Can we control a deadly infectious amphibian disease before it is too late?

Vance T. Vredenburg San Francisco State University



Photo by: Anand Varma

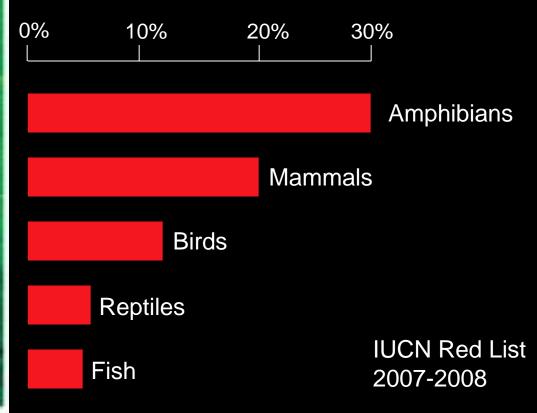


Extinction in Our Times

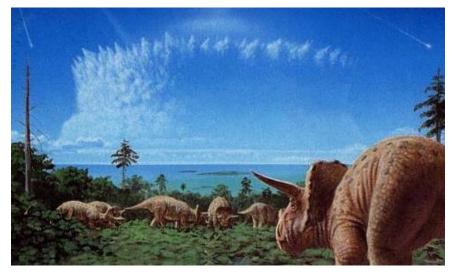
JAMES P. COLLINS & MARTHA L. CRUMP

7,121 described Amphibian Species

•41% declining•30% threatened with extinction



~5 mass extinction events in earth's history



Amphibians have survived the last 4

Are we in the midst of the sixth mass extinction? A view from the world of amphibians

David B. Wake*[†] and Vance T. Vredenburg*[‡]

*Museum of Vertebrate Zoology and Department of Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720-3160; and [‡]Department of Biology, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA 94132-1722

Many scientists argue that we are either entering or in the midst of the sixth great mass extinction. Intense human pressure, both direct and indirect is baying profound effects on natural environfamilies and nearly 60% of the genera of marine organisms were lost (1, 2). Contributing factors were great fluctuations in sea level, which resulted from extensive glaciations, followed by a

Global Amphibian Declines

- Most threatened group of vertebrates on the planet
- Over 1/3 (41%) of amphibians are now threatened with extinction
- Several reasons for declines habitat destruction, introduced species, over exploitation, climate change, environmental toxins

1,917 threatened:

41%

IUCN 2012; Bill Marsh for NY Times

70% assessed

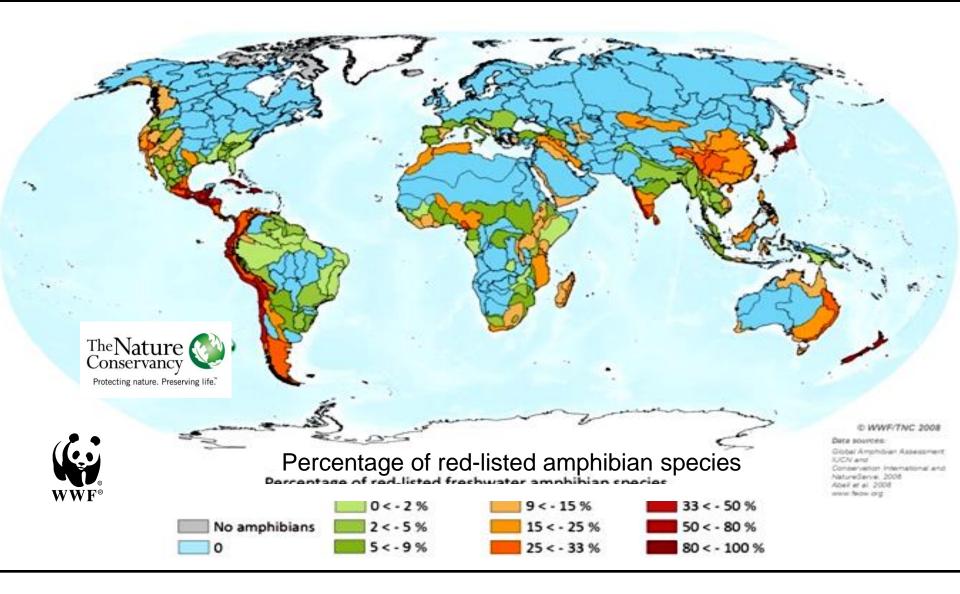
2,767 not threatened

Sierra Nevada California

Possible Causes Amphibian Declines

Habitat destruction Over exploitation Invasive species UV-B radiation Climate change Infectious disease

