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POSTER
BIG LEAPS FOR LITTLE FROG
PROGRESS OF THE KROOMBIT TINKERFROG CAPTIVE BREEDING PROGRAM

By

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ABSTRACT

The Kroombit Tinkerfrog (*Taudactylus pleione*) is listed as critically endangered and is currently known from only 12 small patches of rainforest at Kroombit Tops National Park in South-East Queensland. There are potentially less than 300 individual frogs of this species in existence today, with threats including infection from a frog-specific chytrid fungus. Other threats to the species include wild-fire and the presence of introduced pest species such as wild boar.

Recently two scientific publications were released identifying the Kroombit Tinkerfrog as one of Australia's frog species that is likely to face extinction in the next 20 years if no action is taken, highlighting the critical importance of taking action now.

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary's efforts towards a captive breeding and release program began over a decade ago, with the establishment of the Frog Research and Conservation Facility in 2009. Under a scientific research permit in conjunction with Griffith University, CWS staff collected specimens of the near-threatened Liem's Tinkerfrog (*Taudactylus liemi*) for use as an analogue species to the Kroombit Tinkerfrog. It was imperative that optimal husbandry protocols were established before the critically endangered *T. pleione* were brought into captivity. Working with the Liem's Tinkerfrog enabled CWS staff to work out and practice methods for collection and transport, chytrid fungus testing and treatment, general husbandry, and captive breeding into a second generation of captive bred animals.

Having successfully achieved captive breeding of a F2 generation of Liem's Tinkerfrogs, CWS entered a collaborative agreement with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services to begin collecting adult Kroombit Tinkerfrogs to establish a captive breeding population at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. Over the last 18 months, CWS staff have been successful in rearing the first ever captive bred Kroombit Tinkerfrogs which are destined for release in late 2022.

I intend to present a talk outlining a brief background on the species and the program, a brief history of CWS's involvement and successes leading up to now and goals for future expansion. The presentation will also include an overview of CWS's new amphibian breeding facility, scheduled for completion late May 2022, and a first look at the captive bred froglets and spawn of Kroombit Tinkerfrogs at a variety of life stages.

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BIOGRAPHY

Michael Vella has been working in the Zoo industry since 2003 and has extensive experience in a diverse range of taxa. He has managed the Reptile and Amphibian department at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary since 2015 and currently holds a newly created position with CWS managing the Kroombit Tinkerfrog captive breeding program. In this role Michael is responsible for the husbandry and breeding of the critically endangered Kroombit Tinkerfrog, the development of the new amphibian breeding facility as well as collaborating with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and other organisations, to work towards the eventual release of captive bred Kroombit Tinkerfrog to the wild.