Gekkonidae.

A diversity of researchers came to meet and discuss the latest research in our world of herpetology.

Devi and Phil gave us a realistic, yet inspiring outlook on potential post-doctoral options, with a slightly new twist from a women's perspective.

As always Mark Hutchinson's table took out the quiz night prize *sigh* - I question if that man knows every individual lizard in South Australia, on a first name basis.

The Hawaiian night saw colour, glitter and herpetologists combine into one mass of bizarre dance moves. Simon Clulow took out the dancing queen prize, while Sean Doody pulled off a move unlike nothing I've ever witnessed. I heard it referred to post-conference as 'the cochroach'. Go Doods!

On that note, we would like to invite you to meet again at the next meeting for ASH, to be held in conjunction with SRARNZ and in New Zealand itself. This will certainly be a superb opportunity to see a whole new order of reptiles as well as some serious eye-candy in the form of geckos.

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members of ASH: Mr John Abramyan, Ms Joanne Baizik, Miss Marleen Baling, Ms Manuela Barry, Ms Cecilie Beatson, Miss Gillian Bryant, Ms Chloe Cadby, Dr Victoria Cartledge, Mr Ben Croak, Mr Curtis Doughty, Dr Weiguo Du, Dr Sylvain Dubey, Dr Ashley Edwards, Miss Jennifer Francis, Mr Joshua Hale, Dr Andrew Hayes, Dr Conrad Hoskin, Ms Noriko Iwai, Mr Geoffrey Kay, Mr Stephan Leu, Ms Carryn Manicom, Dr Georgia Mantziou, Ms Camila Monasterio, Ms Bridgette Murphy, Mr Glen Murray, Mr Edward Narayan, Mr, David Nelson, Mr Russell Palmer, Dr Scott Parker, Mr Luke Price, Ms Anna-bel Smith, Ms Katie Smith, Dr Scott Snyder, Miss Zoe Squires, Ms Claire Stevenson, Miss Michelle Stockwell, Dr Duncan Sutherland, Mr Roy Teale, Mr Scott van Barneveld, Mr Dylan van Winkel, Miss Atlanta Veld, Mr Mathew Vickers, Mr Matthew Vucko, Mr Chris Wedding.





EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Second Joint SRARNZ & ASH Conference 2009

Conservation Management of Herpetofauna

Massey University

Location: Albany, Auckland, New Zealand

Date: 16 - 19 February 2009

Calls for symposia proposals

Please submit proposals to Dr Weihong Ji (j.j.wei hong@massey.ac.nz)

Student travel grants available for SRARNZ and ASH members.

Conference trips (subject to interest & availability) - Little Barrier Island,
Tiritiri Matangi Island, Waitakere Ranges & Hunua Ranges.

Conference website available soon.



Located 20 km north of Auckland City, the conference location is close to the coast, bush and also within walking distance to shops, restaurants and cafes. Auckland is central to many mainland, island and marine reserves, which are inhabited by various endemic and interesting flora and fauna.





29th Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation

17-19 February 2009
Brisbane, Australia

Creating – Community – Collaboration: The symposium will explore themes such as building communication and networking at local, regional, and global scales. It aims to create linkages between communities and to connect policy-makers and managers at all levels with the latest information coming out of sea turtle research and conservation programs. This is the International Sea Turtle Society's annual symposium.

<http://www.turtlesbrisbane2009.org/>



6^o World Congress of Herpetology

Manaus-Amazonas, 17-22 August 2008
www.worldcongressofherpetology.org

Herpetofauna Headlines

Herps Hit Hollywood

The latest David Attenborough series “Life in Cold Blood” has seen the showcase of some fascinating Australian herpetology. Screening this year, research from a few Australian Herpetologists including: Mike Bull’s research on skinks — the sleepy lizards and Pigmy Blue tongues; Sean Doody’s research on Pig-nose turtles on the Daly River; Assa frogs from Mike Mahony, Rachael Peak and the frog team in NSW; Adam Britton and some crocodile footage; as well as Scott Keough’s collaboration on African lizards. David Attenborough is highly regarded and reaches a vast audience. It is fantastic to see hard earned research shared with so many living rooms around the world.

Tubeworms Kill Turtles

The Murray River has been making headlines in 2008 with the infestation of a marine tube worm at the mouth of the river. Turtles suffered the consequences of the infestation, as their shells were covered with the tube worm causing restriction to limbs and excess weight on their shells. Some of the turtles were rescued by locals but many probably perished. The years of unsuitable land practises along the Murray River have taken their toll and with the current drought, impacts are becoming evident.

Defence Mismanages Native Grasslands—Endangered reptiles are the losers

The current drought has been playing havoc on farmers, on the Murray-Darling, and brought home how critical water is to become in the not to distant future. In the ACT an unfortunate saga has been playing out with our native grasslands, and the threatened species that rely upon them. Among the species affected are the striped legless lizard, the earless dragon and the pink-tailed legless lizard. Some of the best quality habitat remaining nationally for these species resides in the ACT, and of that, some of the best examples of remnant lowland native grasslands reside on lands controlled by the Department of Defence. Defence, in a bout of chronic indecision, is procrastinating over the buildup of kangaroo numbers in fenced areas at Belconnen and Majura. There the kangaroos are on the verge of eating themselves out of house and home, and taking the threatened species with them. It has become an ugly public issue, with animal welfare groups pitted against conservationists, and demonstrates just how vulnerable are species that cling to existence in relict fragments of natural habitat. Government inaction, pressures of development, conflicting messages to politicians from the community, and a poor commitment to evidential decision-making have, I fear, some imminent bad news stories in the making for some of our endangered ACT reptiles.



A massive thank you to our regional reporters...

Papua New Guinea
North Queensland
South Queensland
Northern Territory
Western Australia
New South Wales
Australian Capital Territory
South Australia
Victoria
Tasmania

David Williams
Lin Schwarzkopf and Rebecca Webb
Harry Hines
Dane Trembath
Dale Roberts
Frank Lemckert
Arthur Georges
Aaron Fenner
David Chapple
Geoff While



North Queensland

James Cook University

Lin Schwarzkopf: Three major projects (1) examining the effects of top predators (goannas) on mesopredator (skinks and spiders) behaviour and ecology, on Hinchinbrook Island, (2) examining the effects of control of the weed para grass by burning and grazing on reptile and amphibian diversity, and (3) measuring the skin morphology of geckos in relation to their ecology, are just finishing up. I am presently studying the impacts of powerlines on amphibian behaviour and the dynamics of the chytrid fungus in collaboration with Ross Alford.

Hinchinbrook: **Carryn Manicom** is presently deciphering the details of the program MARK as she determines the influence of goannas on skinks and spiders for her PhD project. **Mathew Vickers** has just finished working as a technician on the Hinchinbrook Project and is applying for jobs while writing papers on thermoregulation by skinks in the tropics. If anyone needs a fantastic tech, Mat is your man! **Ray Lloyd** has finished his honours on goanna behaviour on Hinchinbrook Island, and is working for the Australian Wildlife Conservancy in WA. **Mark Hadingham** is presently studying the territorial behaviour of rainbow skinks for his Master's of Applied Science degree. **Fran Alexander** plans to start honours mid-year, also on the social behaviour of rainbow skinks. **Scott Harte** is starting a Graduate Certificate of Research Methods on the behaviour of goannas around picnic areas.

Para grass: **Ashley Percy** has completed her master's paper on the ecology of reptiles and amphibians in wetlands, and is enrolled for a PhD at a Dutch University, working on crocodiles in the Philippines. **Katrin Schmidt** is completing honours on the effects of various marking techniques on frogs and skinks, and hopes to convert us all to elastomer tagging. **Rick Abom** is completing his Graduate Certificate of Research Methods on the movements and behaviour of keelback snakes. **Lauren Hodgson** is writing up the final report on the effects of weed control on reptiles and amphibians. Weed control changes numbers and distributions of some species, but they remain present in the wetland. We say: burn that nasty weed!

Geckos: **Matt Vucko** has just completed his unbelievably thorough master's paper on the ecology of skin morphology in geckos, and is writing his papers in between wedding preparations. **Paula Jaycock** is finishing her honours on foraging mode, performance, and morphology in geckos. **Don Miles** visited us for a month, finally visited Moorrinya National Park, and exhausted a whole bunch of geckos and skinks, not to mention bottles of wine.

Powerlines: **Janet Kleiner** has completed her master's paper describing species numbers at sites destined for powerlines. **Arnaud Gourret** is wading up to his waist in honours on those same frogs, measuring movement using radiotracking. As part of his PhD shared between us and the Shine lab, **John Llewelyn** is feeding a whole series of baby keelbacks frogs and cane toads, to see if they can tell cane toads are yucky from an early age, while simultaneously trying to feed his baby son mushed up vegetables (let's hope he doesn't get them mixed up!)

Ross Alford: Ross continues to examine the dynamics of chytrid fungus and frog extinctions, now examining the interactions between chytrids and bacterial populations on frogs.

Nicole Kenyon has just handed in her PhD on the effects of chytrid fungus on frog behaviour and vice-versa. **Sara Bell** has started up a cool PhD on the interactions between chytrids, skin secretions and bacteria on the surfaces of frogs. **Scott Cashins** continues to search for chytrids in water for his MSc, and **Robert Puschendorf** is doing his PhD, studying the ecology of rainforest frogs at risk from the disease. Enrolled in Japan **Noriko Iwai** is wrapping up her PhD data collection studying egg size strategies in savanna frogs with Ross.

Old-timers: **Leonie Valentine** is in WA writing papers and looking for a post-doc. **Brett Goodman** is writing up a storm and working with the Steve Williams climate-change juggernaut, as is **Yvette Williams**, after finishing her PhD on the determinants of rarity in microhylid frogs. **Jodi Rowley** is doing a post-doc in Cambodia with Conservation International. **Simon Cook** has gone off and gotten himself a real job at Ballarat. **Dan Salkeld** is completing a post-doc at Berkeley, and looking for a real job. **Rick Van Veen** left to chase Jamaican iguanas, in the remote hills of Jamaica. His team have made good headway on the project led by University of West Indies Lecturer **Byron Wilson** and with years of accumulated mongoose and pig control, 2008 saw the first wild hatchling return to lay, since the iguanas were rediscovered!

The Bruce Copeman Parasitology Lab

Our lab in the veterinary and biomedical sciences, James Cook University, is home to a lot of people researching frog diseases. Most of the research is based on the disease chytridiomycosis, caused by the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or "Bd"

Lee Berger is looking at the effect that chytridiomycosis has on amphibian skin. Bd infects the keratinised cells which form the outer layer of the skin. Disruption to the keratin layers in amphibian skin may affect osmoregulation. Lee is using antibodies against different keratin types in an immunoperoxidase test to look at changes in frog epidermis which occur as infection progresses.

Lee Skerratt is supervising work on the control, management and host/pathogen relationship of chytridiomycosis. His latest work is showing that the spread of chytridiomycosis has caused its emergence. He is currently developing mapping protocols and testing these in various states and countries to document the spread and impact of chytridiomycosis. He collaborates with other researchers of chytridiomycosis in Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, Queensland, USA, NZ, Hong Kong and Indonesia. In his spare time he cares for his three young children aged 4 yrs to 4 months.

Andrea Phillott is primarily studying the epidemiology of amphibian chytridiomycosis. However she also manages to fit in investigating the effects of toe-clipping on movements of frogs and potential infection of marked toes, hygiene practices suitable for the field, and population dynamics of the 4 species of sympatric rainforest frogs she has been marking every fortnight for the last 2.5 years. Andrea still maintains her research with sea turtles, but gale force winds and floods on the Queensland coast stopped her radio tracking flatback turtle hatchlings by sea kayak during January-March 2008. She hopes the weather is fairer in 2009.

