



**The Wildlife Society
Western Section
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PRESS/MEDIA RELEASE 10/23/00

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUGGESTED TITLE: Biologists Comment on Frog Recovery Plan

For additional information, contact persons listed at the conclusion of this document.

Body of Document:

Professional wildlife biologists of the Western Section of The Wildlife Society (TWS) recently reviewed and commented on the Draft Recovery Plan for the "Threatened" California Red-Legged Frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*). The amphibian made famous by Mark Twain in "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" is threatened by extinction. The species is listed as "threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act.

In a letter to Mr. Wayne White, field supervisor of the Sacramento Branch of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service dated August 10, 2000, the President of the Western Section of TWS (Dr. Michael Morrison) concluded that the plan, while it had specific strengths, lacked substantiation regarding threats to the recovery of this species.

TWS is an international, nonprofit scientific and educational organization serving professionals in all areas of wildlife conservation and resource management. The Western Section of TWS is composed of nearly 650 professional wildlife biologists working for government agencies, consulting firms, universities, and nonprofit organizations in California, Nevada, and Hawaii.

In its letter, TWS agreed with the need for a centralized database on the status of the red-legged frog, the need for designation of recovery units, and the "proposed ecosystem approach" to recovery; however, TWS believes that the costs of recovery will be higher than estimated. TWS also concludes that the plan relies too heavily on mitigation banks and the acquisition of national-forest in-holdings.

It was further recommended the more investigation into the effects on red-legged frogs by non-native species, including bullfrogs and some plants, be conducted. TWS wrote that if non-native species are to be removed, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service must implement rigorous scientific monitoring designed to determine the effects of non-native-species removal.

Dr. Morrison concluded his TWS letter with an offer to Mr. White that the Western Section

of TWS would welcome the opportunity to remain involved in planning for the recovery of the red-legged frog. Threatened and endangered species should be a concern to all Californians, and the Western Section of TWS values its ability to provide reliable scientific data, environmental leadership, and public awareness. To date, no reply has been received.

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