Global Amphibian Declines



Costa Rican Golden Toad

Last seen 1989

Journal of Herpetology, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 174-177, 1991 Copyright 1991 Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles

Mass Mortality and Extinction in a High-elevation Population of *Rana muscosa*

DAVID F. BRADFORD

MASS MORTALITY OF RANA MUSCOSA

175

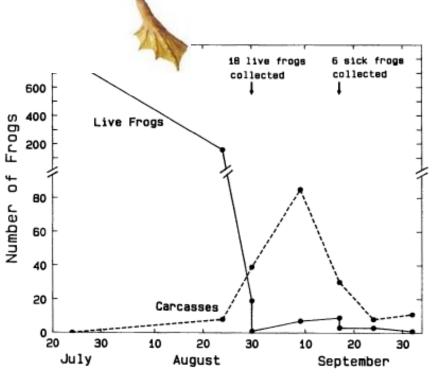


FIG. 1. Numbers of live frogs present and frog carcasses collected in Ridge Lake during summer, 1979.

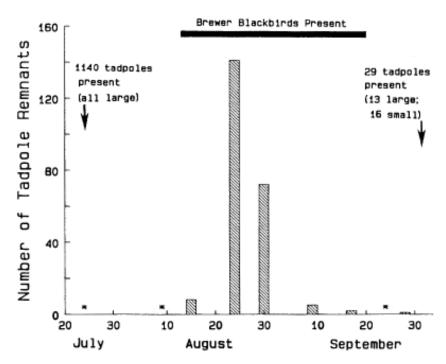
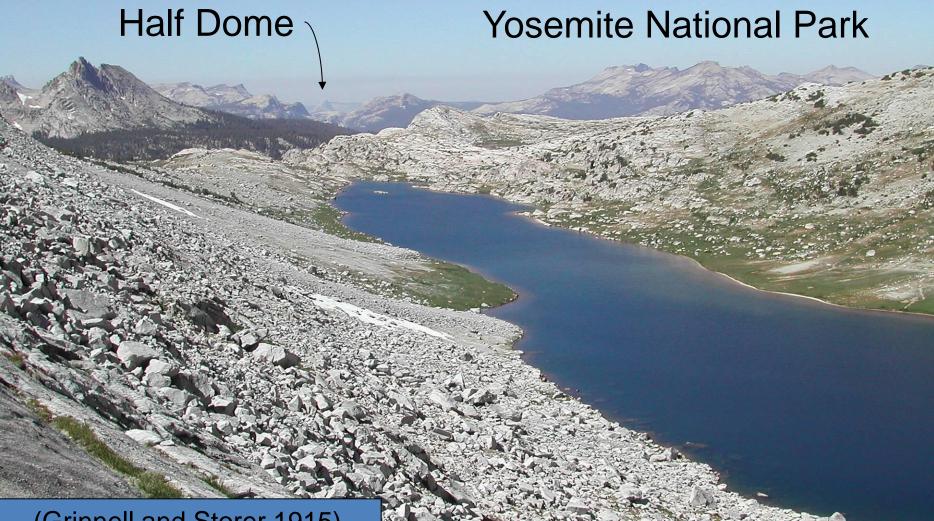


FIG. 2. Numbers of tadpole carcasses collected at Ridge Lake during summer, 1979. Asterisks indicate that no tadpole remains were found on indicated dates.

