

The wonders of the Kimberley

A glimpse at its unique environment. ‘*A chorus of frogs*’

(by Brian Kane)



Have you ever been in the most sensitive room in your home and encountered the famous Kimberley green frog? Disconcerting as they may be in such a situation, they are nevertheless an integral part of our environment. There are at least 39 species of frogs listed as occurring in the region of the

Kimberley with such interesting common names as the Javelin Frog, the Striped Rocket Frog, the Desert Tree Frog, the Wailing Frog and the Bumpy Rocket Frog, which is the racing car of the frog world. It is fast, muscular and streamlined and can make leaps of over a metre. Interestingly, an endemic cave-dwelling frog was only recently discovered in 1979 among the sandstone gorges of the Michell Plateau.

The first wet season downpour in the Kimberley is enough to stir frogs into action. In no time at all, frogs come out to play and fill the air with a chorus of voices. By listening carefully you can distinguish different types of calls with some calls sounding like laughter while others sound like a baby crying.

All frogs require water to breed and most live in wet environments such as flood plains, creeks, remnant rainforest patches and dams. They feed on insects, beetles, grasshoppers, ants, termites and spiders.

There are frogs which cocoon themselves in a moisture sac underground over the long dry season ready for the first rains so they can emerge from hibernation. One such frog found commonly in the Kimberley is the Northern Spotted Grass Frog, which buries itself underground or retreats to permanent swamps or paperbark patches after the wet season.

Scientists say that the presence of frogs is a sure sign that our environment is in a healthy condition. This is a good reason for us to understand and protect our native frog communities.



(The Kimberley Green Tree frog - photo BK)

Further information: BK's Kimberley nature web site:

<http://www.stmarysbroome.wa.edu.au/home/nature/aaopen.html>