The lab has a few PhD students. **Sam Young** is based up in Cairns and is looking very closely at two species of Australian tree frogs, *Litoria caerulea* and *L. infrafrenata*. Sam is establishing baseline haematology and biochemistry reference values for these species. She is characterising the acquired immune response in healthy individuals and determining if the acquired immune response is altered in animals with chytridiomycosis. She will then determine if recovery from chytridiomycosis following treatment, results in protective immunity against reinfection. As well as this, Sam is comparing different surveillance techniques for amphibian disease in far northern Queensland and describing new and emerging amphibian diseases in Queensland. **Stephanie Shaw** is based at Auckland Zoo in New Zealand. She is investigating what diseases are present in native frogs - *Leiopelma* species. One of these diseases is a blistering syndrome present in both wild and captive frogs. She is also collating results and mapping the distribution of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in collaboration with the Department of Conservation, the University of Otago, Massey University, and Victoria University. She plans to isolate Bd in NZ and test the cutaneous bacteria of *Leiopelma* against Bd to investigate the possibility of a protective function. She will also be re-infecting a small group of *Leiopelma archeyi* with Bd that have recovered from a natural infection of Bd in the wild, to see if they have acquired immunity. **Stephen Garland** is conducting diagnostic assays for chytridiomycosis and researching to improve these assays. He provides essential diagnostic support to the amphibian disease ecology group at JCU. He is supported by **Anthony Baker** who works part-time in the diagnostic area when he is not doing his PhD on environmental microbiology.

Jamie Volyes is trying to understand the mechanism of mortality due to chytridiomycosis. Because amphibian skin, where Bd is predominantly found, is a critical physiological organ, her research is focusing on skin functioning and the pathophysiological effects of Bd infection. She is building on previous work that she had completed back home in the USA, and also following on from work that Lee Berger previously completed here at JCU. Jamie's studies indicate that Bd disrupts osmotic balance that may alter cardiac electrical functioning in severely diseased frogs.

Richard Speare, Diana Mendez and Rebecca Webb are also looking at diseases beyond chytridiomycosis. They are investigating the possibility of undescribed amphibian diseases emerging in North Queensland. They are collaborating with researchers from the Cairns Frog Hospital (Deborah Pergolotti), Taronga Zoo (Karrie Rose and Jane Hall) in Sydney and The Australian Animal Health Laboratory in Geelong (Alex Hyatt, Jackie Pallister) to try and create a network of amphibian pathologists. **Rick Speare** also collaborates with a group at University of Otago in Dunedin, NZ, led by Phil Bishop and Russell Poulter to develop more effective therapy for chytridiomycosis. He is also working with a group at Seoul National University, South Korea, Hyo-Jin Yang spent 3 months at James Cook University being trained in techniques and protocols for amphibian disease investigations. **Rebecca Webb** is trying to help slow the spread of chytridiomycosis by finding disinfectants which are really effective against Bd. Rebecca and Lee Berger are also searching for disinfectants effective against *Mucor amphibiorum*, an Australian fungus which causes a disease known as mucormycosis in amphibians, as well as in platypus.

Tawni Cashins is about to follow up the work of recently completed honours student Rebecca James on microbial competition with Bd in the environment.

Southern Queensland

Environmental Protection Agency—Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service

Harry Hines is completing ongoing, although greatly reduced, monitoring of stream frogs in southern Queensland. He conducts opportunistic surveys of frogs in southern Queensland, mostly targeting *Cyclorana* species and general fauna survey work at Craven's Peak (Australian Bush Heritage property, Simpson Desert) and Durikai State Forest west of Warwick. **Rod Hobson** is continuing on with Grassland Earless Dragon, *Tympanocryptis pinguicolla*, surveys. He now has records as far north as Jimbour, west to Dalby, south to Clifton and east to Aubigny (near Oakey). All sites are still confined to Condamine Floodplain. He has recorded the species on thirteen separate properties now – none of which are protected estate.

University of Queensland

David Booth's lab is undertaking a study examining the effects of rearing in isolation, or in groups, on the growth rates of brown-striped marsh frogs. They are continuing a long-term project on the reproductive effort of the Brisbane river turtle and the broad-shelled river turtle in the lakes on UQ's St Lucia campus as well as studies on the role of the incubation environment on the embryonic development and hatchling outcomes of freshwater turtle eggs. Recently they have begun a project on the movement patterns of the Mary River turtles. They are also continuing studies on the role of the incubation environment on the hatchling outcomes of loggerhead and green turtles.

Craig Franklin Lab

Craig Franklin's group at the University of Queensland is engaged in a variety of projects on both frogs and reptiles. This includes a project on the ecophysiology of bimodal respiring turtles ran by **Natalie Clark** (nee Mathie) who has just completed her Ph.D. on the effect of abiotic and biotic factors on the diving ecology of hatchling freshwater turtles. - We have a current focus on the Mary River turtle (*Elusor macrurus*) which is an efficient cloacal respirer. Craig and postdoc, **Hamish Campbell** are undertaking telemetric studies (acoustic, radio and archival tags) on estuarine and freshwater crocodiles up on Cape York Peninsula. This is a collaborative project with Australia Zoo and Queensland Parks and Wildlife. Craig, postdoc **Rebecca Cramp** and Ph.D. students, **Sara Kayes** and **Karen Young** are conducting a variety of physiological studies on the green striped burrowing frog.

Beth Symonds has completed her Ph.D. on the effect of prolonged aestivation on muscle structure and function. She has now moved to Canberra. **Lesley Alton** has started her Ph.D. looking at the interactions of sublethal levels of UV-B radiation with temperature and predation in the striped marsh frog. **Amanda Niehaus** has just been awarded her Ph.D. on her research looking at thermal fluctuations on the development and performance of frogs. **Kirstin Pratt** is continuing her work on the Arafura file snake and is just about to undertake a telemetric field study on Cape York Peninsula.

Griffith University

Marc Hero Lab

Marc is supervising a suite of projects at the moment. **Danial Stratford** is co-supervised by **Dr Ed Myer**, on his PhD. He is studying amphibian responses to climate change within Karawatha Nature Reserve, Logan. This project was undertaken on the first PPBio grid in Australia. Sites are to be surveyed using acoustic and visual survey techniques over a three year period. Ephemeral water bodies located within the park will also be surveyed after rainfall events over the same time period. Focus will be conducted on the *Litoria brevipalmata* breeding ponds. **Saara Kampman** is addressing the influence of vegetation structure and fire history on the composition of lizard assemblages at Karawatha Forest Park, South-east Queensland. Analysis of fire and other environmental variables were looked at to determine the influence of vegetation structure fire effected the composition of lizard assemblages. **Chris Gregory** is looking at ecological, morphological and genetic correlated of the genus *Pseudonaja*.. **Abraham** is working on the conservation genetics of the Acid frogs and sister species from the Wallum habitats of mid-eastern Australia

Dr Monique Van Sluys and **Clay Simpkins** are studying the swabber bias and influence of repeated swabbing on the quantification of chytrid zoospores' as well as detecting a western limit for chytridmycosis in Southern-eastern Queensland. **Clay Simpkins** and **Kat Lowe** are looking at acid frog response to climate change along the east coast of Australia' and 'Chytridmycosis intensity within the acid frog populations'. Their projects will involve the group of frogs known as 'acid' frogs and will attempt to monitor the response these frogs, and their community, have in regards to climate change.

Kerry Kriger (ex-Hero lab) has started a nonprofit called SAVE THE FROGS! (www.savethefrogs.com). On the website there is good frog information, a Wiki, a Gallery and a Forum where users can upload photos and information/questions. I'm also selling a 'Frogs of Australia' poster in the Frog Store: http://www.savethefrogs.com/frog_store/index.html); all proceeds of which go directly to SAVE THE FROGS!, and yes I can ship it to Australia. Any suggestions on how to improve the website or the organization would be appreciated.

Queensland Museum

This year, we've participated in a field survey of the Proserpine, MEQ, area which, once flooding had subsided, yielded a rich sample of madly reproducing frogs and a few reptiles that had been able to reach higher ground. In April, Andrew spent some time in Maningrida, Arnhemland, helping indigenous students learn about scientific methods of investigating the natural world, as well as researching taxonomy of the local skinks. We've published a few popular books including Snakes of South-east Queensland, a handy pocket guide to our local snakes and a re-issue of the best-selling Wildlife of Greater Brisbane. Currently, we're looking at the taxonomy of the skink genera *Lerista* and *Carlia* and the gecko genus *Diplodactylus*, the latter two in collaboration with the South Australian Museum. In September, we'll venture into the rainforests of Cape York to collect genetic samples of geckoes for other taxonomic projects.

Western Australia

Herpers are alive and kicking in the golden west with strong activity at the WA Museum, University of Western Australia, Perth Zoo and state government Department of Environment & Conservation but with hidden pockets at Murdoch University.

Western Australian Museum

Paul Doughty: almost finished revision of the WA Museum frog book and cranking on taxonomy of Kimberley frogs and geckos and lots more. Recent paper on a new species of *Arenophryne* made Doughty a page 3 herper in the West Australian (see West Australian, June 20)!

Ric How's email tells you he will be on leave until the middle of August! But Ric has been active in looking at reptile distributions with Mark Cowan.

University of Western Australia

Most but not all action is in the School of Animal Biology. **Dale Roberts** is continuing studies on group sex in frogs with a current ARC grant with **Leigh Simmons** employing **Martin Dziminski**. JDR is also playing around with a review article on frog polyandry with Phil Byrne at Monash and working with Doughty on Kimberley frog taxonomy and thinking a lot about complex *Litoria* calls. JDR is also a very small contributor to a major program on cane toad genomics being run by Grant Morahan in the WA Institute of Medical Research.

Postgraduate and honours students at UWA are:

Jen Francis (Ph D): Community dynamics of Australian subtropical tadpoles: understanding threats and values (JDR, co-supervised by Paul Doughty, WA Museum)

Aimee Silla (Ph D): Development and application of assisted reproductive technologies for the conservation of anuran amphibians (JDR, co-supervised by Nicki Mitchell and Helen Robertson, Perth Zoo)

Sharron Perks (Ph D): Improving the quality of spermatozoa obtained from male anurans via assisted reproduction (JDR, co-supervised by Helen Robertson, Perth Zoo)

Karen Riley (Hons): The geographic distribution of chytrid fungus in a south west amphibian population (JDR and Olly Berry)

Claire Foster is working on: Nest success of Flatback Turtles on Barrow Island (4th year research project in the Conservation Biology and Management program, supervised by Harriet Mills)

Nicki Mitchell, is an ARC post doc testing direct benefit models of mate choice using *Pseudophryne guentheri*. She is nutting out the bizarre sex life of turtle frogs, and modelling tuatara populations under climate change

Don Bradshaw formally retired some years back but is still cranking out papers including a recent review on environmental endocrinology!

Department of Environment & Conservation

David Pearson: has been heavily involved with Rick Shine's group from Sydney University assessing impact of cane toads on Kimberley herpetofauna and, there is always another python record! **Mark Cowan**, along with Ric How (WAM) and Dale Roberts (UWA) is involved in a joint venture between WWF and DEC analysing vertebrate richness in south-western Australia as a contrast to the extensive mapping of plant species richness by Hopper & Gioia.

Murdoch University

Michael Craig from the Centre for *Phytophthora* Science and Management is working on management of rehabilitated bauxite mines to accelerate the return of vertebrate fauna. That is vertebrates generally but Mike has a soft spot for reptiles and there is a strong set of subprojects in that area.

Perth Zoo

The Perth Zoo is involved in herpetology through work by **Helen Robertson** and several other people, particularly **Glen Gaikhorst**. They have captive breeding programs with *Geocrinia rosea*, *G. alba*, *G. vitellina*, *Spicospina flammocaerulea*, *Notaden weigeli* and *Litoria cavernicola*. Tadpole growth and development studies are being done on *Litoria moorei*. There is a study on induction of ovulation in *Litoria moorei* (with Queensland University Honours student, **Alexandra Mee**). The Zoo has two Honours students from Murdoch University, **Jamie Ong** and **Amelia Hui**, working on detection and variation in chytrid fungus at Yanchep National Park co-supervised by Helen Robertson and Chris Florides from Saturn Biotech based at Murdoch. They are also have an ongoing program captive breeding western swamp tortoises.

Papua New Guinea

Herpetological interest in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands is very strong at the moment, with a number of researchers/groups undertaking projects across the region:

Australian Venom Research Unit:

AVRU's permanent researcher in Papua New Guinea **David Williams** is involved in a number of projects related to improving the clinical management of snake bite in PNG including the establishment of a snake venom production facility at the University of Papua New Guinea which will serve as a source of venoms for antivenom production. From a herpetological perspective AVRU is currently conducting biogeographical and phylogenetic studies of PNG's elapid fauna (*Acanthophis*, *Aspidomorphus*, *Demansia*, *Furina*, *Micropechis*, *Oxyuranus*, *Pseudechis*, *Pseudonaja*, *Rhinoplocephalus*, *Toxicocalamus*) in collaboration with Dr Wolfgang Wüster (University of Wales, Bangor) and Dr Mark O'Shea. A paper on the origin of New Guinea *Pseudonaja textilis* was published in Zootaxa recently. David is supervising a UPNG MSc student, **Owen Paiva**, who is studying the venom of *Micropechis ikaheka* using a range of molecular and protein purification techniques. Owen is currently in Australia at QIMR undertaking genomic studies using *M. ikaheka* venom glands in collaboration with Dr Liam St. Pierre and Dr Martin Lavin.