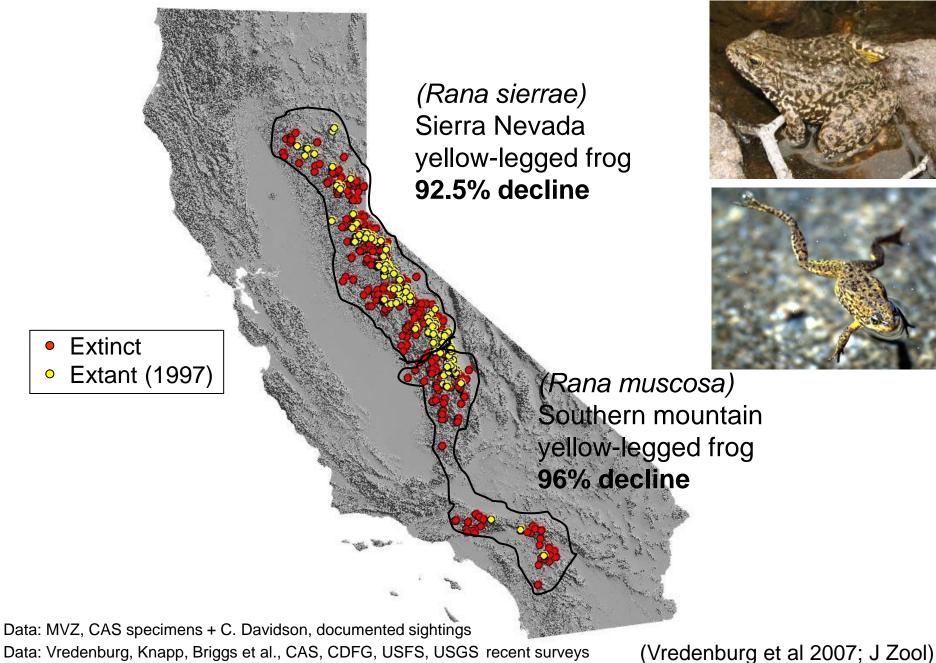
Sierra Nevada: a protected area

Nearly 100 years of Biodiversity Research

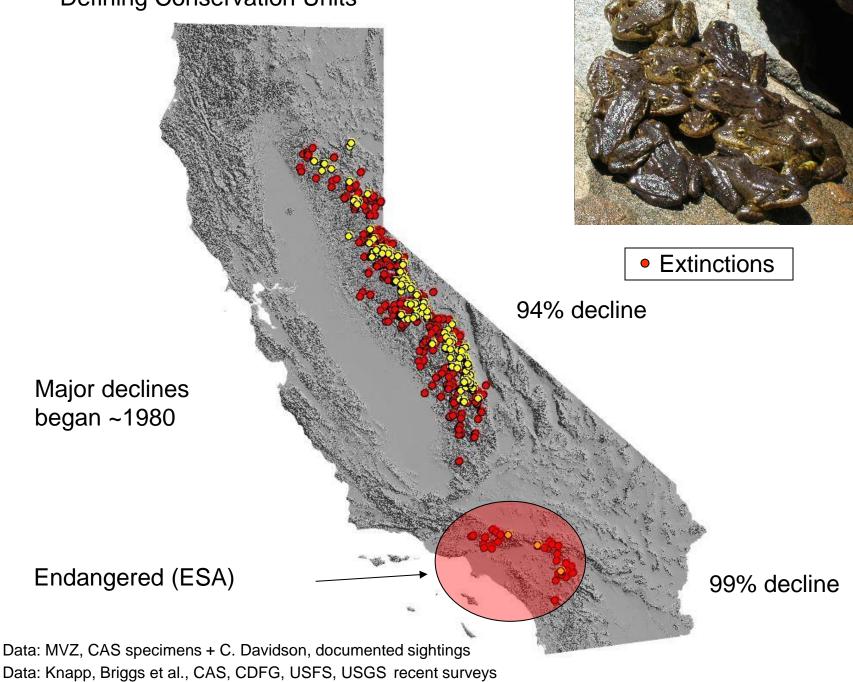


(Grinnell and Storer 1915)

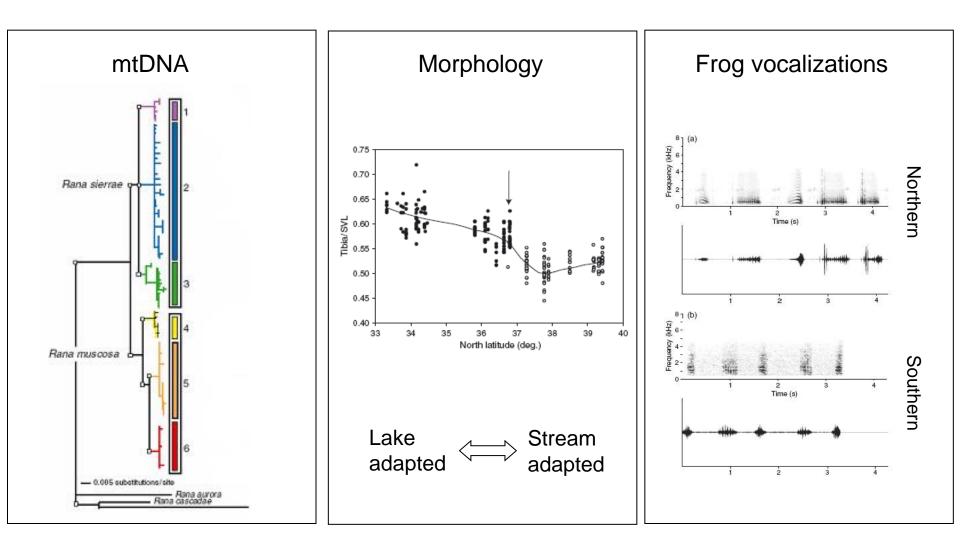
Major declines despite protected habitat



