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# Los Angeles Times

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## Sierra Nevada toad and frog could get federal protection

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By Louis Sahagun  
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For thousands of years, Yosemite toads thrived 10,000 feet high in the Sierra Nevada range, emerging from partially frozen lakes in spring to reproduce and eat enough insects to survive another season of hibernation under the ice.

Since the 1960s, however, the once common toad with a musical mating call has been decimated by livestock grazing, fungal infections, pesticides and the appetites of non-native stocked trout.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed federal Endangered Species Act protection for the Yosemite toad and the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, along with 2 million acres of proposed critical habitat across the range for the cold-climate amphibians.

The proposal came in response to a lawsuit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity, which argued that listing the toads and frogs as endangered would hasten the development of protection and recovery plans to ensure their survival.



The Yosemite toad has been proposed for Endangered Species Act protection. (Lucas Wilkinson / U.S. Forest Service)

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Today, the toad is rarely encountered, even in Yosemite National Park, where it was discovered.

“This is great news for the only native amphibians of the high Sierra Nevada, which have suffered massive declines in recent decades and disappeared from most of the places where they once lived,” Jeff Miller, a spokesman for the Center for Biological Diversity, said. “Their declines are a warning of the failing health of our High Sierra ecosystems.”