



## ENDANGERED SPECIES: FWS extends protections to 3 frog species

Jessica Estepa, E&E reporter  
Monday, April 28, 2014

Three species of frogs found in the Sierra Nevada will be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The Fish and Wildlife Service tomorrow will publish a final rule in the Federal Register that will designate the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog and the northern distinct population segment of the mountain yellow-legged frog as endangered. The rule will also list the Yosemite toad as threatened.

The agency proposed the ESA designations a year ago. They are a part of the sweeping 2011 settlement between the Center for Biological Diversity and FWS for quick protection decisions for hundreds of species.

“We’re glad these frogs and toads are getting the lifeline they need so badly,” CBD’s Collette Adkins Giese said in a statement.

“Threats like toxic pesticides hurt these animals even in the high Sierras. But now, with the protections of the Endangered Species Act, we can do what’s necessary to save these rare amphibians from extinction.”

The yellow-legged frogs, which CBD first petitioned for protections in 2000, face threats that include habitat destruction, disease, predation from nonnative trout and pesticides.

The animals are usually colored a mix of brown and yellow and can grow up to a little more than 3 inches long. They receive their name from the yellow color of their belly and the undersides of their hind limbs, though some animals instead feature an orange color.

A recent taxonomic split of the species has resulted in the separate listings for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, which is found in both California and Nevada, and the northern population of the mountain yellow-legged frog, found only in California. The southern population of the mountain yellow-legged frog has received federal protections since 2002.

The Yosemite toad can grow up to almost 3 inches in length. Males are a pale yellowish green or olive with few blotches, while females are heavily blotched. It is threatened by livestock grazing and pesticides. CBD petitioned FWS to protect the amphibian in 2000, and it has been on the candidate list since 2003.

“This final rule is the result of exhaustive research, public comment, and scientific peer review,” Jennifer Norris, FWS’s field supervisor in Sacramento, Calif., said in a statement. “While other moderate and minor level threats including historic logging, mining, grazing pressures and recreational use were evaluated, they were not considered significant factors in our determination.”