Defining Conservation Units

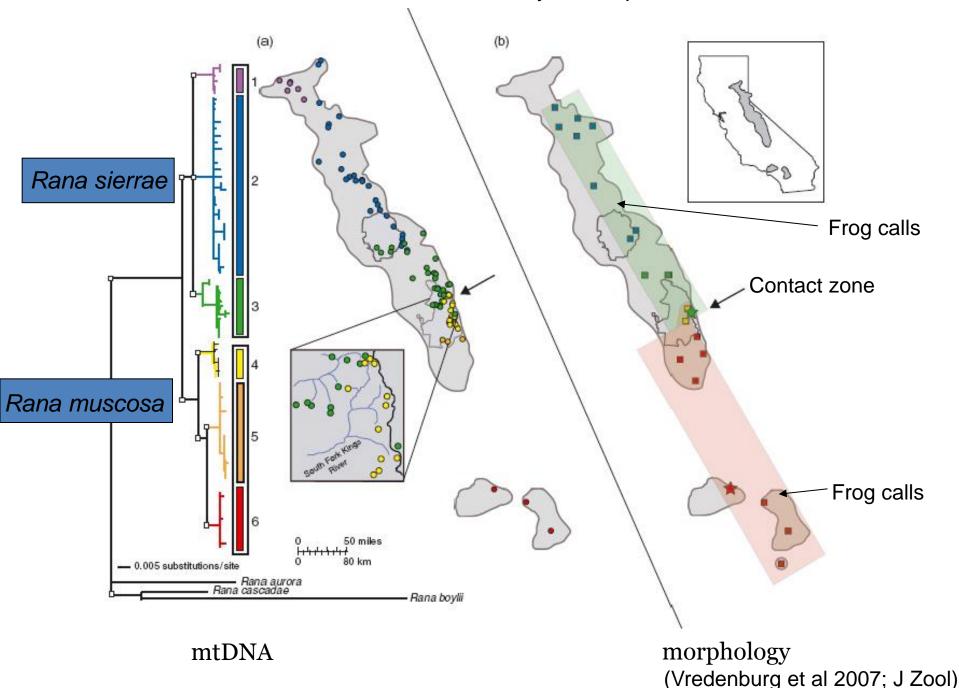


Defining conservation units: Comparison of different types of data collected throughout entire range of the frog

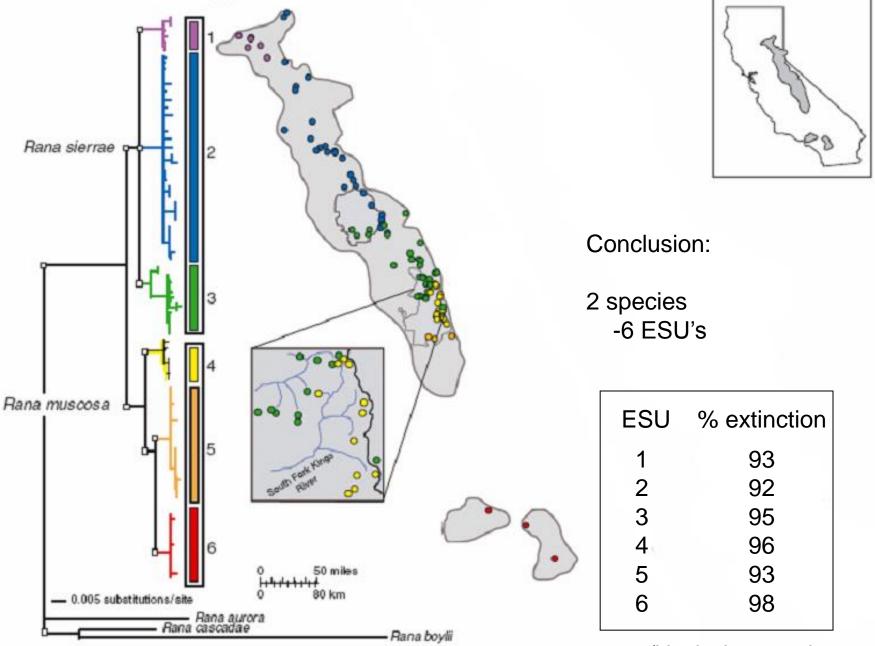


(Vredenburg et al 2007; J Zool)

Concordant data delineate new taxonomy- two species



We now have defined conservation units: Now what?



