

2008

# YEAR OF THE FROG



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## ZOOS HELP ERADICATE NON-NATIVE PREDATORS

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The mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*) is a critically endangered species native to the mountains of southern California. In August, two AZA institutions assisted the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in a fish eradication project in the Angeles National Forest north of Los Angeles. Introduced trout have long been a threat to the eggs and tadpoles of this species, so a plan was made to remove these introduced predators throughout parts of the frogs' range. Zookeepers Kyle Keas from the Los Angeles Zoo and Jim Giacobbe from Fresno Chaffee Zoo assisted in this endeavor. Over 240 fish were removed over a two-day period by electroshocking techniques. One MYLF adult was found during this period, just upstream from a dam that prevented fish from easily going further upstream. The population of frogs in this area is thought to consist of approximately 12-15 animals. At least two more fish eradication efforts are planned throughout the range this season, and AZA institutions will once again be enlisted to assist wherever possible.

In the future, AZA institutions may also assist the USGS in surveys for this species throughout its range. With more people in the field, it is hoped that further populations may be found. The San Diego Wild Animal Park's CRES facility is currently assisting the USGS and USFWS by housing a small group of frogs that were saved by USGS officials from local wildfires. These animals were rescued as tadpoles, which have subsequently metamorphosed at the zoo. Other AZA facilities may assist the USGS with similar captive endeavors in the near future.