

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Final designation of critical habitat for the Oregon spotted frog

1) What is the Oregon spotted frog?

The Oregon spotted frog is named for the black dots that cover its head, back, sides, and legs. It inhabits emergent wetland habitats and is almost entirely aquatic, rarely emerging onto land. It breeds February- early June, depending on elevation. Egg masses are laid in shallow pools of water (generally no more than 14 inches deep) that are often temporary; along gradually receding shorelines; on benches of seasonal lakes and marshes; and in wet meadows.

2) What are the primary threats to the existence of Oregon spotted frogs?

The primary threats continue to be ongoing habitat destruction and modification, predation by non-native species such as fish and bullfrogs, and small, isolated breeding locations that are not connected.

3) What is the agency doing now?

The Service listed the Oregon spotted frog as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act on August 28, 2014. The Service proposed to designate critical habitat for the species on August 29, 2013, refined the proposed critical habitat in 2014, and we are now finalizing that designation.

4) What is critical habitat?

Critical habitat identifies geographic areas containing physical or biological features essential to the conservation of a threatened or endangered species.

5) How does the Service determine what areas to propose for critical habitat?

Biologists consider physical or biological habitat features needed for life and successful reproduction of the species. These include, but are not limited to: space for growth and normal behavior; food, water, air, light, minerals, or other nutritional or physiological requirements; cover or shelter; sites for breeding and rearing offspring; and habitats that are

protected from disturbance or are representative of the historic geographical and ecological distributions of the species.

6) How does the final critical habitat differ from the proposed critical habitat?

Based on new information about the presence or absence of appropriate spotted frog habitat, updated ownership information, and the finalization of conservation agreements, 3,463 (net) fewer acres were designated as critical habitat. With finalized management agreements in place, 3,083 acres were excluded on private and county lands such as Glenwood Valley Coordinated Resource Management Plan and Conservation Agreement and Sunriver Management Plans.

7) Why were some areas excluded from critical habitat?

The Service analyzed four finalized management plans or conservation agreements for their contribution to Oregon spotted frog conservation. We considered whether the plans provided a conservation benefit for the species and its habitat and whether there was a reasonable expectation that the conservation management strategies and actions would be implemented for the foreseeable future, based on past practices, written guidance, or regulations and whether the plan provided conservation strategies and measures consistent with currently accepted principles of conservation biology.

8) What are some examples of the critical elements included in critical habitat for the frog?

Critical elements within Oregon spotted frog habitat include: ephemeral (temporary) or permanent bodies of fresh water, including, but not limited to natural or manmade ponds, springs, lakes, slow-moving streams, or pools within or oxbows adjacent to streams, canals, and ditches. These types of areas provide habitat for all life stages of the frog, including movement corridors and refugia.

9) What does it mean if I have critical habitat on my property?

Designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership, establish a refuge or preserve and has no impact on private landowners taking actions on their land that do not require federal funding or permits. If a landowner needs a federal permit or receives federal funding for a specific activity, the agency responsible for

issuing the permit or providing the funds would consult with the Service to determine how the action may affect a listed species or its habitat.