

Managing Habitat to
Benefit
California Red-legged
Frog (CRF)

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BIOGRAPHY

Trish Tatarian, MSc

Researcher (published) 10 years:
Radio-telemetry
Bd occurrence in Sierran populations
Genetic occurrence of Sierran populations
Biological consultant >20 years

BIOGRAPHY



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biologists; Greg Tatarian – Wildlife Research Associates; Cindy Roberts –
USFS; Jane Valerius Environmental Consulting; Allison Batteate – Co Co
Water District

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WWW.ELKHORNSLOUGHCTP.ORG

See:
Bibliography
Peer-reviewed papers

CRF?



Pond A Pond B

Both?

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Gain a more complete understanding of the biological requirements of the species.
- Identify key components of occupied CRF habitat in a variety of situations, from man-made ponds, to in-stream pools, as well as upland habitats.
- Identify management strategies and solutions used to enhance aquatic and upland habitats to benefit the species.
- Use case examples and success stories to apply effective management strategies and solutions.

TOPICS COVERED

Management Objectives
Biology
Characteristics of Occupied Ponds
Design and Management of Ponds
Management of Habitats
Control of Invasive Species
Planning at the Landscape Level
Regulatory Requirements

IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Manage populations, not individuals
- Focus on breeding habitat vs. adult habitat – more bang for your buck
- Set clear management and monitoring goals

MANAGEMENT

Definitions

- Stewardship – looking after a population
- Manipulative – direct (headstarting young) or indirect (altering habitat or predators)
- Custodial – protective

(Coughley and Sinclair 1994)

MANAGEMENT

Some Key Management Questions:

- What are the threats to CRF in the region and project area?
- How can the site be managed to increase or maintain CRF populations at local and regional level?
- What management practices are currently being used on the site - are they compatible with CRF?

MANAGEMENT

Some Relevant Elements Within a Management Plan:

- Maintenance/restoration of a suitable water body.
- Protection of buffer zones of natural vegetation to protect core breeding sites and refugia.
- Protection of integrity of ecological connectivity among wetlands in the landscape.
- Identify and resolve conflicts between current management practices and CRF.

(Semlitsch 2000)

MANAGEMENT

REGULATORY AGENCIES

USFWS

CDFW
ACE
RWQCB



BIOLOGY

26-2001

BIOLOGY

Annual Cycle

Year 1
December-April.....Calling and Egg Laying
January-September.....Tadpole Stage*
June-September.....Metamorphs Appear*
June-December.....Juvenile Period

Year 2
Juvenile Period

Year 3
December-April.....First Breeding
(males and some females)

BIOLOGY

Survivorship

Stage	Age (months)	Survival	Number of Individuals
Egg>>metamorph	0-5	1-5%**	125
Metamorph>>juvenile	5-12	10%	12.5
Juvenile>>adult	12-24	25%	~3.12
Adults	24-80	~33%/yr	1

BIOLOGY




Breeding Habitat

BIOLOGY

Upland Habitat

Terrestrial prey -
90% of total prey items
(Bishop 2011)



BIOLOGY



Adult Dispersal Habitat

- Most do not move far
- Movement between aquatic habitats
- Escape adversity
- Move in damp conditions (first rains)
- Move at night
- Rarely use corridors



BIOLOGY

Metamorph Habitat

BIOLOGY

Physiology of Anurans

- Majority of water loss is through the skin.
- Reabsorption through the ventral pelvic region.
- The larger the size the greater the distance travelled between aquatic sites.
- Small amphibians have proportionately more surface area and, therefore, have higher rates of evaporative loss.

(Wells 2007)

**CHARACTERISTICS OF
PONDS OCCUPIED BY
CRF**

POND CHARACTERISTICS

Breeding Ponds

Lentic habitats that provide aquatic breeding and non-breeding habitat.