Northern Territory

The dry season has finally set in with the monsoon trough heading north. This is a time of fairly mild temperatures and low humidity thus attracting hordes of non-Territorians to this great place. However even in these milder times, herpetologists of the NT continue to do research, unlike their Southern compatriots whose regional herpetofauna has the audacity to slow down and allow their herpetologists a break in the never ending drama of Australian herpetology. Though compared to other states we have a small amount of researchers within the NT, and their exploits may be presented throughout the regional reports, especially for the fine teams from the Universities of Adelaide, Canberra and Sydney (Team Bufo). These Institutions continue to send students up to partake in the glorious atmosphere that we know as the Northern Territory of Australia.

Charles Darwin University

In recent times the research emphasis has shifted from the physiological ecology of reptiles to the physiological ecology of frogs, although **Sebastian Iglesias** is still chasing lizards. **Keith Christian's** lab continues to produce students such as the recent PhD graduates **Jeanne Young** and **Lorae McArthur**. **Chris Tracy**, our postdoctoral fellow supported by an ARC grant, is exploring the extent to which frog's hydroregulate. **Steve Reynold's** has also been studying the water relations of burrowing and non-burrowing frogs, with particular emphasis on how they survive the dry season. Although the emphasis of the frog work has been on native frogs, we have also studied some of the physiological parameters of cane toads. We have recently begun studying the digestive physiology of crocodilians, in collaboration with staff at Wildlife Management International. An ARC-funded postdoctoral fellow will be appointed in 2008 on this project.

Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory

Last year saw the completion of a PhD on the taxonomy of *Cryptoblepharus* skinks by **Paul Horner**. This work has now been published and includes the descriptions of 19 new species. Additionally Paul continues his work on the tropical skink fauna, with a paper in progress describing new *Ctenotus* species from the Kimberley Region. Lastly Paul has agreed to help solve the *Diporiphora* complex in collaboration with Jane Melville of Museum Victoria.

In 2006 **Dane Trembath** was appointed Research Associate to the Natural Sciences Division of the Museum. He continues to work away dissecting pythons for his PhD on the comparative ecology and evolution of the Australo-Papuan python radiation. He also gives a helping hand to Sean Doody's many students from the University of Canberra. Additionally he is nearing completion of a project on the revision of the *Pseudechis australis* complex in collaboration with Steve Donellan and Ralph Foster of the Evolutionary Biology Unit of the South Australian Museum.

This year also saw the museum finally acquire an ultra cold freezer for the storage of animal tissues from the Northern Territory. Dane and Paul have been actively filling this freezer so that tissues are available for molecular work on the fauna of the Northern Territory.

Visitors to the Northern Territory

Bret Stewart and **Chris Camacho**, under the leadership of Sean Doody and Keith Christian, pulled off an experiment with Daly River pig-nosed turtle eggs that also involved some Wagiman Rangers. Also on the picturesque Daly River pig-nose camp, Sean, Brian Green, David Rhind, and Christina Castellano continued their 7-year study of cane toad impacts. Although the toads are said to be moving fast, the troops were able to outpace them to the Kimberly to initiate more impact studies there.

Scott Snyder—the “Indiana Jones of the parasitic world” from the University of Nebraska along with **Vasyl Tkach** of the University of North Dakota just completed a field trip throughout Western Australia and the Northern Territory for their National Science Foundation funded project on parasites of turtles.

Additionally **Paul Doughty** and **David Moore** came to Darwin on their continual hunt for new and undescribed *Uperoleia* spp. (now officially called Gungans in the Northern Territory and Western Australia). They were treated well by Team Bufo of the University of Sydney and even got to experience a whip cracking show at Fogg Dam.

During the past years numerous researchers, such as Paul Oliver, Luke Price, Ralph Foster of the University of Adelaide and Jane Melville, Museum of Victoria, have also been spotted throughout the Territory in search of herps for their never-ending molecular work on these groups.



New South Wales

University of Southern Cross

David Newell remains writing up his PhD on *Mixophyes fleayi* and associated stream frog stuff. It will be finished any year now. In between writing bouts, he continues to monitor stream breeding rainforest frogs in NE NSW and, specifically, populations of *M. fleayi* (in conjunction with Mike Mahony). This work is being funded through the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority (CMA) and the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC). He has developed a monitoring strategy for acid frogs with Byron Shire Council and worked on a newly discovered isolated high elevation (1100m) *Bufo marinus* population in the world heritage rainforests of the Border Ranges. Dave has been undertaking pool tracking to determine the degree that rainforest habitat is being used (in relation to roads) and is assisting in the development of control strategy with, again, DECC and the NRCMA.

Finally, Dave is looking at mechanisms to prevent accidental transportation of Green Tree Frogs, Cane Toads and Indonesian House Geckoes on to Lord Howe Island via produce. Bleating Tree Frogs (*Litoria dentata*) have recently established there and so this is a real threat, but might also give Rick Shine another island paradise on which to conduct research.

Australian Museum

Allen Greer has officially resigned from the position of Principal Research Scientist in Herpetology as of February 2008. **Cecile Beatson** (former AQIS) has joined the section on a two year Technical Officer appointment. **Ross Sadlier** is still here as Collection Manager (coming up to 30 years at the AM). **Gerry Swan**, **Glenn Shea** and **Rick Shine** remain as section associates and **Hal Cogger** as a museum John Evans fellow. With major renovations at the Australian Museum, the Herpetology section move into new offices and will be located within easy reach of the collections around August 2008.

Ross Sadlier's research centres on a range of collaborative projects, these include: New Caledonian lizards with Aaron Bauer (Villanova Univ.), Sarah Smith (CDU), Glenn Shea (USyd.) Tony Whitaker (NZ) and Herve Jourdan (IRD Noumea); Diplodactyline geckos with Patrick Couper (Queensland Museum); Australian agamids with the Melville cast of thousands; the quarter century *Egernia cunninghami* review with Steve Donnellan (SAM); Major publications due out in 2008 include a review of the *Saltuarius swainii* group in the Records of the Australian Museum and reviews of the New Caledonian gecko genus *Eurydactylodes* and scincid lizard genus *Marmorosphax* in Zoologia Neocaledonica.

Sydney University

Thompson Lab

The Thompson lab has been very productive in a number of areas of herpetology in the last two years. Together with **Chris Murphy** from the School of Medical Sciences, **Mike Thompson** has received another ARC Discovery grant to work on the evolution of viviparity. This project is specifically targeted at studying the development of blood vessels (angiogenesis) in the uterus and embryos of lizards. The overall goal of this research is to understand how increased uterine and embryonic vascular proliferation evolved during the evolutionary transition from oviparity to viviparity. **Scott Parker** is the Postdoctoral Research Associate on this grant. **Joanna Biazik** should soon complete her PhD study of the junctional complexes in the uterine epithelium of a range of lizard species, and the role they play in the evolution of viviparity. **Bridget Murphy** completed her honours project on molecular aspects of the evolution of viviparity in lizards in 2007, and took up a PhD scholarship to continue those studies in 2008. Bridget won the award for the best oral presentation by an honours student at the Albany 2007 ASH meeting in December. **Scott van Barneveld** received a PhD scholarship from the Invasive Animal CRC and began work in 2007 on the physiological ecology of the invasive lizard species, *Lampropholis delicata*. **Chris Gordon** recently completed his honours project on the ecological and physiological consequences of nocturnal activity in the panther skink, *Ctenotus pantherinus*.

Qiong (Jasper) Wu conducted a one semester study of the thermal biology of the fossorial skink, *Saiphos equalis*. A new addition to the lab is **Shervin Aslanzadeh** who is beginning a PhD on the interaction between central netted dragons, *Ctenophorus nuchalis*, and plague locusts.

Jacquie Herbert remains the glue that holds the whole operation together, and is involved in all of the projects mentioned. Additionally, she has been continuing the work on calcium transport across the placenta of lizards. Other students in the lab (**Phoebe Hill** and **Sam Clayman**) are working on viviparity in sharks and physiology of marine molluscs. **Kris Rogers** completed his PhD on the mechanisms and significance of thermal acclimation in frogs in 2006 and now works as a Biostatistician for NSW Health. **Sean Blamires**, who began his PhD on turtles in the Bellinger River, completed his PhD on the ecological and physiological costs of orb-web spider foraging in 2007. The lab has been well represented at recent meetings of ASH and the Australian and New Zealand Society of Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry, and will be well represented at the 6th World Congress of Herpetology in 2008.

Shine Lab

We begin this report with reference to the tragedy of **Raju Radder's** untimely death. Raju had been an ARC-funded postdoc in our group for the last few years. He was back in India briefly for family reasons when he suffered a fatal heart attack on 31 May 2008. Raju was 34 years old.

The group here in Sydney, and in the Northern Territory, are still trying to come to terms with this loss. It is too soon for a comprehensive summary of Raj's career or his accomplishments. We will put together a detailed report in the fullness of time. In the interim, we'll simply note that Raj was a wonderful human being as well as a superbly gifted young scientist, and that his research on sex-determining mechanisms in reptiles was at the forefront of this field internationally. His loss is tragic on many levels.

Sydney: **Rick Shine** is attempting to do an improbably large number of things simultaneously. He is about halfway through his Federation Fellowship, and spends more time than he would like doing talks, media interviews, and getting dragged into administrative and political wrangles. He intermittently manages to get out into the field, mostly at Fogg Dam, where he attempts to get in the way of students and postdocs who are doing real research. Rick won the 2008 Macfarlane Burnet Award from the Australian Academy of Science, and gave a talk there in May. Frustrated at the lack of reliable information about cane toads, Rick and his wife Terri have put together a new website (www.canetoadsinoz.com) that tries to present the results of research in a simple fashion. It has attracted occasional howls of outrage from people who see the world of toads differently, but by and large seems to have been pretty well received.

Fabien Aubret (an ARC-funded postdoc) is aimed at assessing the role of phenotypically plastic traits in facilitating the invasion/colonisation of novel environments. For the past two and a half years he has been sampling a dozen Tigersnake populations across Australia in order to obtain neonates and carry on experiments with them back in Sydney. He is investigating the role of early experience (habitat type, prey size) on juvenile snakes' phenotypes and future preferences. It's all going well and the project will end in January 2009 after which, he will be no longer based in Sydney, but will integrate indefinitely in Jean Clobert's lab in the South of France.

Sylvain Dubey's postdoctoral research topic of this year involved molecular genetic research on the evolution of sexual competition, rates of multiple paternity, and sex-biased dispersal in a tropical Australian snake (*Stegonotus cucullatus*, Colubridae). She is also collaborating on molecular phylogeography projects involving lungworm parasites of cane toads, and small elapid snakes of the genus *Drysdalia*. **Jonno Webb** is another postdoc, working with Dave Pearson (WA DEC) to predict the impact of cane toads on terrestrial vertebrates from the Kimberley region, and with Mike Letnic to quantify the impacts of cane toads on freshwater crocodiles from the Victoria River near the WA/NT border. Jonno is also studying predator-prey interactions between predatory mammals and cane toads, and he is continuing his long-term (16 year) mark-recapture study of broad-headed snakes and small-eyed snakes in Morton National Park.

Wei-Guo Du has won a University of Sydney three-year postdoc. Wei-Guo currently is spending a few months back in China, applying some of his developmental-biology methods to a wide range of Asian reptile species. While in Sydney, Wei-Guo is looking at embryonic responses to incubation conditions, with special reference to exploiting some of the newly available technologies for non-invasive monitoring of heart rates in embryos. A Chinese colleague of Wei-Guo's, **Daode Yang**, spent a few months as a visitor in the Sydney and Middle Point labs, looking at the ecology of invasive house geckoes. He has now returned to China. **Rob Pringle**, now completing his PhD at Stanford, returned to his old haunts to collaborate with Jonno and Rick in GIS-based analyses of habitat characteristics for broad-headed snakes.

