

Frog Census Monitoring Planner

User Guide

A practical guide to using the Frog Monitoring Planner tool.

The Frog Census Monitoring Planner gives suggested monitoring goals that you can choose from and guides the selection of monitoring sites and when to monitor for frogs. Once these steps are complete you can generate a printable frog monitoring plan.

Steps for creating your plan

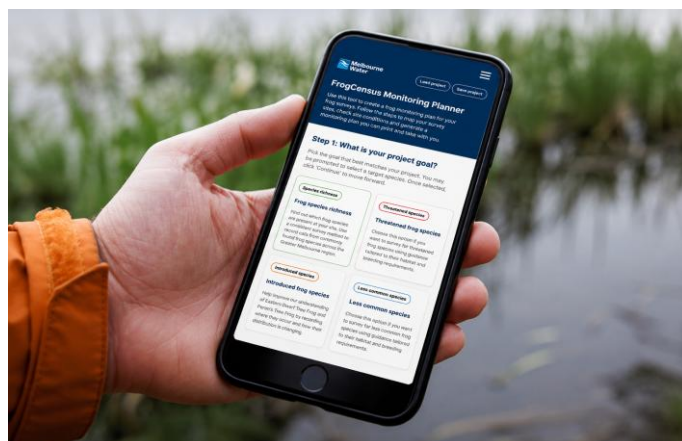
1. Choose a project goal
2. Create a project map
3. Schedule surveys
4. Field checklist
5. Hygiene and habitat checks
6. Safety and weather checks
7. Generate plan



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STEP 1 Project goal

Choosing the right project goal ensures your monitoring plan aligns with what you want to learn. It also helps tailor the guidance you receive, including which species to target, where and when to survey, and what information to collect in the field.



Selecting your project goal

Start by clicking the tile that best matches the purpose of your project.

Frog species diversity

- Select this tile if you want to find out which commonly found frog species are present at your site.

Threatened frog species

- Select this tile for a tailored survey for threatened frog species of the Greater Melbourne region.
- A dropdown box will appear once clicked. It will prompt you to select either the Growling Grass Frog or Pseudophryne species toadlets.

Locally introduced frog species

- Select this tile if you want to survey for the species known to have been introduced to the Greater Melbourne region in recent decades.
- A dropdown box will prompt you to select Eastern Dwarf Frog or Peron's Tree Frog.

Less common species

- Select this if you are focusing on species that are less commonly detected in the Melbourne region.
- A dropdown box will prompt you to select Lesueur's Frog, Common Spadefoot Toad or Red-groined Froglet.

Frog information

For more information on Melbourne's frog species, click the links below:

[Frog identification guide](#)

[Frog Census information](#)



Scan to download the Frog Census app using the QR code or [click here](#).



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STEP 2 Project map

The site map does not need to be perfect. Its purpose is so that you can safely identify where the group will monitor.

What to include on the map

- Waterbodies, wetlands, depressions, ponds, dams, creeks, drainage lines and shallow pools.
- Reeds, rushes, floating and submerged vegetation, and other wetland habitat features.
- Access points, tracks, paths, nearby landmarks and safe parking notes.
- Hazards such as steep banks, poor access, deep water or snake risk areas.
- One monitoring pin for each survey location where observers will stand, listen and record observations.

Add project details

1. Enter the project or site name.

2. Choose the map type

Hand-drawn site map, Vicmap Viewer, MapShareVic, Google Maps, or an existing site map or plan.

3. Add short site notes

Such as access points, key hazards or landmarks.

Create site codes

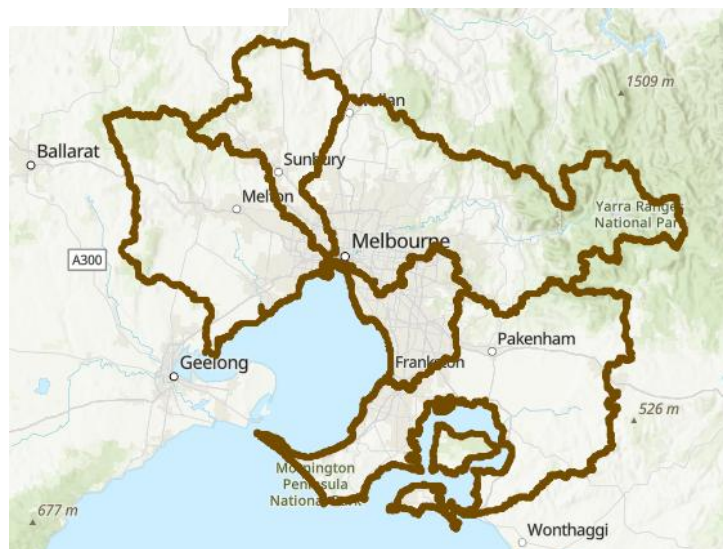
Site codes help keep your survey records organised.

