



near final
draft

Farming for Frogs!

Congratulations...

...you're one of the fortunate few who have White-bellied frogs (*Geocrinia alba*) on your property.

What do you do now ?

What are your legal obligations ?

Who do you contact for further information ?

Which Frog is That?

Firstly, you may wish to confirm the frogs on your property are White-bellied frogs.

1 - Gently catch a frog in a small jar with some moist moss or forest litter in the bottom and plenty of air holes in the lid.

CAUTION: do not put any water in the jar as the frogs will drown.

2 - Work through the leaflet "Is your frog a White or Orange-bellied frog ?" contained in this kit and attempt to identify the frogs on your property.

3 - Still not sure ? ...Call the Geocrinia Recovery Team. Members of the team can help you identify your frog and discuss how you can protect frogs and their habitat. (See Leaflet: "The Geocrinia Recovery Team" for further information)

Conserving Frogs Is Easy (Give it a go!)

Many things can be done to make an important contribution to help conserve the frogs and their habitat without burdening you, your property or the profitability of your farm.

Conserving the frogs is easy: protect their habitat from disturbance or destruction and the frogs will look after themselves !

What are my legal obligations ?

While both the White and Orange-Bellied frogs are contained on the WA government's list of Threatened Species (ie: species in need of special protection) and the Federal government's Endangered Species list, you are not legally obliged to protect the frogs or their habitat if you don't wish. Note: (Different laws apply to endangered plants on private property).

As a freehold landowner you may manage the endangered fauna on your land as you wish, but be aware that the Wildlife Conservation Act protects all of WA's plants and animals from deliberate acts of harm or disturbance.

We would, however like to hear about your frog find even if you do not intend to do anything else. These frogs are so rare that every little bit of information the team can gather will be of benefit to our researchers and may assist in the conservation of the species.

How can I conserve the frogs on my property?

1) Maintain the native vegetation on and around creek lines.

2) Minimise stock intrusion.

Stock destroy ground level vegetation which opens up the protective cover required by the frogs.

They churn the soil profile potentially crushing burrows and frogs and change the pattern of surface waterflow through the creek line vegetation.

3) Minimise the amount of chemicals used near or on the creek line vegetation. Herbicides reduce vegetation cover and insecticides may kill the frogs.

4) Consider fencing your creek line vegetation to provide a physical barrier between stock and the frog habitat.

How will I benefit ?

Protecting your creek lines provides a number of benefits to your property including:

1) Wildlife Conservation.

White-Bellied Frogs are not the only species to benefit from protecting the creekline habitat. Another 10 to 12 species of frogs are likely to live in your creek as well as numerous species of birds. The endangered ringtail possum and the bandicoot which depend on healthy vegetation along the creekline may also be found there or encouraged to return.

2) Erosion and Salinity control.

Preserving creekline vegetation will improve the quality of water available for your stock by protecting your creekbanks from erosion, salinisation and filtering chemical and fertilizer runoffs before they enter the waterbody.

3) Organic Pest Control.

Many species of birds live and breed in the dense vegetation along streams and feed on the large numbers of insects found there and in the paddock. These provide a significant pest control function at no expense.

4) Aesthetic Improvement.

Healthy vegetation-lined creeks meandering through paddocks add a special something to the feel of a property and indicate that sound land management practices occur on this site.

5) Farm Planning.

Fencing the creeklines will encourage the growth of natural shelter belts which will enhance stock and pasture productivity and assist you to develop a farm plan to maximise your property's production in a sustainable manner.

How much will it cost me?

Nothing. As part of the Recovery Plan for the two Geocrinia frog species, the Australian Nature Conservation Agency (ANCA) has made funds available over a 10 year period to assist the Department of Conservation and Land Management to ensure the survival of the White and Orange-Bellied frogs in WA. A substantial proportion of this money is for the construction of fences along the creeklines.

What do I have to do?

Associated with receiving free fencing around your creeks containing white-bellied frogs, you will be asked to sign a Conservation Agreement, the conditions of which require you to:

- maintain or where appropriate improve the condition of your creekline;
- keep your stock from feeding on the creekline vegetation, and
- prevent your stock from pushing their way into the creek.

(See Leaflet: "A Conservation Fencing Agreement" for further information)

A statewide recognition system is being devised for landholders who significantly contribute to the conservation of threatened species. Your participation and cooperation in this scheme will enable you to display "Wildlife Aware" signs on your property boundaries to encourage others in your community to follow your lead and become Wildlife Aware.

Overall, we are asking only a small commitment from you, yet it may mean the difference between survival and extinction not only of the frogs on your property but for the whole species.

Want to find out more ?

Please call us,

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