



## PRESS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

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### Service Announces Availability of the Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the Wyoming Toad

DENVER--The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is announcing the availability of the Wyoming toad Draft Revised Recovery Plan (Plan). The known historic distribution of the Wyoming toad (*Anaxyrus baxteri*) was restricted to approximately 5,000 hectares of habitat consisting of flood plains, ponds, and small seepage lakes in the short-grass communities of the Laramie Basin in Albany County, Wyoming. The Wyoming toad was federally listed as endangered in 1984 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), is considered one of the four most endangered amphibian species in North America, and is classified as "extinct in the wild" (IUCN 2011).

Populations of the Wyoming toad declined precipitously in the mid-80s until the last remaining individuals were taken into captivity to begin a captive breeding program. Approximately 500 individuals are currently in captivity. The cause(s) of the original decline in the mid-80s remains unknown, but was mostly likely due to a variety of threats contributed to the decline of the Wyoming toad.

Currently, the Wyoming toad is facing many threats that impede its recovery. Among the top threats are: (1) a lack of suitable reintroduction sites, (2) the presence of chytridiomycosis, the disease caused by the pathogenic fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd), (3) an inadequacy of regulatory mechanisms, and (4) a small population size.

The objective of a recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of a species so that protection under the Act is no longer necessary. A recovery plan includes scientific information about the species and provides criteria and actions necessary for us to be able to remove it from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. Recovery plans do not regulate federal agencies or their partners, but are often adopted by federal agencies as sound environmental policy.

Recovery of this species will require both sustained, long-term conservation actions and repeated experimentation to determine the optimal means to reestablish wild populations. Conservation efforts for the Wyoming toad are a fundamentally collaborative and cooperative process between multiple partners and will continue to be conducted by State and Federal land management agencies. Additionally, private parties, including landowners and conservation organizations, must continue to support Wyoming toad recovery. A variety of partners contributing to Wyoming toad recovery will help minimize the risk of extinction and facilitate progression towards recovery.

Specifically, recovery of Wyoming toads will depend upon: (1) continued efforts of captive breeding facilities to provide suitable animals for release into the wild; (2) the identification of suitable reintroduction sites with appropriate land management; and (3) management of Bd, a disease that has decimated amphibian populations around the world.

The updated Recovery Plan can be viewed at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/amphibians/wyomingtoad/>

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/> Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USFWSMountainPrairie> Follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie> Watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnpairie/>*