- Coastal
- Inland
- Sierran

POND CHARACTERISTICS

Coastal Ponds



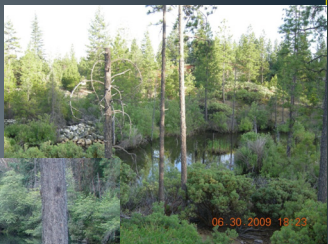


POND CHARACTERISTICS

Inland Ponds



POND CHARACTERISTICS

Sierran Ponds



POND CHARACTERISTICS

Coastal and Inland Ponds



	San Mateo Co (Reis 1999)	Recovery Plan (USFWS 2002)	Santa Cruz Co (Bulger et al 2003)	Sanoma Co (Cook and Jennings 2007)	Marin Co (Fallers and Kleeman 2007)	Central Coast Co (Tatarián 2008)
Elevation (m)	0-10	<1,050	0-300	476	43	113
Surrounding Vegetation communities	Freshwater and brookish marsh, ponds and riparian	Variety	Redwoods and mixed conifer - hardwood	Mixed hardwood conifer	Grasslands and riparian	Grasslands and oak savanna
Water depth (m)	0.05-0.75	>0.7	NA	1.5	0.75-1.5	0.6-1.8
Pond Size (m ²)		NA	NA	110,000	0.5-2(6)	0.33-0.8
Habitat	Pool (integrated)	✓	✓			✓
	Pond (isolated)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Hydrology	Perennial	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Intermittent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emergent/ shoreline	Dense (>25%)	✓		✓	✓	
	Limited (<25%)					✓
Fish	Native	✓				
	Introduced					
Bullfrogs	✓	✓		✓		

POND CHARACTERISTICS

Sierran Ponds

	Butte Co Hughes	Nevada Co Sailor Flat	El Dorado Co Spivey	Placer Co Big Gun	El Dorado Co Bear Creek	Little Oregon Creek
Elevation (m)	772	929	979	1014	792	624
Surrounding Vegetation communities	Montane hardwood conifer	Montane hardwood conifer	Sierran mixed conifer	Ponderosa pine/mixed chaparral	Montane hardwood conifer	Montane hardwood conifer
Water depth (m)	0.3 – 1.4 m	1->2.5	1->2.5	1->2.5	1->2.5	<1
Pond Size (acres)	0.25	0.25	1.5	0.5-2 (6)	1.5	0.03
Habitat	Pool (integrated)		✓		✓	
	Pond (isolated)	✓	✓	✓		✓
Hydrology	Perennial	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Intermittent	✓				✓
Emergent/ shoreline	Dense (>25%)	✓				
	Limited (<25%)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Fish	Native			✓	✓	
	Introduced			✓		
Bullfrogs			✓			

CRF?



Pond A

Pond B

Both?

DESIGN AND
MANAGEMENT OF
CRF PONDS

POND DESIGN

When Creating Ponds, Consider:
Types of ponds
Locations

Permits Required – CDFW, ACE, RWQCB
(e.g.) damming a drainage

POND DESIGN

(Austin, et al. 1996)

POND DESIGN

LOCATION is Everything
(Comparisons between two 1-acre ponds)

Ohio- supported by 10-15 acre watershed (Austin, et al. 1996)
California - supported by 50-100 acre watershed (Deal, et al. 1997)

