



TAKE A LEAP OF ACTION FOR ENDANGERED FROGS

13th February 2014

Start

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is holding its second National Awareness Day for threatened amphibians on the 28th of February 2014 – a date now designated as **Leap Day for Frogs!** The day will comprise a number of events, activities and opportunities for learners, homeowners and employees to take a leap of action to save our frogs.

There are 160 frog species in South Africa, of which 30% are threatened due to habitat destruction, increasing levels of pollution in freshwater systems, disease and changes in climate.

“What many South Africans don’t know is that frogs play a key role in our indigenous ecosystems because they act as both a predator of insects, some of which are disease-spreading, as well as being prey for a host of other species. Their habitats are sources of freshwater and also assist in water filtration and flood reduction,” said Dr. Jeanne Tarrant, Manager of the EWT’s Threatened Amphibian Programme (EWT-TAP).

“Frogs are also important bio-indicators due to their sensitive skins and because they inhabit both aquatic and terrestrial environments. In other words, if they are around, it means our environment is healthy. The fact that one third of our frogs could potentially disappear is a warning sign that our natural environs are in jeopardy and that urgent conservation action is crucial.”

The good news is that unlike a number of other endangered species, which require global support and intervention, the protection and conservation of frogs is something in which ordinary South Africans can play a meaningful and impactful role.

Said Tarrant, “The conservation of frogs is so closely related to existing environmental management and conservation policies and practices, that it’s really just a matter of paying more attention to them.”

The awareness campaign aims to put frogs on South Africa’s conservation map by providing information on what people, businesses and government can do towards reducing their negative impact on amphibian habitats, as well as how they can create environments that are conducive to the survival of frogs. Various events will be held throughout the country focusing on threatened species including the Critically Endangered Picker’s Reed Frog from KwaZulu-Natal, the Critically Endangered Amathole Toad from the Eastern Cape and the Endangered Western Leopard Toad from

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The Endangered Wildlife Trust is a non-profit, public benefit organisation dedicated to conserving species and ecosystems in southern Africa to the benefit of all people.

NPO Number: 015-502, **PBO number:** 930 001 777, **Member of IUCN** - The International Union for Conservation of Nature
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the Western Cape. Jeanne will be involved in two events during the course of the day: she will be addressing local residents of Mtunzini on the afternoon of the 28th about their area being a hotspot for Pickersgill's Reed Frog and how they can help. That evening she will be in her local town of Kloof for a family outing including kids activities, an illustrated presentation and a guided walk in Glenholme Nature Reserve. Activities focused on the Western Leopard Toad will take place in Noordhoek, Houtbay and Stanford. In the Eastern Cape, two events will be taking place to create awareness about the Amathole Toad – the local Hogsback school will take part in a wetland clean-up and a trail run on the Amathole Trail will take place on Saturday, 1 March.

More importantly though, individuals are asked to organise their own events at home, school or the office to bring attention to and celebrate these important creatures in general. The website dedicated to the day will have plenty of information on ideas, tips on how you can help and events in your area.

For further information about the EWT-TAP and Leap Day for Frogs visit www.leapdayforfrogs.org.za or contact Jeanne Tarrant on jeannet@ewt.org.za.

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