Mattias Hagman and **Dan Warner** have both finished their PhDs, and returned to the Northern Hemisphere to take up postdoctoral positions in their native lands. Mattias will work on body-size evolution of animals in the Stockholm Archipelago, whereas Dan is looking at sex-determining systems in turtles and lizards (based in Iowa). Dan won the School of Biological Sciences' award for the best student thesis (no surprise; he published 19 papers from his PhD, including one in *Nature*).

Amanda Lane has been doing a PhD, primarily focusing on the population genetics and phylogeography of laticaudine sea kraits. Though she has been taking a slight detour lately, investigating aspects of the ecology of these intriguing animals. Sea kraits are amphibious, foraging for eels in the oceans, but returning to land to rest, mate and oviposit. This poses somewhat of a thermal challenge; while oceanic conditions are warm and thermostable, terrestrial conditions can be far more variable. She recorded the use of thermostable bird burrows as retreat sites by these animals and noted antagonistic interactions between the sea kraits and the resident birds (wedge-tailed shearwaters).

Ben Croak survived his Honours year (indeed, he did well!) but hasn't yet realised the amount of pain and suffering inevitably involved in habitat restoration projects that involve rock-dwelling animals. Thus, he is currently employed to run the broad-headed snake rock-replacement research. Ben is placing large chunks of concrete (that resemble sandstone rocks) in bushrocked areas to attract endangered snakes (broad-headed snakes, *Hoplocephalus bungaroides*). Thus far, snakes and lizards are using the rocks in great numbers, and this seems to be a great way to attract animals and thus restore habitat. However, most of his time is currently spent carrying rocks from the car to remote areas, rather than catching animals that are using the rocks.

David Pike is a year into his PhD, still monitoring his vegetation overgrowth experiment, where trees were mercilessly cut down with a chainsaw to open up the canopy, allowing more sunlight to penetrate the rocks below (which are used by reptiles as shelter-sites). More and more animals are using these novel habitats, and they are being used more often than shady areas. David spends most of his time measuring small lizards and snakes, and is continually hoping that his back does not go out from lifting heavy rocks prior to completing his project.

David Nelson has just completed his Honours year, looking at the ability of predators (gudgeons and frogs) to learn to recognise and avoid the toxic tadpoles of cane toads. **Georgia Ward-Fear** is looking at interactions between metamorph anurans and meat ants - these fearsome insects seem to be major predators on tiny toads, and we'd like to understand that interaction better. **Stephanie O'Donnell** will start Honours mid-year, looking at the ability of quolls to learn to recognise and avoid toads.

Rory Telemeco has been with the Shine Laboratory for the past 9 months as a Fulbright Scholar from the USA. He has been examining the effects of thermal conditions on the life-history traits of Australian three-lined skinks (*Bassiana duperreyi*). He has been involved in two projects - determining the effects of global warming on nesting behaviour and subsequent nest temperatures; and teasing apart the contributing effects of genotype and thermal environment on phenotypic variation observed in populations from different elevations.

Other people about to begin projects include two new PhD students. **Ruchira Somaweera** and **Sam Price-Rees** will both be working on the ecology of cane toads and their interaction with native predators, but the details remain unclear. Snakes and goannas are the current favourites in the betting. **Melanie Elphick** is continuing field studies on *Bassiana duperreyi* in the Brindabellas, and keeping the lab and its endemic fauna under optimal conditions. **Adele Haythornthwaite** has temporarily abandoned fluffies to grapple with ethics committees, assist Mel in the lab and investigate the history of cane toad introductions. **Melissa Corona** (originally from Oklahoma, but came to Australia with Rory) is assisting with animal husbandry and has a canny way with breeding chameleons.

Tropical Ecology Research Facility, NT (aka Top End team):

Ben Phillips was awarded a three-year ARC postdoc and is still slaving over his common garden experiment, which was designed to test for evolutionary shifts in life-history traits of toads across their northern range. While the planned results of the experiment remain to be seen, the unintended results (mostly manifested in Ben's lowered mental stability) are slowly becoming apparent. Between conversations with inanimate objects, Ben also indulges his nerdier tendencies, spending less time in the field and more time modelling things on his computer.

Greg Brown, now a postdoc with us for so long that his origins are clouded in mystery, still meanders across the wall of Fogg Dam every night, allegedly looking for snakes as part of his mammoth mark-recapture study. There is growing suspicion that he actually does it because he enjoys being bitten by mosquitoes. Greg also is heavily involved in work with cane toads, including laboratory trials of immunocompetence as well as fieldwork with radio-tracking and mark-recapture. **Christa Beckmann** is undertaking a PhD looking at the questions of whether cane toads seriously affect populations of native birds, or if birds have the potential to control toad populations. She is investigating whether or not native birds play a significant role in consuming toads. If confirmed, this information would be enormously useful in attempts to educate the general community about the value of maintaining suitable habitat for native birds.

In 2007 **Ligia Mendeleh do Prado** spent a postdoctoral year studying the spatial ecology of newborn water pythons in the Adelaide River floodplain: understanding patterns of dispersion, movements and habitat use. This year, she is back with the Middle Point group, but now studying the impacts of lung worm parasites on cane toads and native frogs: toad and frog susceptibility to the worms, interpopulational variation of anurans' susceptibility and worms' infective power, impacts of worms and alarm pheromone on survival of toad tadpoles and metamorphs.

Michael Crossland has spent the last couple of postdoctoral years investigating interactions between native frog tadpoles and cane toad eggs/tadpoles, in association with Rick. We have documented mass mortality of native tadpoles at numerous temporary waterbodies at our NT study site. These "tadpole kills" coincide with cane toad breeding, and the mechanism of impact is predation by tadpoles on toxic toad eggs. Although laboratory studies show little variation among species in terms of (1) their propensity to eat toad eggs, and (2) their sensitivity to toad egg toxins, we found high interspecific variation in mortality levels in the field. We are currently investigating why certain species appear to be more prone to mass mortality than others.

During the course of his PhD, **Matt Greenlees** has been studying the interactions between cane toads and native frogs, mostly at Fogg Dam in the Northern Territory. He has been able to perform well-replicated studies on microhabitat use and more broad-scale habitat use as well as conduct experiments exploring specific interactions such as the response of native frogs to metamorph toads as potential prey. To complement these studies, more recently he has been conducting experiments with native frogs from populations with a longer history of exposure to cane toads to see how these interactions might change over time.

Michelle Gray assists on many of the Top End projects and helps run a busy lab, and knows a cane toad when she sees one.

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Glenn Shea has mostly spent the past few years working on the systematics of the scincid genus *Sphenomorphus* in New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. In early 2006 he visited the US National Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Comparative Zoology for 6 weeks, and in early 2007 he visited the Bishop Museum in Honolulu for 6 weeks, gathering data on several thousand specimens. A compilation of records from various museum databases suggests that there are approximately 15,000 specimens worldwide representing this genus in the Papuan region, a bit over half of which have been examined, and the work is expected to take another decade or so to complete (manuscripts are in preparation on the *Sphenomorphus aignanus* complex, *S. muelleri*, *S. melanopogon*, and several distinctive new species). Other projects distracting him from New Guinea *Sphenomorphus* are *Ctenotus* and *Prasinohaema* in New Guinea, diet and reproduction of the New Caledonian skink fauna (in collaboration with Ross Sadlier, Aaron Bauer, and Herve Jourdan at IRD in Noumea, together with final year Animal and Veterinary Bioscience student Sally Ferguson), systematics of the *Egernia striolata* species group (an ABRS-funded project in collaboration with Sarah Smith at CDU and Ross Sadlier), systematics of the *Cyrtodactylus lousiadensis* complex (with Patrick Couper and Jessica Worthington Wilmer at the QM and Fred Kraus at Bishop Museum), geographic variation in *Oligosoma lichenigera* (with Sarah Smith and Hal Cogger), reproduction of *Delma* species, genetic and morphological variation in NSW *Ctenotus* species (with Denis O'Meally and Ross Sadlier). Glenn also continues to edit the journal *Herpetofauna*.

Glenn has also been supervising a number of Vet and Animal & Veterinary Bioscience final year projects. Projects in the past three years have been:

Marcia Wan (2005): Reproduction of *Ctenotus robustus* (Vet. final year research rotation)

Hayley Pearson (2006): Geographic variation in morphology of *Eulamprus quoyii* and *Eulamprus heatwolei* with the description of a new species (An.Vet.Biosci. final year project)

Susan Kuwahata (2007): Reproduction of *Eulamprus murrayi* (Vet. final year research rotation)

Stephen Chan (2007): Reproduction of two populations of *Saproscincus mustelinus* (Vet. final year research rotation)

Vivien Lance (2008): Reproduction in three sympatric species of the *Saproscincus challengerii* complex (Vet. Honours project)

Other student theses under Glenn's complete or partial supervision, and not previously listed in ASH Newsletters (due to a hiatus in reports between 1997 and now) are:

Picton-Barnes, A. 1997. Geographic variation and speciation in the Highlands Forest Skink *Nannoscincus maccoyi*. B.Sc. (Vet.) thesis.

Gill, S. 1998. An investigation into a chronic paresis/paralysis syndrome seen in the Diamond Python (*Morelia spilota spilota*). B.Sc. (Vet.) thesis.

Laing, C.J. 2000. Comparative studies on plasma Vitamin D binding protein. Ph.D. thesis.

Poon, P.P.S. 2000. Oviduct morphology, seasonality of mating and sperm storage in five Australian elapid snakes. B.Sc.(Vet.) thesis.



NSW Department of Primary Industries

Frank Lemckert, along with the rest of his section, has been moved out of Forests NSW and into the Science and Research Directorate of the NSW Department of Primary Industries. What this may mean for future research directions is unclear, but work remains the same for the moment. Frank is continuing with his attempts to unravel the habitat relationships of frogs in forests before it unravels him (perhaps it is too late). He is looking forward to completing his PhD by the end of 2008 and being able to lead a normal life again. As his conference presentations have indicated, there are not many obvious potential influences of pond and surrounding forest habitat on frogs, but ongoing work is providing some ideas for individual species. Water chemistry is not suggesting any great influence either and there are few predators to drive the variation seen.

Frank has recently been working to resurrect the NSW Declining Frog Working Group and they have made leaps and bounds of progress over the last two years. The group is open to anyone and has regular attendance by members from various government bodies, Universities and interested consultants. It aims to provide a forum to discuss the latest frog issues and collate information on various topics for use by interested people. So far, this has included talks on the latest taxonomic situation, monitoring strategies and reviews of the conservation status of frogs. One area of success has been the funding of an assessment of speciation in *Mixophyes balbus* as a result of discussions by the group. This has been funded by DECC and DEWHA (Thanks ABRS and Cameron Slatyer).

Further research is being conducted into the value of tree plantings as habitat for reptiles in drier areas of NSW. Numbers and diversity are clearly lower in plantings compared to remnant habitats and this seems strongly related to a lack of ground cover. Attempts are being made to stock some plantings with artificial cover to see how this affects the presence of reptiles. Cow pats may also prove to be important.

Frank is going to take part in the developing and trialing of monitoring programs for Forests NSW in the coming year. At this time, surveys of reptiles and frogs are being planned for areas of the Pilliga Forests later in 2008 and 2009. The results will guide the establishment of permanent monitoring plots and a standard monitoring method that will be further evaluated in a coastal area of northern NSW in the following years. These areas are expected to form significant long-term research sites to record population fluctuations in state forest areas in relation to environmental changes and provide a basis for adaptive management of species in relation to habitat alteration through forestry activities.

Trent Penman remains working with the Bushfire CRC through Forests NSW, but has time available to write up more papers from his thesis, engage in some reptile related analysis from some long-term forestry research sites and delve into more theoretical areas using his oversized brain. He is also getting married, which should pretty much destroy a promising career.

Recent collaborative works has centred around supervising honours students at the University of NSW, which views forests as a sheltered workshop for people with frog fantasies. **Sandra Plummer** completed a project looking at the potential for conspecifics and predators to influence the use of shelter sites by frogs with somewhat mixed results. **Nikki Wallace** ended up looking at the overlap in diets of *Litoria booroolongensis* and *L. lesueuri* in the New England area using museum specimens. They did not overlap much and booroolongs ate a lot of very small and aquatic invertebrates.

University of Newcastle

The Amphibian Research Group

John Clulow and **Michael Mahony** are continuing their research (with former honours students **Chantel Fitzsimmons**, **Lauren Curphey**, **Bianca Lawson** and **Khim Wooi**) into the reproductive technologies for cryostorage of amphibian germ line and somatic tissues. Recent work has looked at the potential for ovarian and embryonic tissues to be cryopreserved and extended the number of native species for which sperm cryopreservation protocols have been generated.