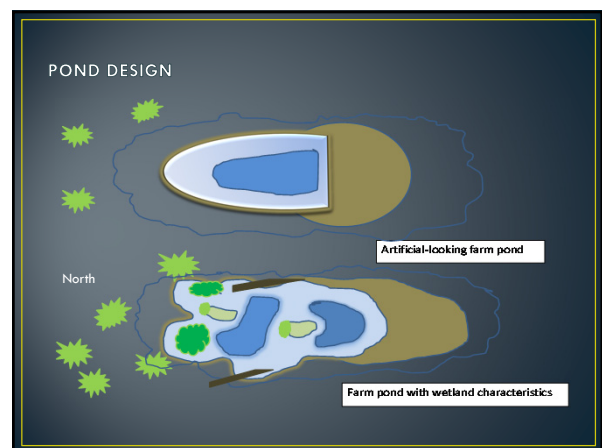
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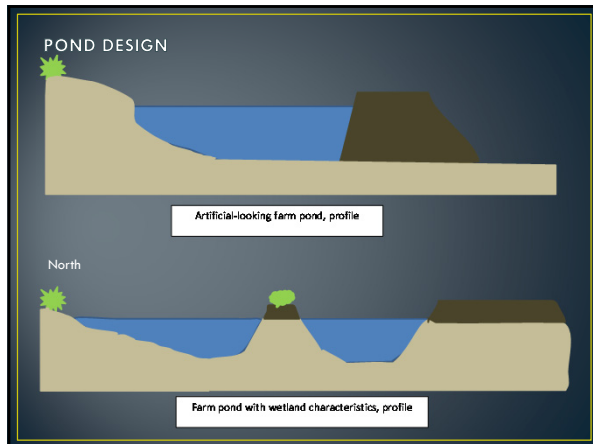
Contra Costa County –supported by 10 acre watershed (Deal, et al. 1997)
Marin County – supported by 2 acre watershed (Deal, et al. 1997)

POND DESIGN

Providing Suitable Structure
Goal: Creating Microhabitats

- Heterogeneity of habitats – cattails, willows, rushes, floating veg., open water
- Varied water depths - deep water, shallow water
- Soils – support vegetation and hold water

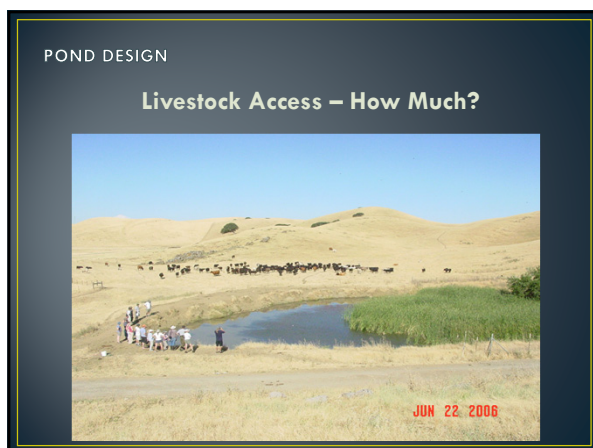
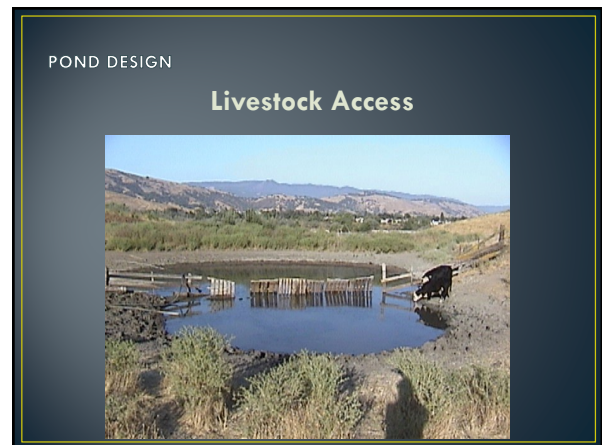




POND DESIGN

**Use Livestock Ponds to Manage
for CRF Population
BUT**

- Rarely maintenance free
- Manage for soil accretion/aquatic biomass accumulation
- Prevent individual loss



POND DESIGN

Effects of Loss or Modification of Habitat

Loss of vegetation: fewer oviposition sites

Soil accretion: shallower ponds, increased evapotranspiration, change in vegetation components, less open banks and fewer sunny areas, less refugia, fewer oviposition and tadpole rearing sites