Enter your community group code, catchment code and site prefix.

These fields are used to create site codes.

1. Enter the project or site name with a 3-letter code. For Example; Friends of Green Creek could be FGC
2. Work out which catchment that you are in using the catchment map shown above. You can search your location on this catchment map

<https://melbournewater.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=49efc083a61749e6b3f5001669cbbdae>



Catchment map for Greater Melbourne

Recommended order for map creation

1. Upload or draw the base map
2. Mark potential frog habitat areas
3. Add access routes and key features
4. Finish by dropping monitoring pins

Map types

- [Google maps](#)
- MapShareVic – Interactive maps from DECCA that allow you to turn on layers such as wetlands
<https://mapshare.vic.gov.au/mapshare/vic/>
- Hand drawn map

3. For the unique site code simply choose a prefix that describes the site.

C – Creek

W – Wetland

D- Drainage line

Or create your own

4. From here the planner will number each site so that it has a unique code. For example; FGC-YRC-W1

- Use **Generate my unique site code** before dropping pins if you want the pins to follow your preferred code structure.
- If you've already added sites, the tool can regenerate the site codes. Review them before printing or saving the plan.

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STEP 2 Project map

Create map

You can hand draw a site map using the 'Draw' tool. However, it's probably better to upload a screenshot of a map and then add details on top.

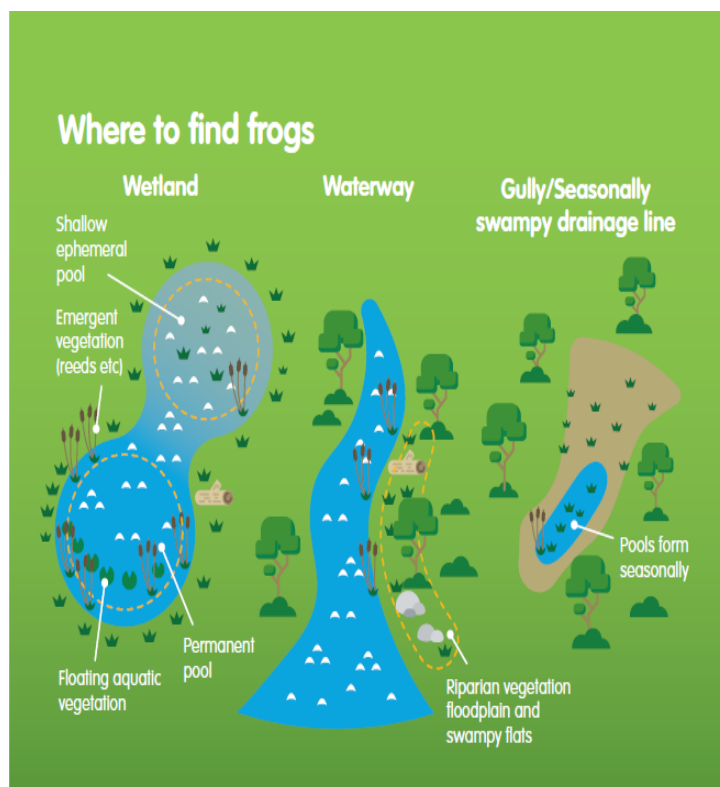
1. **Take a screenshot** of your map area on Google Maps or alternative platform.
Save this on your device.
2. Click the **"Upload base map"** button and select your previously saved image.

