

Twenty-five frogs added to the amphibian fauna of Mount Oku, Cameroon

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Described from Nigeria in 2011, the Schiotz's Puddle Frog is now recorded from Cameroon. Although it has been regularly observed, it might be threatened with extinction due to habitat degradation and climate change. Credit: Thomas M. Doherty-Bone

While amphibians all over the world are undergoing a continuous decline, their status in certain regions, such as Central Africa, remains unknown due to incomplete information. New paper, published by two scientists in the open access journal *ZooKeys*, addresses the knowledge gap by providing an updated list of already 50 amphibian species living on Mount Oku, Cameroon.

Scientists Dr Thomas M. Doherty-Bone, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, and Dr Václav Gvodík, affiliated with both the Czech Academy of Sciences and the National Museum in Prague, have spent more than 10 years studying the Cameroonian mountain. As a result of their thorough surveys, literature review, and re-examination of museum specimens, there are now 50 [species](#) known from the locality, which doubles previous numbers. In their newly published checklist the researchers have listed 49 species of frogs and toads, as well as one caecilian species—a limbless, snake-like amphibian.

However, the number of threatened species seems to increase quite proportionally. Many of the newly recorded frogs, for instance, appear to be extremely endangered, yet they have not been assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Therefore, the authors have used the IUCN criteria to propose conservation assessments for them. If the suggested statuses are approved, together with the updated declines of previously abundant in the area species, the proportion of the threatened would rise to nearly half (48%) of the Mount Oku's entire amphibian fauna. Meanwhile, it is 42% of amphibians at risk of extinction globally.

In their study, the scientists also review the research and conservation undertaken at the mountain so far, including the work they have initiated themselves. Although Mount Oku's forest turned out to be the best managed among the rest in the region, threats such as forest loss, encroachment and degradation are still largely present and increasing.

Additional threats, including use of agrochemicals, climate change and diseases, have also been identified. However, conservation actions for the amphibians of Mount Oku are on the rise, considering both the population and the ecosystem-level perspectives.

"Our paper provides a foundation for continuously improving amphibian [conservation](#) at Mount Oku, as well as other mountains in Cameroon," conclude the authors.

More information: Thomas M. Doherty-Bone et al, The Amphibians of Mount Oku, Cameroon: an updated species inventory and conservation review, *ZooKeys* (2017). [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.643.9422](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.643.9422)

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