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

In partnership with The Science Faculty, UDELAR, Raúl Maneyro

by Daniel Núñez

Report 1 of 3



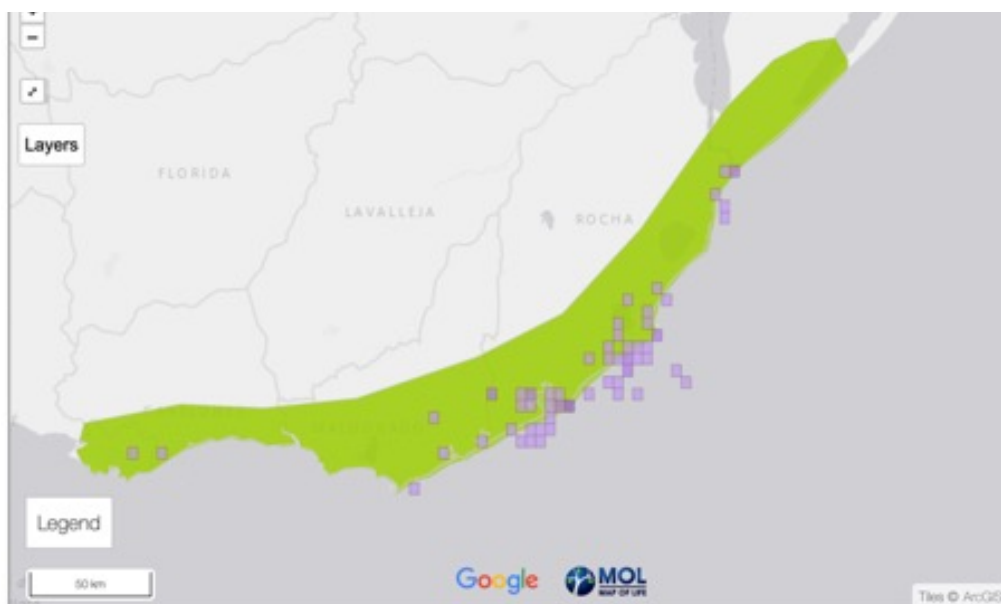
Report 1

Objective 1

The Darwin Toad (*Melanophryniscus montevidensis*), and endemic species only found in Uruguay and a small region of Brazil (south-east edge). The species was seen by Darwin when he came to Uruguay, in that time little was known about the species, after almost 200 years scientist of Uruguay still are studying and learning about the species. In the Department of Science of Universidad de la República in Uruguay, scientist have been studying the species behavior, data, populations, and historical data from the collections.

The species catalogued in the Red List of the IUCN as Vulnerable and as Endangered by the Uruguayan Red List of Amphibians. The habitat of the species is strictly related to grasslands and shrublands of the coast, and they need ephemeral ponds for their reproduction, related of their explosive breeding behavior. It is known from historic data that it was distributed in almost all the coasts of Uruguay and the Brazilian south-east edge. But now, the distribution has reduced and there are separated populations in some areas of its distribution. The causes and threats of this species have been the loss of the habitat, habitat fragmentation because of the urbanization of the country. This is urban development is strongly related to activities like tourism and housing construction. This may be one of the main reasons of the decline of populations and extinction in some parts of Uruguay, like Montevideo or Canelones (Pereira and Maneiro, 2016). More needs to be investigated but climate change is another threat that the toad is facing, with the rising of temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, humidity and sea level, the microhabitats and the toads' populations can be affected.

We visited different experts related to the Darwin Toad, people like Dr. Raul Maneiro (Professor of the Universidad de la República), MSc. Gisela Pereira, Hector Caymaris (Director of the Rocha Lagoon Natural Reserve). All of them told us, that the main threat and possible decline of the populations is the urbanization of the coast and now facing problems of the climate change. We were able to understand more of the species by visiting its natural habitat, interview experts, talking with local people.



Current populations records of *Melanophryniscus montevidensis* (AmphibianWeb)

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