



The Conservation of the Darwin Toad (*Melanophryniscus montevidensis*) Populations, Uruguay

In partnership with The Science Faculty, UDELAR, Raúl Maneyro

by Daniel Núñez

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Report 2

Objective 2

Learning more about the species (*M. montevidensis*) has helped improve the investigation and conservation of it. A lot of efforts are being done to maintain the current populations, from scientific investigations to environmental education for local people. Raul Maneyro, our Darwin toad expert, helped us understand what is happening right now. For example, Raul Maneyro together with other investigators have been doing a lot of science techniques to study the species. For example, photo identify techniques, studying its reproductive microhabitats, reproductive biology of the species, seasonal demography, larval survivorship, and many other investigations. We were able to talk with people working at the Science Faculty about the current efforts and they highlighted the importance of the microhabitats and preserve the locations that are known for now.

We are talking about an endangered species; the techniques of investigation must be noninvasive. The use of climate change models lets understand what is going on but also predict the future of the conservation of the species. Compared to other well know species a lot of questions need to be answered, more information about its diet, their behavior at night, their aposematism. Usually, to study the diet of amphibians need to be sacrificed to see their content, to practice a noninvasive technique the study of the diet of the Darwin toad consists of the analysis of its feces, without the need of the sacrifice the individual. These are some of the actual scientific practices that are being used.

But you can't do science just with investigation, conservation without the local people is impossible. Environmental education is something that is happening in Uruguay, and not only with the Darwin toad. To do conservation educations has to be of all the ecosystems, the different habitats, plants, animals, microorganisms... The work of scientist, park rangers, teachers, etc. is crucial for the conservation of biodiversity in Uruguay. The change of perception of conservation is thanks to people like them. We were able to talk to some citizens and they told us that seeing the Darwin toad is not as common as it was some decades ago the Darwin. The current efforts have been effective in a way, but if everything stays as the same the models predict that by 2040 probably there will be no populations of the Darwin toad.



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