

Science

FROG STYLES

THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE

BY SARA GOUDARZI



ROMEO
11 years old
Cochabamba City, Bolivia

ROMEO THE FROG is lonely. Really, really lonely. He may be the last Schuencas water frog left in the world, and unless he finds a mate he can reproduce with soon, his entire species could become extinct. Biologists found Romeo 10 years ago in a mountain forest in Bolivia and took him into captivity to protect and breed him. But when they went out looking for more Schuencas (pronounced "say-WHEN-cuss") frogs in

- Never married
- Has no kids
- Wants kids
- I'll tell you later
- Stocky
- 0'2" (6.22 cm)

streams and rivers, they couldn't find any. So earlier this year, the researchers got creative: They made a dating profile for Romeo, partnering with conservation organizations and the online dating service Match. Like any dating profile, Romeo's shows off his best attributes: His favorite things? Worms. His body type? Stocky. Lots of cute pics? Definitely. Obviously, frogs can't access the

FAVORITE LOCAL HOT SPOTS
Underneath rocks, for sure.

FAVORITE THINGS
Water. Worms. What can I say? I'm a simple guy.

LAST READ
"Frog and Toad Are Friends"

PETS
I'd like a worm or snail for a pet, but I'd just end up eating it, so maybe not.

internet. They can't read either. The profile is meant for humans. The researchers hope it will raise awareness about Schuencas water frogs and help raise money to support more expeditions that look for a mate for Romeo. So far, they've raised \$25,000 — enough money for 10 more searches! Worldwide, almost half of amphibians are at risk of extinction, mainly because of habitat loss, disease and invasive

species that mess up the frogs' food chains. Despite years of being alone, though, the orange-bellied Romeo has not lost hope. He still uses his melodic mating call. "You take a frog from a stream to an aquarium by himself, but he's still singing for a mate," says Jennifer Luedke, who helps assess what animals should be listed on the global threatened-species list. "We know he's looking for his Juliet." Good luck, Romeo! ♦

QUIZ

WHAT ANIMALS SLEEP THE MOST DURING THE DAY?

- A) GIANT PANDAS
- B) HOUSE CATS
- C) KOALAS
- D) GIRAFFES



THE VET LIFE

ANIMALS ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

WHAT COULD BE better than spending the day hanging out with and helping pets — while getting paid? If this sounds like a dream, let me introduce you to Dr. Amelia Nuwer, a 29-year-old veterinarian who has been working with animals since she was 13. Dr. Nuwer works in emergency medicine for the University of Florida's Small Animal Hospital in Gainesville. "I think it was always my destiny to become a veterinarian," she told me. Here's how she got into it, and a peek at