



News Release

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www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/

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Endangered Species Act Protection for Northern Leopard Frog is Not Warranted

The northern leopard frog does not warrant federal protection as a threatened or endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today. The announcement is the result of an evaluation of the status of the northern leopard frogs its 19-state western range and throughout the species' entire range.

The Service was petitioned in 2006 to add the western U.S. population of the northern leopard frog to the list of threatened species protected under the Endangered Species Act. Under the Endangered Species Act, animal populations that are discrete, significant and threatened can be considered for protection as a "distinct population segment" (DPS). Genetic data analyzed indicates that, while there are genetic differences among leopard frogs, the populations are not markedly separate. Therefore, the western U.S. populations do not qualify as a DPS.

The Service then evaluated the status of the entire species. While the species has experienced reductions in its historical range, particularly in the western United States and western Canada, the species is still considered to be widespread and relatively common in the eastern United States and eastern Canada. Threats at the species level do not indicate that the northern leopard frog is in danger of extinction, or likely to become so within the foreseeable future, throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Listing is not warranted at this time.

The Service continues to request new information concerning genetics and threats to and conservation of the northern leopard frog. New information will help monitor the northern leopard frog and encourage its conservation. If an emergency situation develops for the northern leopard frog or any other species, the Service will act to provide immediate protection.

The northern leopard frog experiences threats from habitat loss, disease, non-native species, pollution and climate change that individually and cumulatively have resulted in population declines and disappearance from areas of its historical range in the western U.S. and Canada.

The northern leopard frog is a smooth-skinned green, brown, or sometimes yellow-green frog covered with large, oval dark spots, each of which is surrounded by a lighter halo. Adult body lengths range from 2 to 4.5 inches.

The northern leopard frog requires a mosaic of habitats to meet the requirements of all of its life stages and breeds in a variety of aquatic habitats that include slow-moving or still water along streams and rivers, wetlands, permanent or temporary pools, beaver ponds, and human-constructed habitats such as earthen stock tanks and borrow pits. Subadult northern leopard frogs typically migrate to feeding sites along the borders of larger, more permanent bodies of water and recently-metamorphosed frogs will move up and down drainages and across land in an effort to locate new breeding areas.

The petition sought protection for the northern leopard frog in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. The northern leopard frog is now considered uncommon in a large portion of its range in the western United States, and declines of the species have been documented in most western states and western Canada. The species' range extends into the eastern United States and eastern Canada, where it is still considered to be widespread and relatively common.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

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 www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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Note to editors:

Photo support is available by contacting Jeff Humphrey (602-242-0210) at on the Internet at:
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Amphibians.htm>

Northern leopard frog vocalizations are available at:
http://www.californiaherps.com/frogs/pages/r_pipiens.sounds.html

Range map of the petitioned northern leopard frog population is at:
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Northern_Frog.html