

FEATURED, WORLD

## Romeo, the world's loneliest frog

by [Staff Report](#) • November 30, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)

The Sehuencas water frog is a fully aquatic frog that was once abundant as tadpoles on the bottom of small streams or rivers, and in ponds in montane cloud forest of Bolivia, but since biologists collected Romeo 10 years ago, nobody has been able to find another specimen.



Sehuencas water frog Romeo is looking for love to prevent the extinction of his species. (Photo credit: Sophia Barro?n Lavayen, Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny)

True love might finally be a reality for Romeo the Sehuencas water frog, the last-known individual of his kind and the world's loneliest frog as the Global Wildlife Conservation and the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny are set to launch field expeditions in Bolivia in early December in search of a mate for him.

Romeo became an international celebrity on Valentine's Day this year with a dating profile on Match, the world's largest dating company.

"We are looking forward to scouring the streams to find Romeo his Juliet," said the museum's chief of herpetology, Teresa Camacho Badani, who will lead the expeditions. Camacho Badani had successfully found Sehuencas water frogs in the field before they seemingly vanished. "I hope to find as many Sehuencas water frogs this time as I did on the trips more than 10 years ago—and ultimately to set Romeo up on a blind date. This is a unique opportunity to prevent the extinction of a species that has become a playful flagship for conservation."

The expedition team will include at least two biologists and a veterinarian who will do two trips per month starting in December and running through the end of February—this is the rainy season in Bolivia, when the scientists are most likely to find individuals of the species. They will be walking through rivers looking for the frogs in locations where biologists had historically recorded Sehuencas water frogs (*Telmatobius yuracare*), including Romeo's original home. Some of these streams have not been surveyed for more than a decade.

In addition to looking for a mate for Romeo and other Sehuencas water frog individuals, the team will be on the search for two other water frog species that have been lost to science: *Telmatobius sibiricus* and *Telmatobius edaphonastes*. These expeditions were made possible by the individuals in more than 32 countries who made donations earlier this year that were matched by Match for a total of \$25,000.

"Thanks to all of the generous donors—and true romantics—who gave money this past Valentine's Day to support these expeditions, we have a real shot of saving this species," said Chris Jordan, GWC's Central America and Tropical Andes coordinator. "At GWC we're all about giving the under-frog a chance. Romeo hasn't given up hope, his fans haven't given up hope, and neither have we."

Romeo's followers can stay up to date on these expeditions and other news about the most eligible bachelor through GWC's blog, mailing list and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny's Facebook page. Romeo has also now taken to Twitter to share his thoughts on his prospects of true love.

Romeo currently lives in an aquarium at the K'ayra Center of the Museo de Historia Natural Alcide d'Orbigny in Cochabamba City, Bolivia.

A combination of climate change, habitat destruction, pollution, the deadly chytrid amphibian pathogen, and the introduction of trout has resulted in precipitous declines of water frog species in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.