

The cave squeaker returns: Rare frog seen after decades

February 7 2017, by Farai Mutsaka

The cave squeaker is back. Researchers in Zimbabwe say they have found a rare frog that hasn't been seen in decades.

The *Artholeptis troglodytes*, also known as the "cave squeaker" because of its preferred habitat, was discovered in 1962 but there were no reported sightings of the elusive amphibian after that. An international "red list" of threatened species tagged them as critically endangered and possibly extinct.

Robert Hopkins, a researcher at the [natural history museum](#) in Bulawayo city, said his team had found four specimens of the frog in its known habitat of Chimanimani, a mountainous area in the east.

The team found the first male specimen on Dec. 3 after following an animal call that they had not heard before, Hopkins said. They then discovered another two males and a female. Hopkins said he been looking for the cave squeaker for eight years.

"I was not with my team when they were found. I was at the base. I can no longer climb the mountains as I am 75," Hopkins said.

Researchers plan to breed more frogs with the ones taken from their habitat and then reintroduce them to the mountain summit. The frog is tiny and light brown with dark spots.

Now authorities fear for the frogs' security, especially from "the

scientific world" whose huge interest could result in the frog being captured and illegally exported. Hopkins said 16 specimens are on display at various museums, including the British Museum.

"We are expecting an influx of scientists looking for it. We will do everything in our power to protect and conserve the [frog](#)," said Caroline Washaya-Moyo, spokeswoman for the Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. She said a park management plan will be devised to protect the cave squeaker.

© 2017 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: The cave squeaker returns: Rare frog seen after decades (2017, February 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-02-cave-squeaker-rare-frog-decades.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.