



Sloane's Froglet, *Crinia sloanei*

What is Sloane's Froglet?

Sloane's Froglet is a very small (around 15 to 20mm), native Australian frog that lives in inland Victoria, New South Wales and possibly southern Queensland. This unique froglet was first discovered in the late 1950s in southern NSW and northern Victoria along the Murray River near Tocumwal by Murray Littlejohn¹. Since that time there has been little research into Sloane's Froglet. In NSW in 2008 it was declared a threatened species under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act*².



Figure 1: Female and male Sloane's Froglets in amplexus

How can I tell if it is a Sloane's Froglet?

Both male and female Sloane's Froglets have backs that are brown or brownish-grey, often with darker brown or olive markings, and males may also have orange or ochre coloured spots. Their bellies are generally white with some darker blotches and a greenish marbling under the chin. Sloane's Froglets are hard to see and hide quickly so the best way to identify a Sloane's Froglet is from its call. During the winter months and after heavy rain it makes a short chirp while floating on top of a water body. It calls during the day and at night.



Photo ©Marion Anstis

Figure 2: The belly of a male Sloane's Froglet



Photo ©Dirk Spenneman

Figure 3: Plains Froglet, *Crinia parinsignifera*

Sloane's Froglet is often mistaken for other species, most commonly for the Plains or Eastern Sign-bearing Froglet, *Crinia parinsignifera*. This froglet sounds similar to Sloane's although its call is usually a longer wail rather than a chirp. The Common Eastern Froglet, *Crinia signifera*, is also similar in appearance and its call is more like a harsh ratchet noise.

Where does Sloane's Froglet live?

Sloane's Froglet was originally found along the Murray River Valley from Mulwala to Echuca and in the plains country between Wangaratta and Whitfield in Victoria¹. Since that time Sloane's has been located in parts of central NSW including Nyngan and Griffith. In the 1990s Sloane's was found in northern NSW at Goodooga and Mungindi. In Victoria it has been located near Rutherglen, Wangaratta, Nagambie, Benalla and Murchison. Until the current survey work commenced in 2010, there had been very few records of Sloane's Froglet over the prior 20 years. Recent survey work has located important populations of Sloane's Froglets at Albury (especially around Thurgoona) and Corowa in southern NSW and Walgett in northern NSW (Phil Spark, pers. Comm). In Victoria, Sloane's Froglet has been found recently in the Rutherglen/Wahgunyah region, at Wangaratta and at Moodies Swamp.

What habitat does Sloane's Froglet live in?

Sloane's Froglet lives and breeds in temporary and permanent waterbodies including oxbows off creeks and rivers, farm dams, large and small natural wetlands, constructed frog ponds and temporary puddles. Sloane's Froglet breeds in winter, and it requires waterbodies that contain shallow water (around 20cm deep). It prefers wetlands that contain riparian and aquatic vegetation. Most often it has been found in waterbodies that contain grasses and reeds that are of medium height and have small stem diameters such as couch, watercouch or the Common spikerush, *Eleocharis acuta*. Waterbodies containing this type of vegetation are essential for

Sloane's Froglet as it lays its eggs attached to vegetation rather than as a frothy mass on the surface of the water like some other frogs. As well as requiring particular breeding habitat, Sloane's Froglet needs connections between breeding and refuge sites. Inland Australia's extremely variable climate means that for Sloane's to survive it has to move across the landscape when it is wet. Sloane's Froglet uses roadside drains, table drains, irrigation channels and inundated grasslands to move from one spot to another.



Photo © Alexandra Knight

Figure 4: Sloane's Froglets' eggs



Photo © Alexandra Knight

Figure 5: Excellent Sloane's Froglet habitat – shallow water, lots of reeds and refuge spots

References

1. Littlejohn, M (1958) A new species of frog of the genus *Crinia* Tschudi from South-eastern Australia, *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales*, 83 (2), 222 – 226
2. NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (2012) *Sloane's Froglet – profile*
<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspeciesapp/profile.aspx?id=20088>

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Figure 6: Sloane's Froglet