



Endangered Species Act Protection Proposed for Oregon Spotted Frogs, Other Amphibians Under Settlement

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In accordance with a landmark settlement agreement with the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently proposed Endangered Species Act protection for Oregon spotted frogs. The agency also proposed to designate more than 68,000 acres and 24 stream miles as protected “critical habitat” for the amphibians. Once abundant from British Columbia to California, spotted frogs have disappeared from 90 percent of their former range, mostly because their wetland habitats are being destroyed.

These protections are the result of a 2011 agreement between the CBD and the USFWS to speed up endangered species protection decisions for 757 imperiled animals and plants around the country. So far, more than 100 species have been fully protected and dozens more have been proposed for protection under the settlement agreement. Several other amphibians have also received protections this year under the agreement. In August, the USFWS protected two central Texas blind salamanders under the Endangered Species Act. The Austin blind salamanders are now protected as an “endangered species” with 120 acres of protected habitat, and the Jollyville Plateau salamanders are protected as a “threatened species” with 4,331 acres of protected habitat. These fully aquatic salamanders require clean, well-oxygenated water and are threatened

by activities that pollute or reduce water flow to their aquatic habitats. In addition, this year the USFWS proposed protections for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and Yosemite toad, along with about two million acres of proposed critical habitat across the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The USFWS also proposed protection for a population of mountain yellow-legged frogs that lives in the southern Sierra Nevada. Yellow-legged frogs throughout the Sierra Nevada have suffered dramatic declines in range and numbers due to habitat destruction and degradation, disease, predation by nonnative trout, pesticides and climate change. Yosemite toads have also disappeared from many areas and suffered population losses primarily from livestock grazing, climate change and pesticides.

Scientists estimate that approximately 20 percent of amphibians in the U.S. are at risk of extinction. Surprisingly, though, just 27 of the approximately 1,400 species protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act are amphibians. Because the Endangered Species Act is America’s strongest environmental law and surest way to save species threatened with extinction, the CBD works to gain these needed protections through scientific petitions, advocacy and lawsuits. More information on the CBD’s campaign to address the amphibian extinction crisis is available here: BiologicalDiversity.org/herps