

Endangered Bolivian frog gets dating profile just in time for Valentine's Day

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Romeo is the last known Sehuencas water frog. Scientists are hoping to find him a mate and start a breeding program to save his species. Photo by Matias Careaga

Feb. 14 (UPI) -- Romeo, Bolivia's last known Sehuencas water frog, has been calling unsuccessfully for a mate for nine years.

To draw attention to Romeo and the plight of his species, scientists have created Romeo an online dating profile -- just in time for Valentine's Day.

The idea may be cute, but the content is serious.

"Not to start this off super heavy or anything, but I'm literally the last of my species," reads Romeo's Match.com profile.

Scientists at the Global Wildlife Conservation and the Bolivian Amphibian Initiative created Romeo's profile with the help Match, the world's most popular relationship site.

"When biologists collected Romeo 10 years ago, we knew the Sehuencas water frog, like other amphibians in Bolivia, was in trouble, but we had no idea we wouldn't be able to find a single other individual in all this time," conservation scientist Arturo Muñoz, founder of the Bolivian Amphibian Initiative, said in a news release.

Like Romeo's mating calls, the search for other Sehuencas water frogs has proved fruitless. But scientists are holding out hope.

"Romeo started to call for a mate about a year after he was brought into captivity, but those calls have slowed in the last few years," Muñoz said. "We don't want him to lose hope, and we continue to remain hopeful that others are out there so we can establish a conservation breeding program to save this species."

Scientists hope Romeo's online profile will inspire donations to fund additional search expeditions into Bolivia's wilderness. Water collected during future expeditions will be tested for the DNA of the endangered water frog species, so that scientists can determine whether there are indeed mates to be found.

"Like the black-footed ferret, golden lion tamarin and California condor, we aim to add the Sehuencas water frog to the list of incredible species that have made a comeback thanks to heroic conservation breeding efforts," said Robin Moore, an amphibian conservation biologist. "Romeo may be the world's loneliest frog now, but his fate stands to change dramatically with the help of Match and generous singles and couples who decide to show their love for Romeo and our wild world this Valentine's Day."