POND MANAGEMENT

Maintenance and Rehabilitation



POND MANAGEMENT

Appropriate Seasons for Maintenance

Dry season – May 15 - October 15
During the driest season – September –October

- After young have metamorphosed
- Pond at a naturally low water level
- Pond refills naturally with next rain event

POND MANAGEMENT

Non-native Predator Control

During maintenance:

- Change hydrology
- Change vegetation



POND MANAGEMENT

Native Predator Control



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Make Sure Management is Feasible for Rancher



GRAZING MANAGEMENT



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Grazed When Grass is Green



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Provide Additional Water Source



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Fence a Portion of the Pond



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Use Temporary Fencing to Exclude From Ponds or Move to Another Field When Metamorphs are Leaving Pond



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Turbidity & Pond Inundation Time: More Research Needed



MANAGEMENT OF STREAM AND RIPARIAN HABITATS

STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Lotic habitats and associated vegetation that help with the retention of biological components to maintain chemical, physical and biological values. The width of the riparian corridor dependent on water table.

STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Habitat Use:
Refugia, Predator Avoidance, Egg-laying, Development, Foraging



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Characteristics of Occupied Habitat

	Coastal	Inland	Sierran
Inundation period	Typically perennial, but calm and stable during breeding	Typically ephemeral, with perennial pools	Ephemeral, with perennial pools
Vegetation	Emergent and riparian	Emergent veg for egg laying and structures to escape predators	Emergent and exposed northern banks
Depth	Perennial stream = 18 inches	Perennial stream = 18 inches Perennial pool = 2 feet	Dammed pools (>3 feet)
Livestock Access Recommendation	Yes, year-round	Yes, limitations	No
Fish Present	Typically absent	No	Yes



STREAM AND RIPARIAN



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Livestock Access



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Livestock Access



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Grazing Management for Streams, Springs & Other Moist Habitats



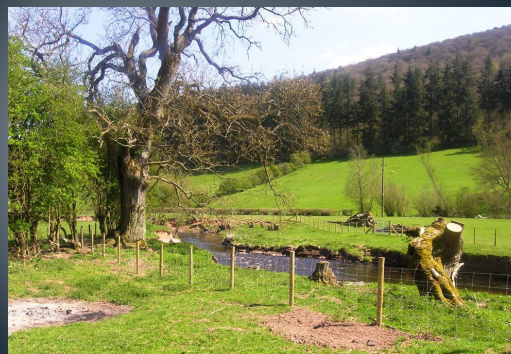
STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Riparian Pasture



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Permanent Riparian Fencing



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Cattle Crossing



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Off-Stream Drinking Water



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Herd Cattle to Less Sensitive Areas



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Moderate Grazing



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Residual Dry Matter Standards

Table 2. Minimum RDM standards for annual grassland/hardwood rangeland in pounds per acre (dry weight)

Woody cover (%)	RDM standard for percent slope (lb/acre)			
	0–10	10–20	20–40	>40
0–25	500	600	700	800
25–50	400	500	600	700
50–75	200	300	400	500
75–100	100	200	250	300

Note: Metric conversion: 1 lb/acre = 1.12 kg/ha.

For areas with average annual rainfall between 12 and 40 inches

STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Improve Livestock
Distribution



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Strategic Placement of Cattle Attractants



STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Move Cattle to Less Compactible/Erodible Soils



✓ Carefully manage livestock grazing in riparian areas to ensure that adequate plant cover remains and bank trampling is minimized.

Inset: Unmanaged grazing often leads to streambank trampling, lack of vegetation and nutrient and sediment delivery to the stream.

STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Maintain Vegetated Buffers



✓ Maintain a permanent strip of vegetation as a buffer between the stream bank and adjacent cropland or pastures to trap sediment and nutrients.

Inset: When a buffer is lacking, soil and nutrients from cropland enters nearby streams causing significant water quality impairments.

STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Effects of Loss/Modification of Habitat

- Loss of riparian vegetation = fewer oviposition sites
- Decreased shading of aquatic systems = increased evapotranspiration, change in vegetation components, more open banks, more erosion
 - Decreased structure in stream = less refugia
- Increased flow of water = fewer oviposition and tadpole rearing sites

STREAM AND RIPARIAN

Maintenance/Restoration
(ref: California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual)

Use: Boulders, Logs, Root wads
Don't Use: Plastic Mesh




**MANAGEMENT OF
SPRINGS, SEEPS AND
OTHER MOIST HABITATS**

SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHER

Lentic habitats provide surface and sub-surface flows that support wetland vegetation within upland habitats or as headwaters to perennial creeks.

SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHER

Refugia

(Protection from high temperatures, dry-down)



SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHER

Refugia

(Protection from adult breeding CRF or other predators)



SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHERS

Characteristics of Occupied Habitat

	Coastal	Inland	Sierran
Inundation period	Present when ponds dry	Often same regime as ponds	a) Present when ponds dry, if headwaters, b) Dry before ponds
Vegetation	Wetlands	Intermixed wetland and upland	Wetlands a) 100% b) 0%
Depth	Shallow to surface	Surface to subsurface	Subsurface
Livestock Access Recommendation	Yes	No	No

SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHERS

Coastal



SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHERS

Inland



SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHERS

Sierran



SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHERS

Graze in Spring or Fence Out Seep/Spring



SPRINGS, SEEPS AND OTHER

Effects of Loss/Modification of Habitat

- Change in surface or subsurface flows = loss of refugia
 - Loss of microclimate = loss of rehydration potential for individuals

UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Foraging
Stream flood escape
Corridors

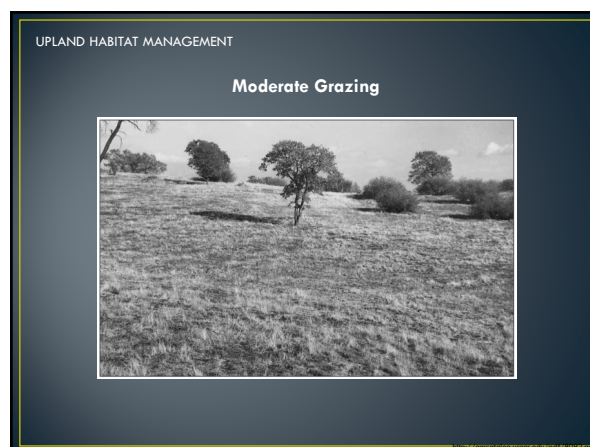
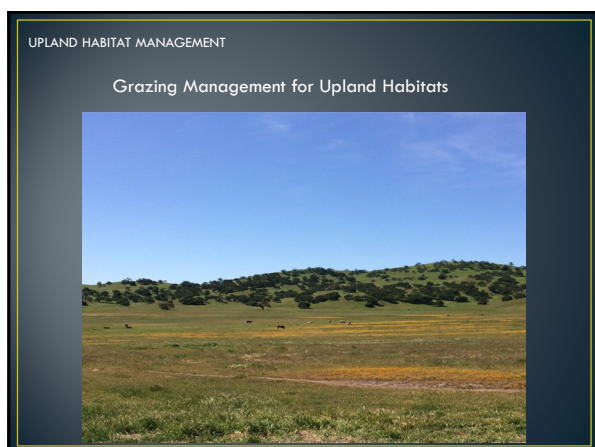
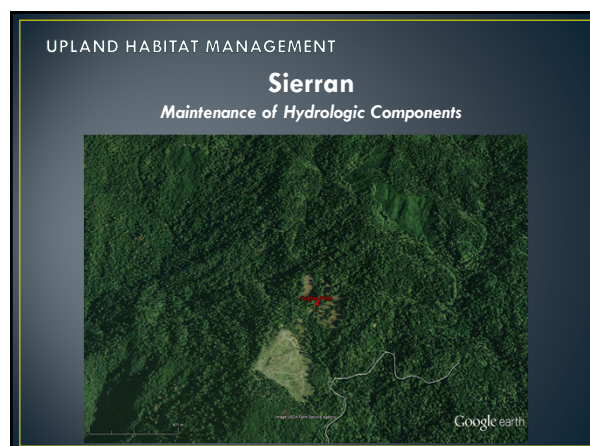
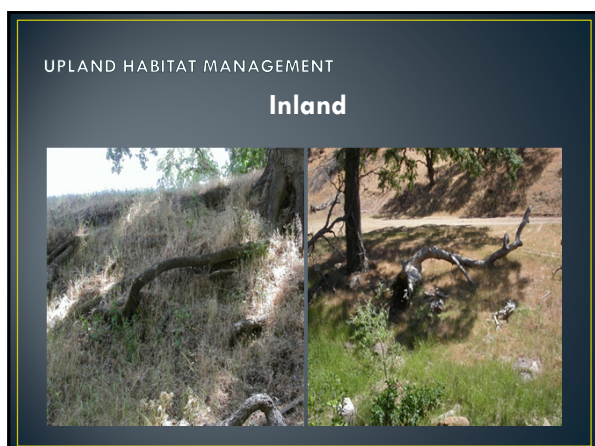


