

Project Update: November 2012

Solving the taxonomic conflict: During the last Argentinean Herpetological Congress held in Mar del Plata (6 to 9 November 2012) we assisted with the symposium: “Sistemática, morfología, biología y conservación del género *Melanophryniscus*”. We have the opportunity to interview the Dr. Diego Baldo, a *Melanophryniscus* specialist, and we asked him about the taxonomic conflict of this species. He mentioned that Tandilean red-belly toad could be assigned to *Melanophryniscus aff. montevidensis*; a Vulnerable (IUCN) species. However he recommends us to conduct a genetic study in order to confirm this observation.



GIS with historic and actual records of red-belly toads in hill-grasslands of Tandilean Hill system: We revised the Museum collection of “Museo de La Plata” and in the next months we will revised the collection of “Museo Bernardino Rivadavia” in Buenos Aires city. We also obtained some historic records from local people. We already surveyed up to 60% of the total area in hill-grasslands of “La Poligonal” protected area; and we

identified more than 100 potential reproductive sites. We described the habitat characteristics of these sites, and we started to draw the potential distribution map of the species.

Impact of threats: We take some samples in order to look for chytrid fungus. These samples will be sent to the lab. We were sampling potential predators (i.e. odonata). We also identified as a potential eggs’ predator a non-identify species of leech.

Educational programme: We gave talks in some local schools about the ecology and conservation of red-belly toad. We elaborate and distribute some stickers and pins. Most of fieldwork was conducted with the help of local scouts groups.