While sperm cryopreservation works very well for frogs, major technical problems still remain with respect to the capacity to cryopreserve amphibian eggs. Much of their work is focused on finding ways around these blocks. Nevertheless, the end goal is very important, as a functional cryobanking capacity may help to prevent future frog extinctions and lead to immortality for Mike and John.

Mike Mahony remains monitoring populations of stream breeding frogs over a range of sites in the northern half of New South Wales. *Mixophyes* spp. are the main focus and seem to be doing relatively well over the last few years after such serious declines. Wallum froglets (*Crinia tinnula*) provide some variation through management of impacts by developments and bell frogs in various parts of the hunter also occupy some of his time.

PhD student **Rachael Peak** is investigating the male parental care and synchronous calling behaviour of the hip-pocket frog *Assa darlingtoni* and managed to get her frogs into 'Life in Cold Blood'. Masters student **Simon Clulow** (yes, nepotism in action) is investigating the evolution of phenotypic plasticity in the larvae of *Lechriodus fletcheri*, the impact of introduced trout on threatened stream frogs in the New England Tablelands and deciphering the *Uperoleia* spp. complex of eastern Australia in collaboration with Scott Keogh's group from ANU. PhD student **Michelle Stockwell** is investigating the role of the amphibian chytrid fungus in the decline of the green and golden bell frog and, along with honours students **Lachlan Storrie** and **Colin Goodenough**, is conducting an experimental reintroduction of this species in the Hunter Region of NSW. Frank Lemckert drops by occasionally pretending to be a student and generally clutter up the place (see DPI report).

NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change

David Hunter and **Rod Pietsch** have been monitoring the survivorship of captive bred and reared southern corroboree frogs, spotted tree frogs and booroolong frogs that were released back to the wild from the Amphibian Research Centre and Taronga Zoo. They've also been undertaking population monitoring for a range of threatened frog species in Southern NSW, and assessing the role of habitat degradation and disease caused by the amphibian chytrid fungus in the on-going decline of several of these species.



Australian Capital Territory

It is June so not much herping activity going on in the cold country, but lots of associated activity. In fact, when you put it all together, the amount of activity and the number of budding young scientists involved is quite remarkable. Read on, to learn what is going on in the ACT.

Australian National University

Don Driscoll of the Fenner School has recently supervised the honours project of **Joel William** on the impact of habitat loss and patch isolation on mallee reptiles. Don is also supervising a PhD by **Annabel Smith** on the demographic and dispersal consequences of time since fire for three lizard species--*Amphibolurus norrisi*, *Nephrurus stellatus* and *Ctenotus atlas*. Additional reptile PhD projects are available with Don at ANU. For more information see <http://fennerschool-research.anu.edu.au/malleeefire/>.

Scott Keogh (Commander-in-Chief) is working on a variety of molecular genetic projects in both the phylogenetic and behavioural ecology worlds. The big projects at the moment are putting the final touches on a multi-gene phylogeny for all myobatrachid frogs with Dale Roberts, Phil Byrne and David Moore and continuing to do a series of phylogeography projects on the herp fauna of southwestern Australia with Dan Edwards and students. Over the past year a number of our lab members have moved on to new things. **Matt Morgan** is now a postdoc at the University of Texas in Austin with **David Cannatella**. **Vimokselehi** is now a postdoc at the University of California, Irvine with John Avise, the father of phylogeography. **Jo Sumner** is on a hiatus from her ARC Postdoc to take up an exciting job at Museum Victoria as their new Manager of Genetic Resources where she is running their molecular lab. **David Moore**, my RA for the past year, is about to move to Thailand to be a Youth Ambassador for a year.

Conrad Hoskin (ARC Postdoc) is currently working on a number of phylogenetic, phylogeographic and hybrid zone projects, mostly involving Queensland rainforest herps, particularly those in the Wet Tropics region. These projects include analysis of the *Litoria genimaculata*/*L. myola* contact zones (the focus of his ARC APD), phylogeography and secondary contact in *Cophixalus ornatus*, and phylogenetics of Australian microhylid frogs and *Lampropholis* skinks. He has also been working on a broad-scale analysis of Australian frog calls, and continuing his interests in the systematics of leaf-tailed geckos (*Phyllurus/Saltuarius/Orraya*), velvet geckos (*Oedura*), and other Queensland herp groups. **Danielle Edwards** (Postdoc Research Associate) is working on a range of different phylogeographic and systematic projects at the moment. With Scott Keogh, she has been working on a phylogeny for *Hemiergis*, with individual phylogeographies for each Western Australian species. She has also been working on the taxonomy and biogeography of the mess that is the *Ctenophorus maculatus/fordi/femoralis* species complex. She has also set out reconstruct the biogeographic history of south-western Australian coastal sand-plain reptiles, with a particular focus on the Shark Bay region. Dan is currently preparing papers from her PhD work on frogs in the south-west (with both Dale Roberts and Scott Keogh) and on agamid phylogeography (with Jane Melville).

Suzi Morrison is in the final year of her PhD and busy writing up her work on the ecology and conservation biology of the Fijian Crested Iguana. **Mitzy Pepper** has just entered year two of her PhD. This past year has been spent sequencing ND2 for six other species of gecko found in the Pilbara and surrounding arid zone, following on from the *L. stenodactylum* work she has been doing. At present, she is visiting Craig Moritz's lab in Berkeley, working closely with Matt Fujita on the systematics of *Heteronotia*. Her work so far has involved sequencing numerous nuclear markers that Matt has working for *Heteronotia* so that they can combine their datasets, and she will be trialling these markers on other related geckos as well. Still on geckos, she is also in the process of doing a taxonomic revision of *Rhynchoedura ornata*. She has a phylogeny of *Rhynchoedura* with good sampling across the arid zone and has identified five distinct lineages. She has or will be spending time at the AM, SAM and WAM looking at specimens and learning from the curators to try and find diagnostic morphological characters for these clades.

Renee Catullo started her PhD in the Keogh Lab early this year. The initial focus of her research is a wide scale cryptic species scan of the *Uperoleia* frog genus. During the past few months she has been sequencing a mitochondrial gene and trialling nuclear genes. Once complete, she will undertake work to support the phylogeny with morphological and calling behaviours. She hopes that she also has the opportunity to investigate introgression and hybridization within the genus.

Jordan Crabbe is working on *Hemiergis*, a species that has received much taxonomic attention but for which morphological studies have produced widely conflicting results. Preliminary genetic work also has indicated that there are discrepancies in the current taxonomy of *Hemiergis*. This project will use three independent data sets (two mtDNA gene, one nDNA gene) to produce a detailed molecular phylogeny and to this morphological data will be added. These data sets will be used to examine the developmental hypothesis put forth for digit loss in this genus, the mechanism of species diversification in southwestern Australia and produce a taxonomic revision.

Geoff Kay has just completed Honours on the comparative phylogeographic patterns of three southwest Western Australian lizards. Deep phylogeographic signal was detected in each of the species observed, and resulted in potential range extensions for IUCN listed threatened *Ctenotus lanceolini*. Of most interest, his project was able to identify common biogeographic regions significant for conservation efforts in the southwest of Western Australia. Geoff is currently preparing his thesis as a series of papers to be published later this year.

University of Canberra

Institute for Applied Ecology

Some recent goings: Hard worker **Dave Hunter** has completed his PhD on the conservation management of two threatened frog species in south-eastern NSW and is now working as a threatened species officer in the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change. In that capacity, he is continuing his research on corroboree frogs and other threatened high mountain species. **Damien Fordham** has completed his PhD on population dynamics and indigenous harvest of the northern snake-necked tortoise in Arnhem Land and taken up a postdoctoral position with the Centre for Climate Change Modelling at Adelaide University. **John Roe** has completed his PhD on the secret life of the eastern long-necked turtle and taken up a postdoctoral position with Purdue University in Indiana. **Alex Quinn** has completed his PhD on sex determination in reptiles and has taken up a postdoctoral position with RSBS at ANU to work on some interesting human problems. Let's hope we don't lose him from herpetology. **Martha Rees** has completed her honours year on the secret lives of eastern long-necked tortoises in the suburbs, with some surprising results--they do quite well despite the traffic and other obvious perils. She is now working as an ecologist with ENSR Australia. **Ben Corey** completed his honours on the habits of the inland carpet python and has moved to Maningrida where he is working on a range of wildlife utilization projects with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation.

Nadav Pezaro completed his honours on nesting behaviour sex allocation of *Physignathus lesueurii* and travelled the world before bedding down plans to return to Australia to continue his research. **David Steer** wrapped up his Honours studying how agile wallabies keep from being ambushed by saltwater crocodiles and is using his technical expertise at Sentinel Instruments in Canberra. **Emma Cheetham** completed her Honours on communal nesting in Sydney skinks and is working as a research assistant in the eWater CRC at UC. **Sarah Ross** completed her honours on the potential of frogs for natural pest control in the rice agro-ecosystems and is now working for the Nursing Department at University of Canberra. **Shona Hodgetts** completed her honours on DMRT1 and HSP expression in normal and sex reversed central bearded dragons. She is now working for AQUIS. **David Lowery** has completed his honours on new approaches to habitat modelling for the northern Corroboree Frog.

Some Recent Comings: **Christina Castellano** joined us from the US where she recently completed a PhD on the wood turtle *Clemmys insculpta*. She has recently started a postdoc with Steve Sarre and Will Osborne on earless dragon conservation, and will be developing experiments to test habitat structure hypotheses and to estimate dispersal using microsatellite DNA markers. In her spare time, she is continuing her work with the WCS and the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group on a conservation strategy for Madagascar tortoises, and visited there in January. Coming across from the ANU, **Tariq Ezaz** joins Steve Sarre and Arthur Georges to start a postdoc on sex in dragons, using some spiffy comparative hybridization techniques to probe the dragon genome. **Carla Eiseberg** joined us last year from the remote depths of the Amazonian rainforest with great anticipation for study in the driest continent on earth. Unfortunately her project is on pig-nosed turtle nesting biology and harvest dynamics in the remote depths of the Papuan rainforest.

Action at the Front: On the lizard front, **Arthur Georges** and **Stephen Sarre** are continuing their work on sex in dragons under renewed funding from the ARC. A highlight from last year was the appearance of some of the results in *Science* with lead author **Alex Quinn**. Also a highlight was the purchase of a *Pogona viticeps* BAC library which will multiply capacity to isolate sex specific fragments, map them to chromosomes, and potentially isolate the sex determining gene in dragons. Alex and Tariq have also isolated and characterised a sex specific fragment in the three-lined skink in collaboration with the Shine mob, and isolated a sex specific marker in the Corroborree Frog (XX/XY) with funding from the NSW government. PhD student **Wendy Dimond** has recently completed her population demographic surveys of the grassland earless dragon and is currently in Germany developing movement and population viability models based on those survey data. **Marion Hoehn** continues to write papers on her PhD studies of geckos in the WA wheatbelt and is close to finishing her genetic study of the mating system of *Gehyra variegata* at Kinchega National Park. She is also working with Christina Castellano developing microsatellite markers for the grassland earless dragon.

Dane Trembath is beavering away in top end on his python project, looking at the comparative ecology and evolution of the Australo-Papuan python radiation. His supervisor, **Sean Doody**, is enjoying the afterlife following five concurrent honours student completions, and continuing to work at UC in five areas: climate change responses in reptiles, communal nesting in lizards, cane toad impacts on frog-eating predators, predator-prey interactions between crocodiles and wallabies, and biodiversity in the rice-growing region. Water dragons continue to dominate his time, but he is pursuing funding to work on climate change impacts on Galapagos reptiles with colleagues from the University of Melbourne and the University of Wisconsin. In the Northern Territory and Western Australia he is running ahead of the toad front to measure impacts on goannas and crocodiles, along with associated cascading effects, while continuing to monitor declines and recovery on the Daly River.

Oil Search Ltd have funded a three year study of the pig-nosed turtle in the Kikori district of Papua New Guinea and the Hermon Slade Foundation have funded a three year study of the Australia-New Guinea nexus and freshwater turtles. This is keeping Arthur Georges busy and less than disease free. CERF is also funding some phylogenetic work on our tropical turtles, and a novel distribution database for Auzzie turtles generally.



