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Saving the Northern Leopard Frog

All About Frogs

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Amphibians are in trouble

We don't normally think of frogs as being endangered. But almost on third of amphibian species today are threatened with extinction. The Northern Leopard Frog used to be found all over North America and now is endangered in



Alberta and BC. This is why I chose the frog (The Northern Leopard Frog).

Fantastic Facts

- ◆ The Northern Leopard frog starts breeding at the young age of 2 to 3 years.
- ◆ A female Leopard Frog can lay 6,000 eggs at once.
- ◆ This frog spends its winters under rocks in lakes or slow moving streams.

2008 is the Year of the Frog

Why do you think it is the year of the Frog? Because amphibians all over the world are in critical condition and need our help. The main reason most amphibians are disappear-

ing from our planet is because of habitat loss, a "chytrid" fungus disease and pollution. Look around at the Calgary Zoo for their posters of salamanders, frogs and



other amphibians. The Calgary Zoo is one of the many zoos around the world celebrating the Year of the Frog to raise awareness.

Why are they in trouble?

Scientists don't really know why these animals are disappearing from Alberta. Some scientists think it is unusual conditions like a draught, jack frost, diseases, acid rain, loss of habitat, global warming, changes in ultra violet radiation levels and polluted air, water and soil. When scientists looked at the places that Leopard Frogs used to live, they say that only 20 per cent of frog sites are occupied today.

All frogs live in wetlands. By 1996, almost 75 percent of wetlands around Calgary and Edmonton had been lost. The City of Calgary now says that number has risen to 90 percent.

The Northern Leopard Frog is very picky about the wetland that they live in. Some of the re-

quirements are fishless pond for breeding, natural land for foraging and oxygen-rich water for over the winter. All of these three types of habitats need to be connected in some way (like a tunnel or path) so the Leopard Frog can get from one to the other easily.

Alberta amphibians have been poisoned by a fungus known as the Chytrid. It has been found in three of four sites that were studied.



Another Fantastic Fact
The Northern Leopard Frog is the largest common frog at 50 to 130 mm long

Species Monitoring program

This is a way for any one to help the frogs. Alberta has a species monitoring program where you get a CD all the frog calls that mite be in your area. You also get a manual on what you do and a few tips. Then you get to

go out and start monitoring the frogs. That's when you go out to a stream, wetland or slow moving body of water (ex. Fish creek park). Scientists will use your information when they are looking to find a certain type of frog.

This program is great because you spend your time outside in nature and if you spend 2 minutes or half an hour you are still making a difference.



Two of the best

Lots of organizations in Alberta are trying to help Northern Leopard Frogs, but I found two main organizations. They are the Alberta Conservation Association and the Calgary's Zoo's Conservation Research Department. I have done research on both of these great organizations and looked at their similarities and differences. I think they are both equal in their own unique way. For example, the ACA is moving frog eggs to places they used to be in to establish frog populations there. And, the Zoo's program is actually breeding live frogs and taking them out in the wild.

I talked to Anna Hargreaves, and ecologist who works at the Zoo. She told me that her group will be doing research this summer on the Northern Leopard Frog. They want to monitor the success of reintroducing the Northern Leopard Frog.

How we can help

There are lots of things we can do to help like cleaning up ponds, rivers, etc. We can participate in the species monitoring program and we could have a silent auction to raise money for study of these frogs. Supply

They've been involved in research . . . trying to figure out what their needs are – where they find food and what kinds of conditions they need to hibernate and breed. .

She said any money that we raised would go to support this research, helping them send scientists into the field to study frogs.

I also talked to Kris Kendall, who is a biologist with the ACA. He's started observing the cycle of the life of the frog when he was 8 to 10 years old. Now he does it



Another Fantastic Fact

There's a lot of information on Amphibians at the Calgary Zoo Web site. www.calgaryzoo.ab.ca. Click the frog.

for a living. He said that donations would help their monitoring program and could perhaps purchase fences so that water or marshes that the Leopard Frogs live in remain uncontaminated by cattle or other farm animals. They also work with landowners to get them to try and make the ponds on their land clean for the frogs.

I would like you to vote. Which organization do you think is the best? And, that you can trust. Either one that we pick, I'm sure the money will go straight to the study of these frogs.



wood so that cows won't go walking through their homes. Make posters to spread awareness about these beautiful creatures that could vanish off the face of the earth. The more people how know that these animals

are in trouble the better because every person no matter how small (as Dr. Seuss says) can help !!!!



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My Sources for this project were:

www.abheritage.ca/abnature/speciesatrisk/leopard_frog_intro.htm

www.calgaryzoo.ab.ca/yof_2008/index.htm

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