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Center for Biological Diversity: Southern Arizona's Chiricahua Leopard Frogs are on their way to being endangered

January 14, 2021 6:01 am Frankie McLister

TUCSON (KVOA) – The Chiricahua Leopard Frog is one of the many native species to southern Arizona. Now, the Center for Biological Diversity says it's on its way to being endangered. Right now, the Chiricahua Leopard Frog is what they consider "threatened".

The Center for Biological Diversity blames this on what they call "excessive grazing". This means, cattle roaming around the frogs' habitat and destroying it.

"The big overarching issue here is that our ecosystems and wetlands are in severe distress throughout the Southwest," said Chris Bugbee of the Center of Biological Diversity. "It's where most of our species is concentrated, but also where most of the cattle is concentrated."

To make things easier, here are two photos showing what the Center for Biological Diversity is talking about.

PHOTO 1: Without the grazing, where the frogs' habitat isn't harmed.



PHOTO 2: And two, where the frogs' habitat is harmed due to the grazing.



"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with the ranching community to meet both the needs of the threatened Chiricahua leopard frog and the needs of their livestock operations. Because our natural waters in Arizona have been so severely curtailed, frogs have moved into cattle tanks. Stock tanks are built and managed to support livestock watering, and they also happen to provide habitat for frogs. Without water there would be no frogs. As a result, many of the best recovering and reintroduced populations of Chiricahua leopard frogs are on ranches in Arizona.

We have experienced one of the worst droughts this past year and frogs would be in trouble without these waters regardless of how they might look to an observer. Many livestock operators are eager partners in assisting in the comeback of this Arizona native and the reduction of the leopard frog's main predator -- the American bullfrog. Done right, livestock grazing and leopard frogs can be compatible."

When a Federal action, such as permitting livestock grazing on Federal lands, may affect a listed species, consultation between the Service and the action agency is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The conclusion of consultation may include mandatory changes in livestock programs in the form of measures to minimize take of a listed animal or to avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of a listed species."

Cat Crawford

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For more information on the Center for Biological Diversity, visit www.biologicaldiversity.org.