Kate Hodges is continuing her studies of the phylogeography of the broad-shelled tortoise and the eastern long-neck, and **Erika Alacs** is nearing completion of her marriage of wildlife forensics and phylogeography of the northern snake-necked tortoise. Our illustrious Editor, **Deb Bower**, is living the high life in the Murray Riverland, chasing her beloved broadies (and everything else with four legs--optionally--and scales). **Kiki Dethmers** is in the final throes of completing her thesis on the conservation genetics of marine turtles, and has taken up a position as a marine biologist with marine biodiversity group of the Northern Territory's Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts

ACT Herpetological Association

ACTHA has been going for many years but have found that they need to review and renew what they do. They have reaffirmed that their main task is promoting public understanding of Australian herpetofauna, particularly in the Canberra region, which is done through major Snakes Alive display held in January each year at the Australian National Botanic Gardens (ANBG), and through other smaller displays. Snakes Alive endows them with funds, and these have been used to support education and research projects. Throughout the year they have bi-monthly meetings with a guest speaker, and are very fortunate in Canberra that most talks are given by professional herpetologists, well informed amateurs, and students undertaking honours or post graduate research into herpetofauna. The members come from a wide variety of backgrounds but include many enthusiastic herpetofauna keepers. One of our members is the enterprising Peter Child who owns a unique reptile shop and the Association draws on Peter and his resources for much of its work. We have a talented and enthusiastic committee who meet regularly and plan the Association's activities.

In the last eighteen months they have held two Snakes Alive displays, each having a large number of Australian reptiles, many of them local. We have been able to display threatened reptile and frog species. On each occasion around 5,000 people visited the display and not only did they rave about it, but they also went away with positive messages about Australian herpetofauna. A keen supporter of our display is Frogwatch, a group which has been a major success in this region and provides an annual census of frogs. From monies raised at the display, a large chunk goes to the ANBG for its education program, and last year we donated \$4,000 in grants, including money to Frogwatch for a poster and four grants to students to assist them in their research. We also held displays at Questacon, Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve and two school fates.

In January 2008 ACTHA awarded life membership to **John Wombey** and **Ric Longmore** for their services to herpetology and the Association. John has made a major contribution to the taxonomy of herpetofauna, and Ric is a well known expert on elapids and has a reputation in the local media as Snakeman.

In 2008, ACTHA awarded four small grants to the energetic young herpetologists Mitzi Pepper, Deborah Bower, Rachelle McConville and Geoff Kay.



South Australia

Flinders University

Bull Lab

Michael Bull has continued supervising a number of PhD and honours students with projects on sleepy lizards, pygmy bluetongue lizards, gidgee skinks, Tuatara, *Corruca zebrata* and the parasites of many of these species.

Aaron Fenner is in the final stages of his PhD, investigating the social structure of pygmy bluetongue lizards, *Tiliqua adelaidensis*. He has been primarily investigating the role of visual and olfactory cues in pygmy bluetongue lizard social structuring and the implications this may have in the conservation and management of this species. He has also been filling in some of the gaps in our knowledge of pygmy bluetongue lizards, including their parasites, behaviours and responses to fire. **Stephanie Godfrey** is in the final stages of her PhD, which investigates how social network structure affects parasite transmission in reptiles. Her thesis spans the Tasman, involving two species with contrasting forms of social organisation; the group-living gidgee skink (*Egernia stokesii*), and the territorial tuatara (*Sphenodon punctatus*). In August, Stephanie will continue to follow her interests in social network structure and parasite transmission, by beginning field work on the legendary sleepy lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*).

Melissa Pettigrew is in her last year of her PhD and is looking at grazing and its impact on populations of *Tiliqua adelaidensis*. Her studies involve looking at the specific microhabitat requirements for *T. adelaidensis*. In particular she aims to investigate what level of grazing will best maintain this optimal microhabitat and thus sustain and promote populations of *T. adelaidensis*. She has one more field season left before she will be in the final write up stage. **Stephan Leu** investigates the social organisation and social networks of the sleepy lizard (*Tiliqua rugosa*). Using GPS units mounted on the back of each lizard, he is able to continuously observe individual movement and deduce unique information about inter-individual contact. Based on this detailed data, his study aims to identify the social units that are formed and describe their social organisation. His study also intends to illuminate how environmental resources and mating opportunities influence the social organisation. Based on the data of social interaction and shelter sharing, he will also be able to construct social networks and will investigate parasite transmission within a sleepy lizard population. **Annabel Smith** (Flinders University and ANU) is following her honours work on conservation genetics and is currently in the first year of her PhD working on pygmy bluetongue lizards. She is investigating the mechanisms behind animal responses to fire.

Flinders University and Zoos SA

Greg Johnston has moved from exclusive work for the Royal Zoological Society of South Australia (Zoos SA) to an academic position jointly funded by Zoos SA and Flinders University.

Over the past few years Greg has been part of a group involved in a reintroduction of Woma pythons to the Arid Recovery Project near Roxby Downs in northern South Australia. After several years of waiting, pending demonstration that the snakes lacked IBD and ophidian paramyxovirus, 9 womas were released with transmitters in September 2007. Initially they settled in well, were moving about and eating. Then they were discovered by the local king brown snakes. The king browns ate their way through the pythons over a few months, and now there are none of the released animals left! See:

<http://www.adelaidezoo.com.au/conservation-&-research/conservation-programs/woma-python>

Mike Geen has joined Greg's lab from South Africa, via New Zealand, to do his Honours degree on the thermal implications of the red-grey colour polymorphism in death adders.

South Australian Musuem

Steve Donnellan still has his fingers in many pies in an attempt to solve the intricate relationships in more trees than he can climb. Current projects include: the 21st century taxonomy small terrestrial vertebrates program; the phylogeny, systematics and biogeography of the blind snakes; the phylogeography of lowland New Guinean terrestrial vertebrate; the systematics of the Australo-Papuan treefrogs; and the systematics of *Gehyra* geckoes.

Mark Hutchinson continues his research with a number of collaborative projects and PhD students. He is currently involved in the phylogeny and systematics of *Egernia* group skinks (ABRS with Donnellan); the conservation biology of the pygmy bluetongue lizard; fossil vertebrates of the Naracoorte Caves; biological survey of South Australia; speciation in the frogs of Melanesia; and fossil lizards of the St Bathans site, New Zealand.

Also in South Australia **Adam skinner** is completing a postdoc on the evolution of *Lerista*. **Mark Sistrom** has recently began a PhD exploring speciation in the gecko genus *Gehyra*. **Paul Oliver** is well into his PhD on the evolution of Diplodactylid Geckos and **Luke Price** can also see light at the end of the tunnel with his PhD on the phylogeography of tree-frogs.

Victoria

Museum Victoria

Jane Melville heads the research group at Museum Victoria. Her research is currently focused on the phylogenetics, systematics and evolutionary ecology of agamid lizards, and the population genetics of south-east Australian frogs. Jane has been racking up the frequent flyer points attending international conferences and examining the type specimens of Australian agamid species held in European museums. Late last year Jane completed an epic round-Australia agamid collecting trip with Euan Ritchie and Rich Glor (Rochester University, USA). **Euan Ritchie** recently completed his ABRS-funded postdoctoral research on the systematics and phylogeography of Australian agamid lizards (specifically *Pogona*, *Lophognathus* and *Amphibolurus*). He is probably also looking for a change of fortune after badly breaking his arm while arm wrestling at the University of Melbourne Zoology Department Christmas party. After having a metal rod inserted in his arm, Euan was well on the way to recovery. That is, until he was hit by a bus and knocked off his bike while riding into the museum in May, promptly breaking the same arm again! So it's back to square one with the rehab, but Euan is now safely away from Melbourne doing a postdoc on dingoes up at JCU.

Jane is continuing her ARC-funded research on the genetic basis of limb development in agamid lizards, in collaboration with **Jonathan Losos** (Harvard University). This project involves the use of phylogenomics and morphological analysis of the hindlimbs of Australian agamids and desert Iguanian lizards. **Georgia Mantziou** recently completed her postdoctoral research on this project, just in time to give birth to a baby girl. **Rebecca Rose** has also been involved in this project, but is now back in Africa and having fun chasing mammals. **Felicity McLean** recently completed her honours research on this project examining DNA sequence variation of limb development genes in Australian agamids, and investigating spatiotemporal expression of certain limb development genes to see if gene expression has a role in determining limb length.

Research is also continuing on Jane's ARC-funded project using historical museum specimens to examine changes in the population genetic structure of frog species north of Melbourne. The project aims to use the vast number of frog specimens collected by Murray Littlejohn (University of Melbourne) and contemporary collecting in the same regions to look at changes in population genetic structure and hybrid zones with urbanisation over the past forty years. **Josh Hale** is continuing his PhD research into the impact of habitat fragmentation, in particular urbanisation, on the genetic structure of three Victorian frog species (*Litoria ewingi*, *Crinia signifera* and *Litoria raniformis*). **Katie Smith's** PhD research is focused on examining the hybrid zone between *Litoria ewingi* and *L. paraewingi*.

Jo Sumner has been at Museum Victoria for the last 2 ½ years working on phylogeography of the *Eulamprus quoyii* group of water skinks. The first 2 years of that time were as an ARC Post-doctoral fellow through ANU with Scott Keogh. In Feb 2008 Jo started a permanent position as Manager of Genetic Resources at Melbourne Museum (this roughly translates as lab manager). Jo has also been doing some work on population genetics and phylogeography of broad-headed snakes with Rick Shine, Jonno Webb and Scott Keogh. Jo and Devi Stuart-Fox (University of Melbourne) co-supervised an honours student, **Tessa Koumoundouros**, who gained an H1 for her thesis on the population genetics of the Alpine She-Oak skink, *Cyclodomorphus praealtus*. **Camila Monasterio Martín** made the trip from Spain (Museo Nacional Ciencias Naturales) to spend a few months in late-2007 working with Jo and Jane on the phylogeography of *Ctenophorus nuchalis*. **Stephanie Greaves**, an honorary research associate at the museum, recently published her honours work (completed at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) on the phylogeography of several New Zealand skink species (*Oligosoma lineocellatum*, *O. chloronoton*, *O. infrapunctatum*). Steph is now busy in the genetics lab completing the phylogeographic work on *Ctenophorus nuchalis*, and working on a variety of other projects including *Eulamprus* and *Lampropholis* skinks. **Adnan Moussalli** has been seen finishing up some of his *Saproscincus* work from his PhD and working with Devi Stuart-Fox on a variety of herp projects. Adnan recently commenced a postdoc in the marine sciences section of the museum working on Cephalopods.

David Chapple arrived at Museum Victoria in July 2007 after completing a postdoc in New Zealand at the Allan Wilson Centre for Molecular Ecology and Evolution (based at Victoria University of Wellington) on the origin and evolution of the New Zealand skink fauna. He continues to write-up papers for publication from the NZ postdoc, but is making great progress on his current ARC postdoc examining the invasion dynamics of the delicate skink, *Lampropholis delicata*. This work is being done in collaboration with Mike Thompson (University of Sydney) and Fred Kraus (Bishop Museum, Hawaii) and involved extensive fieldwork in Australia, Lord Howe Island, New Zealand and Hawaii during 2007 and early 2008. The aim is to trace the source populations for the introduction of *L. delicata* to Lord Howe Island, New Zealand and Hawaii. The *L. delicata* phylogeographic work includes a collaboration with Conrad Hoskin (Australian National University). David is also completing a phylogeographic study on *L. guichenoti*. David has recently wrapped up the last remaining part of his PhD work on the *Egernia whitii* species group (now *Liopholis*) by completing his work on the evolution of colour pattern polymorphism in the group.

University of Melbourne

There is plenty of herpetological research happening at the University of Melbourne, both in the Department of Zoology (Devi Stuart-Fox, Michael Kearney) and the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (Brian Fry).

Kearney Lab

Michael Kearney continues his research on the evolution of parthenogenesis and the impact of climate on animals.

Stuart-Fox Lab

Local herps: **Devi Stuart-Fox** has been heading a project on sexual conflict in Lake Eyre dragons (*Ctenophorus maculosus*). Based on pioneering work by Mats Olsson, this species is often cited as a vertebrate example of sexual conflict because females have evolved seemingly costly rejection behaviour, which is unique among lizards. Females develop bright orange coloration on their throats and bellies in the breeding season. In response to male harassment and attempted forced copulations, females flip onto their backs, exposing their bright orange bellies, which stand out against the white salt crust. This ARC-funded project aims to tease apart sources of direct and indirect selection on female rejection behaviour and female ornamentation. Contrary to published information (Mitchell 1973), we have shown that females develop orange coloration just prior to sexual receptivity, not after. The orange coloration appears to signal reproductive condition and orange females are courted and harassed more intensely than non-coloured females.

