



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM**

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW (Time 4:36)

**CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG (HOST SARAH LEON WITH JIM
RORABAUGH)**

This transcript was produced from audio provided by FWS Endangered Species Program

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Music plays.)

MS. LEON: Hello, there. This is Sarah Leon with the Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm on the phone today with Jim RORABAUGH, Lead Biologist at the Arizona Ecological Services Sub-Office in Tucson.

Hi, Jim. How are you today?

MR. RORABAUGH: I'm pretty good. And you?

MS. LEON: I'm doing fine, thanks. I was just hoping you could talk to us today a little about the Chiricahua Leopard Frog.

MR. RORABAUGH: Absolutely.

MS. LEON: First, can you just tell us a little about this species?

MR. RORABAUGH: Sure. This is a spotted frog with a stripe down each side of its back. They grow to a maximum of about five inches in length and it's a frog that lives in pond, streams, springs, and rivers, mostly in the high country of Arizona and New Mexico and adjacent portions of the Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico.

The Chiricahua Frog is one of eight species of Leopard Frogs in the U.S. of which six occur in Arizona and New Mexico. One of those eight, the Vegas Valley

Leopard Frog is extinct. And the Chiricahua Leopard Frog was listed as threatened in June 2002.

MS. LEON: All right, so can you please bring our listeners up to speak on the current status of this species?

MR. RORABAUGH: The Chiricahua Leopard Frog has disappeared from about 80 percent of its historical localities. And the primary causes of that decline are degradation by non-native species such as bullfrogs, crayfish, sport fishes and tiger salamanders. And then there's apparently introduced chytridiomycosis that is killing not only Chiricahua Leopard Frogs, but frogs and toads around the planet.

Other threats to the frogs include habitat loss degradation, things such as contamination post-fire sedimentation and scouring, and human development of water.

An important consideration is that these non-native predators have often pushed the frog into small and isolated locations where these predators don't occur and in these small sites, drought or flood or fire take out an entire population.

MS. LEON: So what about the Chiricahua Leopard Frog makes it an ideal spotlight species?

MR. RORABAUGH: Although it faces serious threats, it's a species that we can work with a variety of partners on recovery. We have a number of enthusiastic people out there and agencies and organizations that are working with this on recovery.

We also have a number of conservation schools in place such as programmatic section 7 Consultations with National Forest. We have safe harbor agreements and we have a 4D rule in place that facilitates those working relationships.

MS. LEON: And can you explain to our listeners why the recovery of this species may be relevant to them? Are amphibians really a new canary in the coal mine as far as overall environmental quality is concerned?

MR. RORABAUGH: Yes. They are to some degree the canary in the coal mine. They're very sensitive to changes in their environment. Commonly used pesticides such as malathion and atrazine as well as residual pharmaceuticals, they're increasingly common in the environment and trigger a number of adverse physiological changes in the frogs themselves, but can also cause a variety of changes in the frogs' environment that then affects not only the frogs, but a number of animals that are living in those aquatic environments.

And in the Southwest, the Chiricahua Leopard Frog, and most other amphibians are associated with water which is a very scarce commodity there, that's often already over allocated.

MS. LEON: Okay, and just finally, what sorts of volunteer opportunities are there for interested listeners in the area? What can they do to help recover this species?

MR. RORABAUGH: Sure. We're always looking for recovery partners—for instance, lands where we can establish and manage frogs—but we also need help monitoring frogs and changes in the environment.

We have a recovery website where we post information about the frogs including volunteer opportunities. It's a great place to learn about the frog and recovery programs.

MS. LEON: Thank you, Jim, for taking the time to speak with us today a little bit about the work that you're doing with the Chiricahua Leopard Frog. You're doing a great job, so keep up the great work.

MR. RORABAUGH: Thank you.

MS. LEON: This is Sarah Leon for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thanks for listening.

(Music plays, whereupon, the interview was concluded.)