

TODAY THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN BEGINS

Rana Romeo of Sehuencas seeks a partner to save his species

Global Wildlife Conservation, Match and the Amphibian Initiative of Bolivia of the Natural History Museum Alcide d'Orbigny of Cochabamba raise funds for the project.

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THE ROSE ROMEO RESIDES IN THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. DIRK ERCKEN AND ARTURO MUÑOZ

For Valentine's Day, Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC); Match (the largest relationship company worldwide); and the Bolivia Amphibian Initiative of the Alcide d'Orbigny Natural History Museum "of Cochabamba join in a fundraising campaign to find a partner for Romeo.

"When the biologists collected the Romeo frog, 10 years ago, we knew that the Sehuencas water frog, as well as other amphibians from Bolivia, was in trouble, but we had no idea that we would not find a single copy of the species in all this time," said Arturo Muñoz, director and creator of the BAI Bolivia Amphibian Initiative, and associate conservation scientist at GWC.

"Romeo started calling for a couple about a year after he was transferred to captivity, but those calls began to decrease in recent years. We remain hopeful that there are others of their species, so that we can establish a breeding program for conservation and save the species," Muñoz said.

Together, Match and GWC, hope to raise \$ 15,000 on Valentine's Day, to support the 10 expeditions of the Amphibian Initiative of Bolivia, in places where the species was once common, and in places with similar habitats, where biologists previously they did not have an opportunity to search.

The fund will cover the equipment for collecting frogs, headlights, transport and guides. Match will match each donation from February 9 until Valentine's Day. To give Romeo a platform and bring his story to life, Match has created a profile for this amphibian, to learn more about him and to donate to his cause.

Time is running out to find a partner for Romeo.

The water frog of Sehuencas (*Telmatobius yuracare*) was once abundant, finding tadpoles at the bottom of small streams or rivers, or in ponds of cloud forests in Bolivia. The combination of climate change, habitat loss, pollution, the deadly chytrid (pathogen that affects amphibians) and the introduction of trout has resulted in the precipitous decline of *Telmatobius* species in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.

The Government of Bolivia plans to build a dam in a wooded area where the water frog of Sehuencas was once so common, that it became its homonym: Sehuencas. In addition to looking for adults and tadpoles of the water frog. The expedition team will carry out tests in the water of the streams and rivers, in key places, in search of DNA traces of the frogs, looking for confirmation that they are there to be found, even if the members of the team do not see them. directly in the expeditions.

Robin Moore, amphibian conservation biologist, and communications director at GWC, noted that "Romeo may now be the loneliest toad, but his fate can change dramatically with help."

Profile

Romeo is a shy frog. He likes to rest under the rocks, and lean only when his favorite sandwiches serve him: earthworms, isopods and snails.