

Surveys for California Red-Legged Frog and Arroyo Toad on the Los Padres National Forest¹

Valerie K. Hubbart and Thomas G. Murphey²

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Extended Abstract

Starting in the spring of 1999 through the fall of 2000, USDA Forest Service biologists have conducted surveys throughout the Los Padres National Forest for the federally-listed California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) and arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*). Sites known to have frogs or toads present were monitored for breeding and possible impacts of Forest Service activities. Potential impacts to frogs and toads include roads, trails, campgrounds, off-highway vehicles, grazing allotments, and introduced species.

Historical locations and areas having suitable habitat for both species were visited to confirm occupancy. Day surveys were conducted to confirm presence of eggs and tadpoles, in the breeding season, and to determine areas that had potentially suitable habitat for adults. Night surveys were performed to establish presence or absence of adult frogs and toads. When adults were present, the locations of individuals were recorded and mapped, and pertinent habitat information was collected. Habitat information included land use, dominant vegetation, air and water temperatures, pool depth and location, and general hydrological information about the site.

Approximately 267 kilometers of stream channel have been surveyed. Survey results are summarized as the maximum number of adults seen within sub-watersheds (table 1). These numbers should not be interpreted as exact counts of current populations. Surveys through August 2000 have resulted in 11 new locations on the Los Padres National Forest for red-legged frogs and an expanded range for arroyo toad on upper Piru Creek near Castaic Mine and Goldhill Campground in Ventura County, based on past surveys (Stephenson and Calcarone 1999). Arroyo toad breeding was confirmed in these drainages: Piru Creek, Aqua Blanca Creek, Sespe Creek, Indian Creek, Mono Creek, and the Santa Ynez River. Arroyo toad breeding occurred from April to the end of May, and toads were still calling as late as the end of June, 2000. Breeding for California red-legged frog occurred from February to the end of March and at all sites that contained more than one frog.

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² USDA Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest, Santa Maria, CA 93453.

Table 1—Results of May 1999 to August 2000 amphibian surveys on the Los Padres National Forest.

Sub-watershed	Maximum # of Adults Observed		Total Area Surveyed (km.)	Creeks/Rivers Surveyed
	California Red-legged Frog	Arroyo Toad		
Arroyo Seco	0	0	8.7	Arroyo Seco, Santa Lucia and Tassajara
Carmel	50	0	18.0	Carmel River and Miller fork of Carmel*.
San Antonio	0	0	3.6	North Fork San Antonio
Monterey Coastal Streams	14	9	17.0	Little Sur, Sycamore Cyn.*, Laffler Cyn.*, Hare Cyn., Limekiln, Kirk, Mill, Wild Cattle, Prewitt, Plasket, Willow, Salmon, Alder, Villa, Redwood Gulch, Dutra and San Carpoforo
Salinas	6	0	21.7	Salinas* and Navajo
San Luis Obispo Coastal Streams	18	0	5.9	Morro, East. fork Morro* and Chorro
Hausna	0	0	1.6	Trout
Arroyo Grande	5	0	5.7	Big Falls*, Little Falls* and Lopez Cyn.
Cuyama	23	0	21.4	Branch*, Alamo*, Cuyama, Stephens Cyn., Pine Cyn.*, Aliso Cyn., Bates Cyn. and Rancho Nuevo
La Brea	78	0	20.0	North fork La Brea*, South fork La Brea* and Main fork La Brea*
Sisquoc	34	1	12.6	Sisquoc* [#] and Horse Cyn.
Manzana	35	0	7.2	Manzana* and Davey Brown
Santa Ynez	242	70	50.0	Santa Ynez* [#] , Oso, Cachuma*, Mono* [#] , Indian* [#] , Blue Cyn.*, Agua Caliente* [#] , Fox* and Alder*
Matilija	0	0	0.8	N. Fork Matilija
Sespe	0	54	26.2	Sespe [#] , Middle Lion, Rock and Rose Valley
Piru	0	44	47.0	Piru [#] , Agua Blanca [#] , Canton Cyn., Reasoner Cyn., Dominquez Cyn. and Lime Cyn.

* Drainages with California red-legged frogs present.

[#] Drainages with arroyo toads present.

Future surveys will be conducted to further identify areas of potentially suitable habitat and to locate new breeding areas. Inventorying and monitoring will continue where Forest Service activities may result in adverse impacts on the listed species.

References

Stephenson, John R.; Calcarcone, Gena M. 1999. **Southern California mountains and foothills assessment: Habitat and species conservation issues**. General Technical Report PSW-GTR-172. Albany, CA: Pacific Southwest Research Station, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; 402 p.