Microhabitats: boulder, barn door laying on the ground, large logs, grassland thatch, cow hoof print, crevice, ground squirrel burrow

UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Coastal





UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Residual Dry Matter Standards

Table 2. Minimum RDM standards for annual grassland/hardwood rangeland in pounds per acre (dry weight)

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0–25	500	600	700	800
25–50	400	500	600	700
50–75	200	300	400	500
75–100	100	200	250	300

Note: Metric conversion: 1 lb/acre = 1.12 kg/ha.

For areas with average annual rainfall between 12 and 40 inches

- UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT
- Effects of Loss or Modification of Habitat**
- Loss of surface flows to nearest water body = reduction in size of water body
 - Loss of structure = less refugia
 - Loss of microclimate near water body = increase in temperature and potentially lose aquatic water body

UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Summary of Livestock Grazing Tools

- 1) Modify timing of grazing
- 2) Modify number of cattle
- 3) Provide additional water troughs, strategically placed away from water ways
- 4) Provide strategically placed salt/minerals
- 5) Develop riparian pastures
- 6) Install exclosure fencing
- 7) Herd livestock away from sensitive areas
- 8) Establish vegetated buffer strips
- 9) Modify kind (species) and class (gender or age class) of grazing animal

UPLAND HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Rodent Control

- Beneficial: control dam face undermining
- Detrimental: potential for CRF to be killed in burrows from fumigation, plugging, or igniting burrows

Recommendations

- Enhance raptor populations, use lead-free ammunition

**CONTROL OF
INVASIVE SPECIES**

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

PLANTS

INVERTEBRATES (e.g. CRAYFISH)

VERTEBRATES (FISH, BULLFROGS)

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

PLANTS

Aquatic species (i.e., parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)) may increase sedimentation in a pond, decrease habitat heterogeneity, and prevent availability of shallow open water for metamorphs to grow.

Upland species (i.e., Harding grass (*Phalaris aquatica*) and velvet grass (*Holcus lanatus*) can grow in dense stands and decrease habitat heterogeneity.

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES



CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES



CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

VEGETATION CONTROL

Bio-control

Herbicides

Environmental

Mechanical Removal

Bio-control

Hand Removal



CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

**Grazing to Control Tall, Dense Annual Grasses
& Invasive Weeds**



CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

HERBICIDES

Buffer zone (no-use) for ground application 260 feet from the edge of CRF habitats and 400 feet buffer for aerial application from the edge of all habitats, including upland habitat. Regulations apply in 33 counties where CRF are known to occur.

