

The Status of Northern Leopard Frogs (*Rana pipiens*) in British Columbia.

Doug Adama¹ and Marc-Andre Beaucher²

¹Adama Wildlife and the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program,
PO Box 158, Golden, BC V0A 1H0, < adama@rockies.net >, Ph: 250-348-2366.

²Beaucher Wildlife Consulting and the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program,
Site 3, Box 6 RR1, Wynndel, B.C. V0B 2N0, < beaucher@kooteny.com >, Ph: 250-866-5203

Northern Leopard frogs have declined across the western extent of their range. In British Columbia, *R. pipiens* occurred in the Columbia and Kootenay River systems and at Osoyoos lake in the Okanagan. Despite three extensive surveys conducted in the 1990's, only a single, small population of *R. pipiens* is known to occur, located in the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area (CVWMA) near Creston, B.C. This population is listed as endangered both Provincially (CDC) and by COSEWIC. Since 1997, the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program has been monitoring this population in an effort to monitor its status, and identify limiting factors and the cause(s) of decline. Methods including calling surveys, egg mass surveys, visual surveys, radio telemetry, a fish inventory, water quality monitoring and disease monitoring have been employed.

To date, only 46 egg masses have been found and egg mass production in the past 2 years is down from previous years suggesting that the status of the population is indeed precarious. Seasonal habitats (breeding, summer and winter) have been identified using radio telemetry, and barriers to movement between these habitats include a road and private land. Chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) has been observed in dead and dying adult *R. pipiens* and *Saprolegnia* has been observed in conjunction with substantial egg mortality. A fish inventory identified pumpkinseeds, yellow perch and black bullheads at the breeding sites and large mouth bass in the channel where *R. pipiens* overwinter.

While it is difficult to attribute the cause(s) of decline, it is likely that these and perhaps other factors played a cumulative role in their decline. A recovery team has been assembled and a draft recovery strategy has been proposed. Recovery efforts including habitat enhancement, and reintroduction are currently underway.