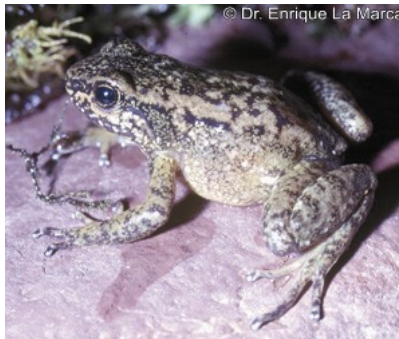


REVAFROGAMPHIBIANS , TOAD IN VENEZUELA , CONSERVATION OF AMPHIBIANS , SITU CONSERVATION , EDUCATION ENVIRONMENTAL

Mucubají mapurite frog, an endangered species. *Aromobates leopardalis*

The leopard frog or Mucubají mapurite frog (*Aromobates leopardalis*) was in the decade of the 70s and 80s of the last century, according to the records in zoological collections, one of the most common species in the streams that run in the high mountains of the Sierra de Santo Domingo, in the state of Mérida. In recent decades there has been a notable decrease in their populations, a fact that is part of a phenomenon that has been accentuated worldwide in several groups of anuran amphibians.

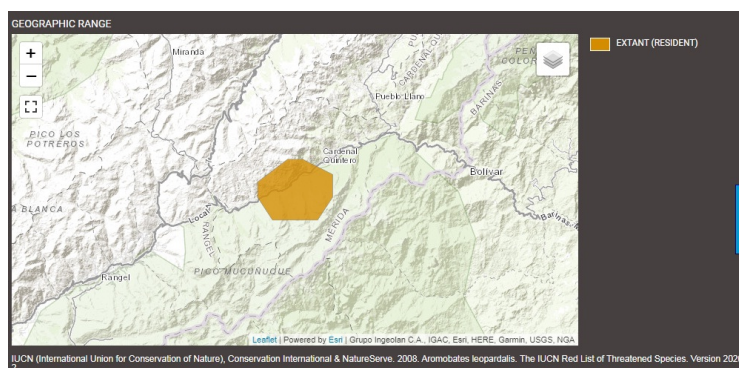
Aromobates leopardalis occupies several types of habitats, from the highest portions of the cloud forests, through shrubs in the sub-paramo to Andean paramo formations, in an altitude range t' Guardar from 2400 meters to 3300 meters above sea level approximately .



*Aromobates
leopardalis*
female
specimen .
Photograph
by Enrique
La Marca

In general, they take refuge in the grasslands and among the typical paramo vegetation, such as the frailejones (*Espeletia* spp.) That are found near bodies of running water. In addition, it is possible to record them within streams and under rocks on their banks.

These animals belong to the Aromobatidae family. The frogs in this taxonomic group do not possess aposematic colorations . *Aromobates leopardalis* has a rather cryptic coloration with its environment, with a brown back and a sparsely tuberculated skin. Like other representatives of the genus *Aromobates* , *A. leopardalis* apparently exhibits parental care. The female would lay a small number of relatively large eggs that are cared for by the male and then transported to waterways on her back to ensure survival. Evidence to document such an assumption is lacking, but there is a high probability that it is.



Hypothetical
distribution
of the
Mucubají
mapurite
frog , an
endemic
species from
the state of
Mérida,
Venezuela.
Source:
IUCN, 2010

This species has not been recorded in more than two decades, despite intense searches carried out on various occasions, in the same way as with a sympatric species in its highest distribution range, which belongs to the genus *Atelopus* and which has a distribution Similary.

State of conservation

Although the species resides within protected areas under the figure of National Park, with little intervention, we do not have recent records and it is considered by the IUCN as a "Critically Endangered" species. Since mid-2020 and under the patronage of the Mohamed bin Zayed Conservation Fund, at REVA we have made significant efforts to monitor the relict populations that may exist in the Andean páramo and determine the total distribution range of the species.

There are many causes to which the decline in populations of this species is attributed. The introduction of exotic species such as rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), known to be a voracious predator, could have a great influence on the survival of tadpoles and shapeshifters.



The mapurite frog is also known as the leopard frog and is Critically Endangered. Illustration by Angel Ulloa. Source:

REVA (
<https://bit.ly/2DDghZ4>
<https://bit.ly/2DDghZ4>
).)

On the other hand, the contamination of the moors, either by extensive cattle ranching (an activity not controlled by environmental authorities) or by the use of a large quantity of chemical products to maintain large areas of cultivation, as well as burning sporadic accidentals have greatly diminished the quality of habitat for these beautiful amphibians.

In addition to this, the incidence of the disease known as chytridiomycosis has not been ruled out as one of the factors causing its population decline; however, histological analyzes carried out on collection animals did not show positive for the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in *A. leopardalis*.

Many ecological aspects of this species have not yet been evaluated, including its activity schedule, its role in food chains and the resources it consumes, as well as its reproductive aspects, among others.

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LABELING ANDES , AMPHIBIANS , AROMOBATES , AROMOBATES LEOPARDALIS , CONSERVATION OF AMPHIBIANS , AMPHIBIAN DECLINES , MUCUBAJI , VENEZUELA

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