(California Department of Pesticide Regulation 2013
http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/endspec/rl_frog/index.htm)

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

**HERBICIDE EXCEPTIONS:
Invasive Species and
Noxious Weed Control Programs**

- Handheld devices doing spot treatments allowed beyond 15 feet from aquatic habitats
- No pesticide use during precipitation or 24 hrs. prior
- Applied by certified applicator
- Additional exemptions

(California Department of Pesticide Regulation 2013
http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/endspec/rl_frog/index.htm)

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

INVERTEBRATES

Crayfish (*Procambarus* sp., *Oronectes* sp. and *Pacifistacus* sp.): Require CDFW crayfish permit and Scientific Collecting Permit for *Pacifistacus* sp.
(CDFG Informational Leaflet No.31)

Allowable methods: hand, hook, line, dip net (<6 feet)
or trap (<3 feet of any dimension)

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Crayfish Biology

- Burrow depth 1-3 feet, and deeper during drought conditions
- Opening of completed burrow is covered at the top with a mud plug
- Typically permanent ponds with warm waters
- Reproduction – spring through autumn
- Eggs hatch – fall or following spring

(UC IPM Pest Management Guidelines: Rice - AN Pub. No 3465)

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Crayfish Control Recommendations

- Pond drainage - depending on CRF metamorph presence
- Trapping
- Increasing water depth to lower temperatures
- Increasing heterogeneity of vegetation

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

VERTEBRATES

Fish (i.e., Mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) and Centrarchids (e.g., green sunfish (*Lepomis cyanellus*), etc): Requires CDFW fishing license

Bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*): Requires CDFW fishing license; allowable methods are bow and arrow, air gun if stipulated specifically through CDFW Scientific Collecting Permit

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Vertebrate Control Recommendations

- Pond draining
- Trapping
- Deepening pond to lower temperatures
- Increase heterogeneity of vegetation

Bullfrog control? That's another story...

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Bullfrog Biology

- Up to 6 inches in length
- Travel overland up to 1 km
- Prefer non-vegetated habitats
- Warmer waters
- Larvae typically over-winter BUT can metamorphose the same year as hatching (Cohen and Howard 1958, Moyle 1973, Tatarian, pers. obs.)
- Larvae can sustain themselves in mud when ponds are drained
- Fast colonization of habitats, typically perennial ponds (larger) and streams, except in Sierra Foothills (Moyle 1973).



Ephemeral habitats are next to be invaded

CONTROL OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Bullfrog Control Recommendations

Effective with isolated populations:

- Decrease bullfrog population growth rate (modeling): Adult control, mortality rate of > 65%/year every two years or draining ponds every two years. (Doubledee, et al. 2003)
- Metamorph control in fall is the most effective. (Govindarajulu, et al. 2005)



LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Buffer Zones

Purpose - Retain aquatic conditions, and allow individuals to forage, escape into refugia and move throughout the habitats.

Components – woody debris, leaf litter and duff, forbs, shrubs, trees

Depth-of-edge microclimatic influences dependent on vegetation beyond the immediate riparian habitat. (Richter 1997)
e.g. large trees and shrubs vs grasslands

LANDSCAPE LEVEL

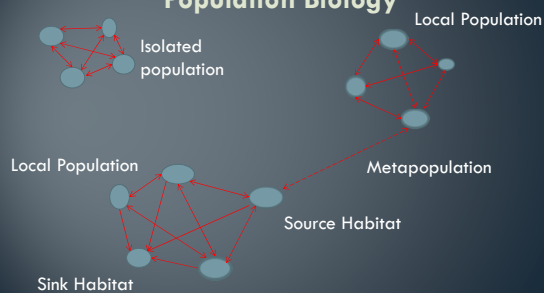
Buffer Zones

Beneficial to habitat - Retention of biological components to maintain chemical, physical and biological values of lentic and lotic habitats. Vegetation width and composition important during droughts.

