

2008

YEAR OF THE FROG

U.S. PACIFIC NORTHWEST ZOOS RELEASE HUNDREDS OF ENDANGERED FROGS INTO THE WILD

This fall, staff from two U.S. Pacific Northwest zoos successfully raised and released hundreds of endangered Oregon spotted frogs back into the wild at a remote western Washington lake.

This effort to recover an endangered West coast species is a project of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and an initiative of the NW Zoo and Aquarium Alliance – a consortium of eight AZA accredited zoos and aquariums from Washington, Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia. Other partners in the project include Fort Lewis, Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Port Blakely Tree Farms, Washington Department of Natural Resources, U.S Geological Survey, Mountain View Conservation & Breeding Centre and The Nature Conservancy.

The tiny frogs were collected by the WDFW from the wild as fertilized eggs in March and delivered to Northwest Trek and the Oregon Zoo where they were reared for release. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium provided financial and facilitation support. Woodland Park Zoo will join the frog-rearing effort next year.

“When we collaborate at a regional level to restore an endangered species like the Oregon spotted frog, we can be far more effective in achieving our conservation goals,” said Gary Geddes, Alliance chair and director of Northwest Trek and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

Once abundant from southern British Columbia to northern California, Oregon spotted frogs are one of the most endangered amphibian species in the Pacific Northwest, with only 24 remaining breeding sites. Listed as a priority species in the Amphibian Ark, the frog is endangered in Washington and British Columbia, sensitive in Oregon, and a candidate species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. Key factors in its decline are loss of wetland habitat, disease, and non-native predators such as the American bullfrog.

To learn more about the Oregon spotted frog project, visit the NW Zoo & Aquarium Web site at www.nwzaa.org.