Females maintain the orange coloration until they lay, after which the colour usually fades. This suggests that males can only determine female receptivity through the combination of coloration and behaviour and not from coloration alone. This is largely based on the work by a recent Honours student, **Rita Chan**, who also looked at the endocrine basis of colour expression. She was co-supervised by Tim Jessop (Zoos Victoria).

Another Honours student, **Tessa Koumondouros**, worked on the population genetics of the Alpine She-oak skink, *Cyclodomorphus prealtus*, (supervised by Jo Sumner-Museum Victoria, Nick Clemann-Arthur Rylah Institute, and Devi). Tessa's study showed that Vic and NSW populations should be considered as separate Evolutionary Significant Units (ESUs). The mtDNA indicates historical connectivity between Victorian populations but microsatellites indicate an absence of current and recent gene flow. The data show that the three main Victorian populations are effectively isolated and testify to the very low dispersal capacity and high degree of habitat specialisation of this secretive species.

International herps: Devi has spent the last few years working on the evolution of colour change and camouflage in dwarf chameleons. She has also spent two field seasons working with a research team (French and Portuguese) on evolutionary dynamics and structure of a hybrid zone between two divergent lineages of a lacertid lizard from the Iberian Peninsula (*Lacerta schreiberi*). Some of this work is published and the rest will hopefully be published soon.

Fry Lab

Team Venom continues to plunder the world's riches as part of our noble endeavour to spend as little time in the lab as humanly possible and as much time in the field as inhumanly possible. **Bryan Fry** looks set to achieve the legendary continental grand slam of travelling to every continent in a single year period. A trip to Africa in July will complete the list. The hardest one was Antarctica but this was accomplished by Team Venom being awarded berths aboard the Australian Antarctic Division's flagship vessel *Aurora Australis* as part of the CEAMARC census of marine life in the Eastern Antarctic waters, Australia's official contribution to the International Polar Year. What were herpetologists doing in Antarctica? Raping and pillaging of course! The major aim of Dr Fry's QEII Fellowship is to develop a general theory of how venom evolves. The origin and evolution of venom in many animal orders remains controversial or almost entirely uninvestigated. Dr. Fry is using cDNA studies of venom glands to examine convergent strategies for recruitment of proteins for use in the animal chemical arsenals. Comparison of related toxins found in invertebrate and vertebrate venoms is revealing striking similarities in the types of proteins chosen for toxic mutation. These results shed light not only upon what makes a protein amenable for use as a toxin but what makes a protein useful for development into a general multigene family.

Bryan's new PhD student **Jure Skejic** from Croatia is comparing the molecular evolution of venoms from *Echis* species (saw-scaled vipers). Vipers are an ancient branch of the advanced snake (Colubroidea) tree, evolving independently for about 46 million years. They possess a highly complex venom delivery apparatus consisting of long, mobile and hollow front fangs, which fold back when not in use. Currently 269 species are recognized, inhabiting all continents except Australia. Jure's thesis research concerns the evolution of (i) venom composition and (ii) speciation of the carpet or saw-scaled vipers of the genus *Echis*. These small fascinating vipers have a wide distribution in Africa, Middle East and on the Indian subcontinent. They are notorious for being a major contributor to snakebite morbidity and mortality in many Asian and African countries. All *Echis* were previously considered as a single species *Echis carinatus*, but now the genus is known to contain multiple species. There have been numerous reports of regional antivenom ineffectiveness in treating *Echis* bites. This study is unique in that it will for the first time examine the venoms of all *Echis* species in a phylogenetic context. This will help clinicians predict which antivenoms may be more effective in treating a bite by a particular species. It may also shed light on the selective pressures driving the evolution of the venom composition, as *Echis* species differ significantly in their diet. A second aspect of Jure's thesis research deals with the evolution of the organisms themselves. Parapatric speciation and species contact

zones are one of the least understood and highly complex topics in evolutionary biology, and *Echis* represents an ideal model for studying them. The systematics of *Echis* is still unresolved despite extensive morphological and mitochondrial DNA phylogenetic studies. Since mitochondrial DNA cannot test for male-mediated gene flow in species that occur in parapatry, this study will use nuclear markers to resolve their systematics.

Monash University

A diversity of herpetological research is currently being undertaken at Monash University. This research focuses on sea turtles, frogs and lizards and is being conducted in four separate labs headed by Richard Reina, Phil Byrne, Bob Wong, and Paul Sunnucks. Here are the details of the work being conducted in each lab:

Reina Lab

Recent research in the lab group has focused on: i) the effects of secondary salinisation on native frogs; ii) life history tradeoffs in frogs; and iii) conservation biology, nutritional ecology and physiological ecology of sea turtles. **Deigo Amorcho** is completing a PhD examining the biology and ecology of sea turtles in protected areas of the Colombian Pacific. **Emma Dalton** is completing PhD research on the life history traits and reproductive investment by leather-back sea turtles.

Wong Lab

Research in the Wong lab covers a range of topics in behavioural ecology but focuses mainly on addressing empirical questions within the field of sexual selection. In particular, they are interested in the interactions between inter- and intra-sexual selection, the costs and benefits of mate choice, and the consequences of anthropogenic disturbance on behaviour. Current work in their lab involves a variety of study organisms, from slaters and cockroaches to fish and birds. Herp-related projects have used frogs as model systems for investigating the environmental correlates of calling and, more recently, the effects of human-induced environmental change. For details of my research and publications from the Wong lab, please visit: www.biolsci.monash.edu.au/staff/wong/index.html

Byrne Lab

Research in the Byrne's lab focuses on understanding how behaviour is shaped by sexual selection. In brief, they are interested in how mate choice, sperm competition and sexual conflict shape the evolution of reproductive strategies and mating systems. Their approach to testing evolutionary theory is multidisciplinary, combining behavioural observation with comparative analyses, molecular genetics and quantitative genetics. While Phil is open to using diverse organisms to evaluate theoretical models, he generally focus' on frogs. . At present, Phil's research is focussing on the reproductive ecology of terrestrial toadlets (*Pseudophryne* species).

Phil has two Honours students currently working on toadlet projects. **William Wettenhall** is investigating the impacts of soil pH on embryo development while **Lee Harrison** is investigating the role of pheromones in communication. In the next year the plan is to continue with research on toadlets as well as to conduct field work in Africa with foam-nesting tree frogs and in Africa and Madagascar with poison dart frogs.

Sunnucks Lab

Jody Taylor is continuing her PhD research on the impacts of different configurations of roads and associated remnant vegetation on the population biology of two skink species *Lampropholis guichenoti* and *Ctenotus robustus*).

La Trobe University

Geoff Heard is close to completing his PhD project on the conservation biology of the endangered Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) in urbanising landscapes. The University of Melbourne and La Trobe University have just finished their second field season examining vital fauna attributes in Heathy Woodlands to enable appropriate ecological fire regimes to be determined for the management of faunal biodiversity. **Evelyn Nicholson** is conducting her PhD as part of this project examining the impact of both fire frequency and interval on herpetofauna.

University of Ballarat

Simon Cook continues his research on various aspects of herpetology, including arid zone ecology and management, community ecology, island biogeography, and evolutionary ecology. Simon heads an active lab, with **Jonathan Starks** doing a MSc looking at maintaining frog populations following the decommissioning of the channel system in the Wimmera/Mallee. **Gemma Candy** is completing an honours project on the distribution of the striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*) across an agricultural gradient. For his honours project **Richard Goonan** is examining the impact of adjacent land use on the invertebrate prey of the striped legless lizard (*Delma impar*) in linear habitats. **Sean-Paul Smith** is completing honours research on the survivorship and recruitment of the Corangamite water skink (*Eulamprus tympanum marnieae*). **Ashley Olson** is investigating the relative effects of forest thinning treatments on the reptile fauna in Box-Ironbark forests as part of an honours project.

Department of Sustainability and Environment

DSE- South West Region

Garry Peterson has been managing numerous threatened herpetofauna projects in south western Victoria over the past few years. Garry along with **Cath Grant** and **Ted Rohr** have just completed the fourth year of a large scale targeted survey for the threatened Striped Legless Lizard (*Delma impar*) across 330 sites in south western Victoria. The project has significantly improved our knowledge on the status and distribution of this, and numerous other grassland herp species. **Michael Scroggie** (Arthur Rylah Institute) is currently examining the data to determine detection probabilities of *D. impar* and the influence of covariates for future monitoring. The project is now entering its second phase with an emphasis on population demographics.

Two recent collaborative honours projects from Simon Cook's lab (University of Ballarat) have also been undertaken as part of the *D. impar* project. **Gemma Candy** is examining the influence of landscape and habitat variables on the presence and absence of *D. impar*. **Richard Goonan** is examining the potential impact of pesticides on *D. impar* prey availability on linear reserves (generally roadsides) adjacent to cropping. A collaborative *D. impar* molecular project with Jane Melville and Jo Sumner (Museum Victoria) is also in the pipeline.

Garry has been continuing with the Corangamite water skink (*Eulamprus tympanum marnieae*) recovery program. Extensive work has been undertaken in habitat protection and enhancement as well as threat mitigation. Population monitoring, adaptive experimental management and associated research is also continuing as well as further molecular work by Jo Sumner (Museum Victoria).

Garry and **Donna McMaster** have also just undertaken the first comprehensive surveys for the Grassland Earless Dragon (*Tympanocryptis pinguicolla*) in Victoria for a decade, to no avail. Surveys have been centred around Geelong and will continue in 2008/09.

Extensive surveys for the Growling Grass Frog (*Litoria raniformis*) across the south west were also conducted this past field season in collaboration with **Mike Smith** (Arthur Rylah Institute). The project examined both the distribution and habitat requirements of the species and was a precursor to a larger project examining habitat restoration scheduled to begin in 2008/09.

In further collaborative news the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University have just finished their second field season examining vital fauna attributes in Heathy Woodlands to enable appropriate ecological fire regimes to be determined for the management of faunal biodiversity. **Evelyn Nicholson** (Brian Malone's lab, La Trobe University) is conducting her PhD as part of this project examining the impact of both fire frequency and interval on herpetofauna.

Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research

After an interminable winter spent writing reports and administering threatened species programs and teams, **Nick Clemann** has been enjoying a mild summer in Victoria's high country, conducting surveys and monitoring of threatened alpine lizards and frogs. On rare excursions into the lowlands he has been assisting **Mike Smith** with surveys for Growling Grass Frogs.

Geoff Brown has continued his work on reptiles (and other vertebrates) in rural landscapes and woodlands of south-eastern Australia; most recently he has investigated, in collaboration with CSIRO, the influences of low-input grazing systems in temperate woodlands and native pastures on reptiles, though he has found some time to dabble in a variety of other projects, including the effectiveness for reptiles, after 20 years, of a major wildlife corridor in semi-arid Victoria, the impacts of ecological burning in Box-Ironbark habitats, and the status of frogs in some outer Melbourne catchments.

Zoos Victoria

Zoos Victoria, via its Department of Wildlife Conservation and Science, is currently involved in undertaking two applied research projects measuring impacts of multiple threatening processes on Victorian herpetofauna.

The first project, led by **Graeme Gillespie** is investigating, using field experiments, the role of chytrid fungus and trout predation, and their interactions, on influencing the demography of the endangered spotted tree frog. The second project, led by **Tim Jessop**, is investigating integrative approaches (i.e. demographic, genetic, and physiological methods) to measure threatening processes (e.g. introduced predators, logging) and their impacts on individuals, populations and broader herp communities.

With respect to international projects, both Graeme and Tim continue to work in Indonesia focusing on conservation and wildlife management issues related to herps in Sulawesi and Komodo National Park/Flores. Next year they plan to set up a zoo funded project to look at community impacts (including herps) of lowland forest disturbance in Sumatra.

Zoos Victoria herpetofauna staff are also involved in assisting in the captive breeding for reintroduction of the southern Corroboree frog. **Chris Banks** continues to facilitate conservation activities pertaining to the Philippine Crocodile via establishing partnerships with international Zoos to raise funds for habitat protection in NE Luzon.

Tasmania

The University of Tasmania

Herpetological research has begun to slowly take over the School of Zoology at the University of Tasmania led by both the Behavioural and Evolutionary Ecology Research (BEER) and Comparative Endocrinology and Ecophysiology groups. Both research areas have a strong and continued focus on using herpetological model systems to examine key areas of interest in behavioural and evolutionary ecology and comparative endocrinology.