Beneficial to individuals – Supports the home range of the species. Movement from breeding to non-breeding habitat (aquatic and non-aquatic) is unique at each wetland. (Rittenhouse and Semlitsch 2007)

LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Population Biology



LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Breeding Site Networks



LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Movement Corridors

Beneficial to the population – allows for migration between local populations

“One size does not fit all”

Behavior variances due to:

- Climate
- Vegetation
- Timing
- Predators

LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Movement Generalities

- Most CRF do not move far – adults don’t explore
- Movement occurs between aquatic habitats
 - CRF move during damp conditions (first rains and winter)
 - CRF move at night
- But, CRF movement corridors can be difficult to detect or recognize (e.g. not always aquatic, topography not as limiting as one imagines).

LANDSCAPE LEVEL

**Defining Elements of Good CRF
Integrated Landscape Management**

- Maintain breeding ponds and provide metamorph habitat
- Maintain landscape connectivity, which is dependent on the location (i.e., coastal, inland or Sierran habitats).
- Look for direct line movements between water bodies.
- Create “stepping stones” (structures) between water bodies (occupied) and other habitats (unoccupied) and resources.
- Take into account ephemeral changes to the landscape.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Section 7 (B.O.) or 10 consultation (HCP)
- Maintenance under 4(d) rule – artificial stock ponds, and routine maintenance
- Safe Harbor Agreement – if listed species habitat maintained, landowners are not prohibited from incidental take (injure or kill) of state-listed as long as the take occurs on a farm or ranch during the course of routine and ongoing agricultural activities

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Some cost-share incentives (Recovery Program, Partners for Fish and Wildlife)
- RWQCB – aquatic habitats
- ACE – aquatic habitats
- CDFW – aquatic habitats
- Enhance habitat for population BUT no “take” of individuals

CASE EXAMPLES

CASE EXAMPLE 1

Sailor Flat

- 100 % aquatic vegetation cover
- 100 % shade cover in shallow areas
- Soil accretion of shallow areas



CASE EXAMPLE 1

Sailor Flat

- Cooperative Agreement – USFWS, land owner
 - Pre-construction surveys to determine population
 - Removal of individuals the night before dewatering
- Held individuals on-site during removal
 - Post-construction surveys to determine population

CASE EXAMPLE 1

Sailor Flat



Number of CRF observed in the Pond

Date	Adults	Metamorphs
8/2006 (survey)	5	1
9/2006 (survey)	7	2
10/2006 (captures)	16	22

CASE EXAMPLE 1

Sailor Flat - Success

Date	Adults	Metam.
8/2007 (survey)	9	40



CASE EXAMPLE 2

EBMUD Sediment Pond



CASE EXAMPLE 2

EBMUD Sediment Pond – Contra Costa County*

Cattle grazing and stock ponds
 1990's - CRF population high
 1996 - CRF listed and maintenance stopped
 2000's - pond started to fail and CRF population down to 5 localities
 2008 - created HCP as management document with various restoration methods (research)
 2013 – CRF population at 39 locations

(*Bert Mulchaey, Biologist, EBMUD, pers. comm. 2013)

CASE EXAMPLE 2

EBMUD Sediment Pond



CASE EXAMPLE 2

EBMUD Sediment Pond



Elkhorn Ranch
Ponds

CASE EXAMPLE 3

Elkhorn Ranch Ponds – Monterey County

Eradication at a large scale as part of a conservation action
HO: California red-legged frog change their habitat use or hide in
presence of bullfrog

- 12 ponds supported CRF and BF in which BF were controlled
- BF Removal – June – Oct. 2004, until 2006. Hand capture, gigs, seining
- Inverse relationship of number of BF to CRF
- CRF adults used willows and tule, and were closer to shore in presence of BF. This is habitat typically used by smaller CRF.
- High resource partitioning – when no BF present CRF able to use all habitats and reduced potential predation on smaller CRF by larger CRF.

D'Amore, et al. 2009

WHERE ARE THE FROGS?



Pond A

Pond B

Both



Questions...