

Romeo the lonesome frog is feelin' the love

February 17 2018



Romeo, a Sehuencas water frog (*Telmatoobius yuracare*), alone in his tank at the Natural History Museum in Cochabamba, Bolivia

In the end, Romeo the lonesome Bolivian frog found more love than he could have imagined.

A campaign to raise \$15,000 by Valentine's Day to fund a search for

Romeo's Juliet before he croaks generated \$25,000, an environmental group said.

Romeo is the last known [frog](#) of his kind. Given the normal life span of Sehuencas water frogs, he has only about five years left to live, giving urgency to his love quest.

Texas-based Global Wildlife Conservation teamed with dating website Match and the Bolivian Amphibian Initiative to raise money for Romeo's last shot at romance.

"People from around the globe showed their love this Valentine's Day for the world's loneliest amphibian," the [environmental group](#) said in a statement dated Friday.

"We are overwhelmed by the support from Match and all of the donors who generously let Romeo into their heart this week," said Arturo Munoz, founder of the Amphibian Initiative, a project of Cochabamba Natural History Museum, where Romeo resides.

"Thanks to the help of everyone that donated, we hope that our next big announcement will be that we found Romeo his Juliet and established a conservation breeding program to save his species from extinction," Munoz said in the statement.

The #Match4Romeo campaign, in which the frog got his own Match profile, generated donations from 32 countries. The profile included a video of the beady-eyed bachelor scampering around in his tank, and lunging at a worm.

Munoz said earlier that when researchers collected Romeo a decade ago they knew that Sehuencas water frogs were "in trouble" but they had no idea that they would not be able to find another one, let alone a partner

with which he could mate and preserve the species.

Climate change, habitat loss and other threats have taken their toll on the frogs, like many other creatures.

Munoz said Romeo started to call for a mate about a year after he was brought into captivity a decade ago, "but those calls have slowed in the last few years."

Scientists don't want Romeo to meet the sad fate of "Lonesome George," a childless Galapagos tortoise who died in 2012, taking his entire subspecies with him.

With the money raised, the Amphibian Initiative plans to make 10 expeditions to locations where the species was once common, as well as to similar habitats where nobody has looked before.

The expedition teams plan to start their search as early as June in the eastern Andes forests.

Romeo will be waiting.

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Citation: Romeo the lonesome frog is feelin' the love (2018, February 17) retrieved 13 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-02-romeo-lonesome-frog-feelin.html>

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