BEER Group:

The BEER group at UTas has grown steadily since its induction 5 years ago and now contains 6 PhD students, 2 honours students, 2 post doctoral research fellows, and one cricket mad leader. Just as with the Australian cricket team our pursuit of total domination of the School has continued unabated during this time. This couldn't have been achieved without the assistance of a few thousand snow skinks and a couple of hundred *Egernia* each year. However, in recent years our ranks have swelled to include, not just other reptiles species such as *Pseudemoia entrecasteauxii*, but also lyrebirds, swamp rats, and dumpling squid. While the BEER group is traditionally quiet at this time of year, with its members taking the opportunity afforded by a hibernating herpetofauna to migrate to warmer climes and pursue other passions (Indonesia, The United States, France, and the U.K), most of us are gearing up for another busy season in the field. More details of students, projects available and our publications can be found by following links from Erik's webpage (<http://www.zoo.utas.edu.au/EWPblist/EWPbList.htm>).

Erik Wapstra heads the BEER research group and is continuing his long term research on the spotted snow skink (*Niveoscincus ocellatus*). He was recently awarded, along with Tobias Uller (University of Oxford) and Ido Pen (University of Groningen), a 3 year ARC discovery grant to examine maternal effects and sex allocation in the snow skink system. This collaboration continues a productive relationship that arose out of recent workshops organised by Erik and Tobias on sex allocation and maternal effects. Erik also continues his now long-term collaboration with Professor **Mats Olsson** from the University of Wollongong primarily on Swedish sand lizards, but also new exciting projects on snow skinks and agamids looking at the influence of metabolic processes in constraining life history evolution. To show diversity and respect to the other half of the herpetological community, Erik also collaborates with **Dr Craig Sherman** and Mats from the University of Wollongong on inbreeding/outbreeding and sperm competition in tree frogs.

Geoff While is in the final stages of his PhD project in which he examined various aspects of sociality within *Egernia whitii*. His study integrated a detailed field based examination of social spacing and offspring dispersal with molecular analyses of paternity to determine the social and mating system of a Tasmanian population of *Egernia whitii*. As a key component of this study, Geoff, in collaboration with David Sinn (DPIW), examined how consistent individual variation in behaviour influenced social strategies and parental care behaviour. These natural components of his study were also complimented with an experimental examination of birthing asynchrony, a unique behaviour within reptiles whereby females give birth to offspring with in a litter one at a time. Once his PhD has been completed, Geoff will remain as a post doc on Erik's snow skink ARC, but will stay involved in the *Egernia* research through continued collaboration with Caroline Isaksson (University of Groningham), David Sinn (DPIW), as well as students on the system.

Mat Russell is due to arrive from Canada in the next month (although he assures us that he is aware of the sport Cricket from his time in England) to begin his project examining context-dependent maternal effects in snow skinks. Specifically, he will examine the constraints on mechanisms for sex ratio adjustment and the role of operational sex ratios in affecting female decisions.

Chloe Cadby is in the 3rd year of her PhD investigating maternal effects in the snow skink *Niveoscincus ocellatus*. The first phase of her work focused on the effects of maternal basking behaviour, maternal stress and maternal nutrition on offspring phenotype and growth rate. She will expand on this in the next year by using the data collected by Erik over the past eight years to measure the effect of climate (mainly temperature) on offspring body condition in two populations living at the climatic extremes of the species range. Using these results, and with the collaboration of CSIRO, she is hoping to model the potential impact of climate change in this species.

Jo McEvoy has just started her PhD project on *Egernia whitii* after being brought back from the edge of a mammalian based project. Jo's project, entitled "population and evolutionary dynamics in a free living reptile population with respect to behavioural variation", plans to continue and expand on the *Egernia* system established by Geoff. Specifically she plans to investigate how behavioural phenotypes (consistent individual variation in behaviour) may influence mating system dynamics, reproductive output (and thus fitness), resource and habitat acquisition, and dispersal. In addition, Jo will use *Egernia* as a system to explore behavioural phenotypes themselves (specifically across context/behaviour consistency) as well as the physiological basis and costs of these behavioural phenotypes.

Finally, in addition to the PhD projects a number of Honours students have recently completed their honours projects. **Kat O'Connor** completed her project examining the effects of climate variation during embryonic development on offspring phenotypes in the spotted snow skink just this past May, while **Genevieve Bordogna** completed her project examining the genetic structuring of *Egernia whitii* communities last November.

Comparative Endocrinology and Ecophysiology group

When **Sue Jones** isn't busy running the School of Zoology itself, she continues her work examining the evolution of viviparity in vertebrates and how environmental stressors affect the endocrine (hormone) system. She is particularly interested in interactions between the adrenal (stress) axis and the reproductive system, and continues to explore the hormonal control of gestation. Sue's projects also span far and wide (and across non-herpetological taxa!), recently taking on a PhD student, **Laura Parsley**, who will examine the potential for endocrine disruption in sea turtles across Queensland and Malaysia. This project is co-supervised by **Joan Whittier**, who recently left UQ to settle in Tasmania. In addition Sue collaborates with members of the BEER group on other herpetological related projects providing expert advice and support on the physiological basis of key behavioural traits.

Ashley Edwards is continuing her long term monitoring project examining key components of the reproductive physiology of the Blue Tongue lizard (*Tiliqua nigrolutea*). Ashley's work includes a number of key areas including characterisation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal (HPG) axis and examining the key physiological steps by which ectothermic vertebrates living in cold climates assess their capacity to breed. Ashley aims to expand this in the upcoming years by examining aspects of kin recognition in *Tiliqua nigrolutea*.

Keisuke Itonga is in the second year of his PhD examining maternal effects in the grass skink (*Pseudemoia entrecasteauxii*), supervised by both Sue and Erik. Keisuke chose *Pseudemoia* as his model organism because of its placental complexity. As the strength of potential maternal effects is likely to be related to the complexity of maternal-embryo communication, maternal effects mediated via the placenta may therefore have great implications for offspring fitness in such species. However, this is yet to be examined. Keisuke began his PhD by examining the extent to which food and temperature conditions during gestation influence offspring fitness. In upcoming years he plans to expand on this by examining the influence of both hormones and carotenoids on offspring phenotype through both examination of natural patterns and also through experimental manipulations.

Where are they now?

Roy Swain

Last position held: Associate Professor, School of Zoology, University of Tasmania

Current location: Honorary Research Associate, Utas

Update: Retired 2003. Have now pretty well wound up all research, though I still keep in touch with colleagues and ex-students at Utas. Final two herp postgrads graduated in December 2007.

Spend my time now having fun with a very large garden + some fishing and golf. My only ongoing professional commitment is as Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee for threatened species in Tasmania.



Michael James Tyler

Last Position Held: Associate Professor of Environmental Biology and Visiting Research Fellow (still current)

Current Location: 5th Floor, Jordan Building, The University of Adelaide, North Terrace, Adelaide 5005



Update: Theoretically I retired from the University of Adelaide 6 years ago. However, since then I have continued my research work on anuran pheromones and am completing two major projects: a Field Guide to the frogs of Australia, illustrated by the artist Frank Knight, and a fourth revised edition of the Frogs of WA in collaboration with Paul Doughty, Laurie Smith and Ron Johnston.

Where are they now?

Graeme Watson

I took early retirement at the end of 1999 aged 57 (I decided that life was too short to put up with the rampant managerialism that was thoroughly permeating and destroying University life as I had known it). My late wife Barbara (she sadly died of cancer in May 2006) and I decided to move away from the big smoke and bought a tiny cottage in the CBD of Castlemaine in central Victoria. This choice of locale was not random because over the past 40 years we had spent most of our free time at a little miner's cottage about 7 km south of the town and proposed to create a show garden on the surrounding 0.7 hectares as our retirement project. And so for the past 8.5 years I have spent most of my waking hours toiling away at horticultural and landscaping pursuits. I have had little to do with herpetology in retirement other than keeping in contact with my former colleagues and friends; getting roped into the "speaking circuit" of Field Naturalists Clubs, Land Care Groups, Garden Clubs and so on; building an elaborate multi-pond water feature in the garden where at least five species of frogs have successfully bred; and of course, filling the garden with froggy *objects d'art* (See Fig. 1). Best wishes and may Eric be with you,



W (aka Graeme Watson)

FIGURE 1 Garden Statue

Jeannette Covacevich

Jeanette Covacevich retired from the Queensland museum in June 2002. She really enjoys retirement and feels she should have retired at birth.

She lives between a Brisbane city apartment and a farmlet some 15km west of Cooktown, NEQ, on the banks of the Endeavour River. In Cooktown, where Jeanette is based almost 9 months each year, her time is spent tending 28 acres of rainforest and a few fruit trees, mowing 5 acres, swimming 2-3km 5 days a week, beach combing, bushwalking, making forays to remote parts of Cape York Peninsula, and hosting visitors (of which there are many).



Jeanette maintains her association with the Queensland Museum as an Honorary; talks with her friend and successor at the museum, Patrick Couper, often; and still collects road-killed specimens of reptiles and mammals for incorporation to the museum research collection.

Where are they now?



Gordon Grigg

Last position held: Professor of Zoology, University of Queensland

Current location:
Brookfield, Queensland.

Update:

1. CERF-funded project with Andrew Taylor (UNSW) developing autonomous bioacoustic monitoring system. This is an outgrowth from the system we have been using for monitoring NT frogs (since 1996) but will do birds, insects and bats as well. Will be available at the end of 2009.
2. Writing a book on crocodiles. Probably available early 2009.
3. Bushwalking. Walls of Jerusalem, Mt Anne, Frenchmans Cap since 2006.

Angus Martin

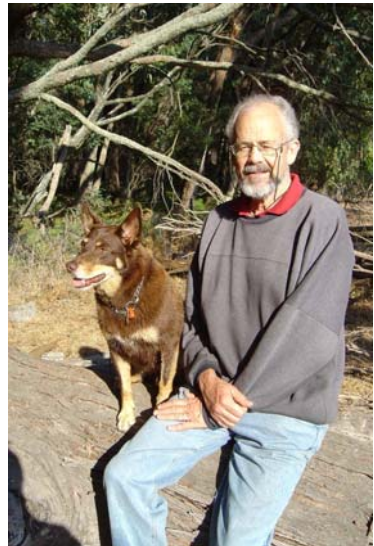
Last position held: Coordinator, Certificate in Zoo-keeping, Box Hill Institute of TAFE, Victoria

Current location: Honorary Research Fellow, Department of Zoology, University of Melbourne; Associate, Museum Victoria, Melbourne.

Update:

Travel: Natural history study tours to Belize, Guatemala, Kenya, Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana. Forthcoming: Peru, Galapagos.

Other: Restoration of an ecologically degraded property in the Strathbogie Ranges, Vic; Member, Strathbogie Tableland Landcare Group.



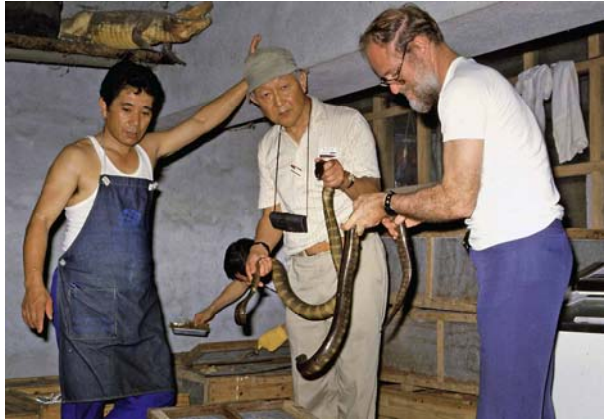
Where are they now?

Harold Heatwole

Last position held: Professor, Dept. of Zoology, North Carolina State University

Current location: North Carolina State University

Update: My recent activities have been teaching Herpetology” and “Animal Diversity”, editing new volumes of “Amphibian Biology”, editing the journal “Integrative and Comparative Biology”, continuing work on my PhD in Geography at James Cook University, writing my backlog, and conducting research on snake venoms.



I have travelled to all continents in the past few years making videos for use in university online courses and for high school teachers. I take classes overseas each year. Destinations since the year 2000 have been Antarctica, Spitzbergen (Arctic), Trinidad, Venezuela, Galapagos, the Namibia. This doesn't leave a lot of time for hobbies but I do avidly collect postage stamps.



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