



# United States Department of the Interior

U.S. Geological Survey  
Biological Resources Division

Point Reyes National Seashore, Point Reyes, CA 94956

Phone 415-663-8522, ext. 236

Fax 415-663-0469

Email Gary\_Fellers@usgs.gov

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Stafford Lehr  
Department of Fish and Game  
1701 Nimbus Rd., Suite A  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Dear Stafford:

It was good to see you last week and get an update on the what was happening with Spivey Pond. As you know, when red-legged frogs were found there last spring, it was the first time adults of this species had been seen in the Sierra foothills for at least a decade.

Your plans to conduct a fish survey are highly appropriate. We need to know whether there are any predaceous fish in the pond. One of my concerns has always been that only six adults were found and that there was no clear sign of successful reproduction. I searched the pond pretty carefully that first night and my field crews joined in to search again the next day. There were two possible red-legged frog tadpoles which eluded us, but even if they were both red-legged frogs, that would represent only a tiny reproductive effort. If there are predaceous fish in the pond, they could be eating the eggs or tadpoles. At least the solution to the problem would be obvious and probably easy to implement.

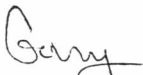
What is desperately needed is a thorough survey of the entire drainage to see if the red-legged frogs at Spivey Pond have dispersed there from some other breeding site. It may turn out that Spivey Pond is merely a dispersal site, not a significant site for reproduction. If that is the case, there may well be other sites in much greater need of protection.

My field crew spent several weeks working in the Weber Creek area. As you know, we operate under very strict regulations which require us to obtain written permission before conducting surveys on private land. Most of the time was spent talking with unfriendly land owners and checking county records. Hence, some important portions of Weber Creek could not be visited. Most notably, the ponds a short ways down stream from Spivey. If someone familiar with red-legged frogs has authorization (or can gain permission) to visit these areas, it would provide some critical information on the significance of Spivey Pond in sustaining the local population of red-legged frogs.

Some additional surveys at Spivey Pond for adult frogs and a better evaluation of reproduction effort would also be in order. This could be done with some egg surveys (early in the spring) and followed up with some tadpole surveys (through the spring and early summer). Red-legged frog eggs are surprisingly difficult to locate and surveys should be done by someone familiar with their eggs. Tadpole surveys could be done with a combination of dip nets and minnow traps. These surveys would provide better counts of the adult population and, more importantly, a better evaluation of reproductive effort.

I would be happy to assist with any additional field work. Please keep me posted as to what fish you find in the pond.

Sincerely,

  
Gary M. Fellers