Add monitoring sites

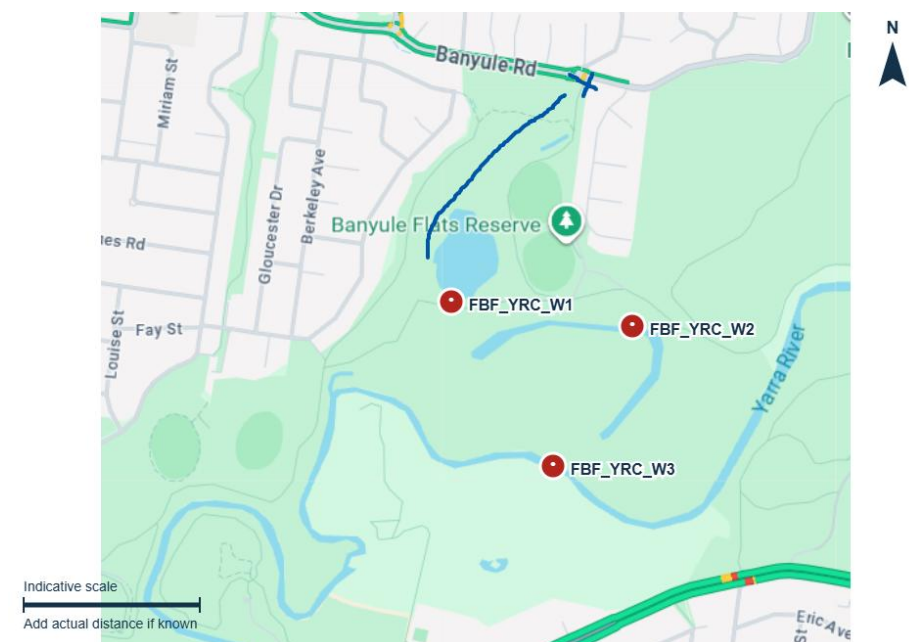
1. Click the **'Drop Monitoring Pin'** button
2. Click or tap the map where a monitoring site should be placed.
3. Enter site code, site name, habitat type and notes when prompted
4. Repeat for all sites.

How to use site codes

Be sure to include the site code when making each frog record. Use the Location name box in the App to record the site code. Follow this with the location name.



Example of a project map with monitoring sites added



3**STEP 3****Schedule surveys**

Use the species guidance shown at the top of the step to decide when surveys should occur. Then add each planned survey event.

Plan your monitoring schedule

1. Enter a survey date guided by the recommend months listed in the survey protocol and volunteer availability.
2. A survey label is automatically generated but you can alter if needed. For example; Autumn survey or Post-rain event survey.
3. Each site should be surveyed every survey event, even if no frogs are heard calling. If the field is left blank, the planner uses all current site codes.

**4****STEP 4****Field checklist**

Use this section as a pre-departure and on-site checklist. Tick off the items before and during each survey.

Before leaving

- Charge your phone and turn on location services.
- Install the Frog Census App and familiarise yourself with frog calls that you might hear.
- Check the weather conditions.
- Refer to the Beaufort scale at the end of the Handbook to estimate windspeed.
- Pack a torch, water bottle and field hygiene kit.
- Confirm you have a monitoring partner.

Survey timings

Most protocols recommend:

- Surveying from 30 minutes after sunset
- Avoiding heavy rain
- Ensuring wind below 20 km/h refer to Beaufort Scale on page 8
- Use the target-specific guidance shown in the planner
- Be sure to check the weather conditions before heading out. Bureau of Meteorology BOM

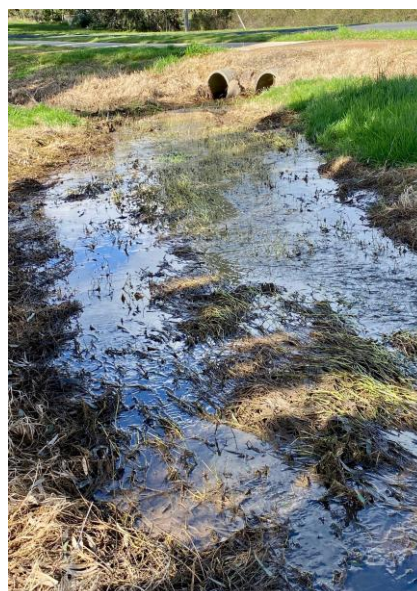
On site

- Stand still and quiet for about 5 minutes at each monitoring site to allow frogs to resume calling.
- Listen for the number of different frog calls.
- Record for 5 minutes while standing still.
- Record even if no frogs are heard, because null records are still useful.
- Use your current location, then check and adjust the dropped pin if needed.
- Submit the observation before leaving the site.
- If there's no phone service, the report will be saved to your phone, and you can upload it when you have coverage.

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STEP 5
Hygiene and habitat

Follow the hygiene procedure before entering and leaving each site to prevent the spread of frog pathogens, diseases, weeds and pests between locations.

- Carry and use a field hygiene kit.
- Check and clean clothing, footwear and equipment before arriving and when leaving.
- Disinfect potentially contaminated materials and allow disinfectant to stay on for at least 1 minute.
- Keep group size to 2-4 people at sensitive sites.
- Avoid entering water and avoid trampling frog habitat.
- Do not actively share (outside of the App) exact location of threatened species.


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STEP 6
Safety and weather

Complete this step 1-3 days before the monitoring day and confirm that conditions are suitable before heading out.

Weather suitability check

1. Use the BOM to check weather conditions. Enter the expected night-time air temperature in degrees Celsius.
2. Enter the expected wind speed in Kilometres per hour, also refer to Beaufort Scale as a guide.
3. Choose the rain condition: none, light rain or drizzle, recent rain, or heavy rain.
4. Select 'Check conditions'

The planner returns one of three results:

- Suitable survey conditions
- Check before surveying
- Or not recommended.

Field Hygiene Kit

Should include the following items

A stiff scrubbing brush to clean loose material off footwear.

Disinfectant: use either, methylated spirits diluted to 70% in water. Alternatively, household bleach diluted to 1% sodium hypochlorite in water.

Both will degrade over time and must be labelled and stored safely. Make sure to follow the safety advice listed on the product.

In the field a spray bottle with diluted methylated spirits can be used to disinfect between sites as this dries quickly.

Safety checklist

- Complete a daytime visit to assess hazards.
- Confirm safe parking and safe access.
- Tell someone exactly where you will be.
- Survey in a group.
- Avoid extreme weather.
- Wear sturdy shoes and long pants.
- Understand snake risks near waterways and long grass.
- Survey with at least one other person
- **Know the emergency protocol: call 000 for police, fire or ambulance.**

7**STEP 7****Generate plan**

This step brings together all the information you've entered, including your map, survey sites, schedule, monitoring method, hygiene procedures, safety checklist and supporting resources into a single monitoring plan.

Plan buttons**Refresh plan**

Updates the monitoring plan with your latest changes.

Copy text plan

Copies the text version of the monitoring plan to the clipboard.

Download map image

Downloads the map created in Step 2.

Print or save PDF

Opens the browser print window. Choose a printer or choose **Save as PDF**.

Save project JSON

Downloads the project data as **frog-monitoring-project.json** so it can be reloaded later.

Load project JSON

Loads a previously saved project JSON file.

Troubleshooting**"I cannot see a monitoring pin"**

Make sure **Drop monitoring pin** is selected, then click or tap the map. Check the site list below the map.

"The site code is wrong"

Edit the code in the site list, or adjust the group, catchment and prefix fields and regenerate site codes.

"I uploaded the wrong map"

Use **Clear map**, then upload the correct base map. Check site records because pin positions will be removed.

**Quality check before printing**

Review the project name, objective, target species, survey effort, site codes, survey dates, map, safety notes and field datasheet before printing or saving the plan.

Share this with your monitoring group prior to going out to site.

"The weather result says not recommended"

Choose another survey date or reassess conditions closer to the survey. Avoid heavy rain, high winds and temperatures above 30°C.

"The plan is missing information"

Return to the relevant step, update the fields, then select Refresh plan in Step 7.

"I need to continue later"

Use **Save project JSON** and keep the downloaded file. Reload it later with **Load project JSON**.

For further support, please email Melbourne Water at frogs@melbournewater.com.au

Beaufort Scale – used to estimate wind speed

Source Royal Meteorological Society

Beaufort Number	Description	Wind speed	Land Conditions
0	Calm	< 1 km/h	Smoke rises vertically
1	Light air	1-5 km/h	Direction shown by smoke drift but not by wind vanes
2	Light breeze	6-11 km/h	Wind felt on face, leaves rustle, wind vane moves by wind
3	Gentle breeze	12-19 km/h	Leaves and small twigs in constant motion, light flags extend
4	Moderate breeze	20-28 km/h	Raises dust and loose paper, small branches move
5	Fresh breeze	29-38 km/h	Small trees in leaf begin to sway, crested wavelets form on inland waters
6	Strong breeze	39-49 km/h	Large branches in motion, whistling heard in transmission wires, umbrellas hard to use
7	Moderate gale, near gale	50-61 km/h	Whole trees in motion, hard to walk against the wind
8	Gale, fresh gale	62-74 km/h	Twigs break off trees, impedes progress when walking
9	Strong/severe gale	75-88 km/h	Slight structural damage to buildings possible
10	Storm/whole gale	89-102 km/h	Seldom experienced inland, trees uprooted, considerable structural damage eg. roof tiles blow off buildings
11	Violent storm	103-117 km/h	Very rarely experienced, accompanied by widespread damage
12	Hurricane force	118+km/h	Widespread destruction