(Vredenburg et al 2007; J Zool)

Introduced species: No native fishes above 1,500 m



(reviewed in: Vredenburg et al 2005)



copyright 1992 philg@mit.edu

THREATS – Introduced Fish

BACKGROUND

•Historically fish found only at lower elevations of Sierra Nevada.

•Filled colored areas are native fish ranges

•Red outline is the range of the two species of mountain frog



Reasons why trout were originally not seen as big factor in frog declines:

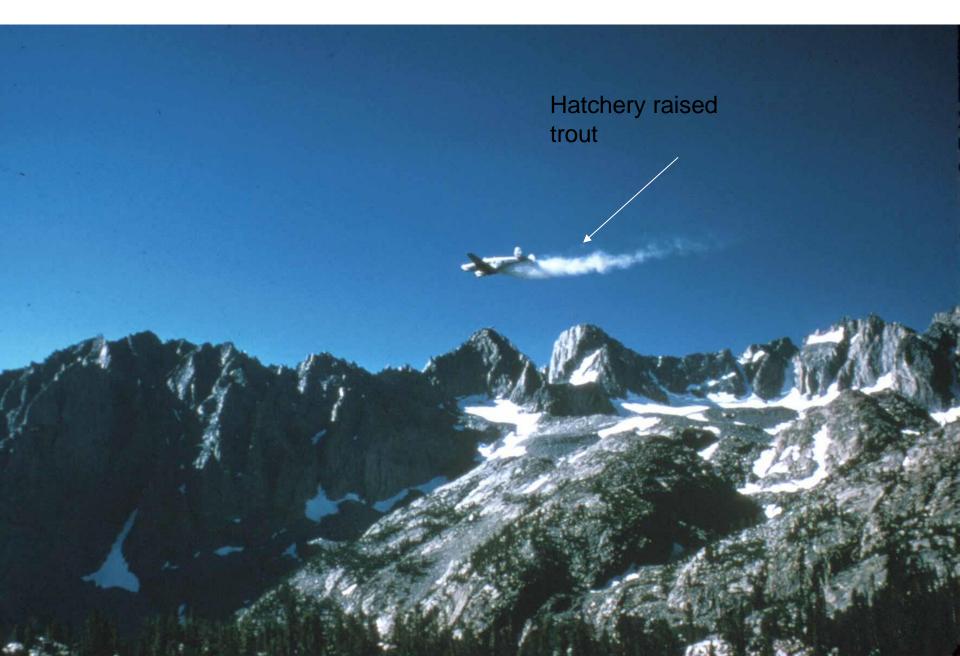
Mule train packing live trout (1893)

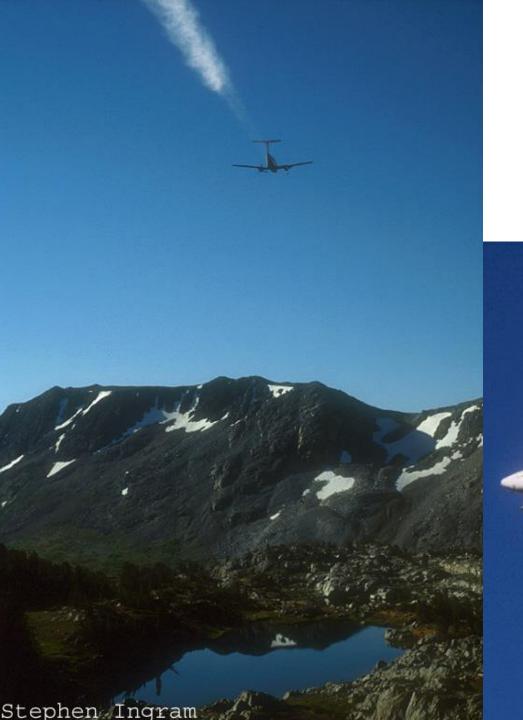
1. Trout native in some areas

2. Historical introductions of trout began in 1890s, but frog declines in late 1970s

...therefore trout not responsible!

In the 1950-60's, industrial trout introductions began

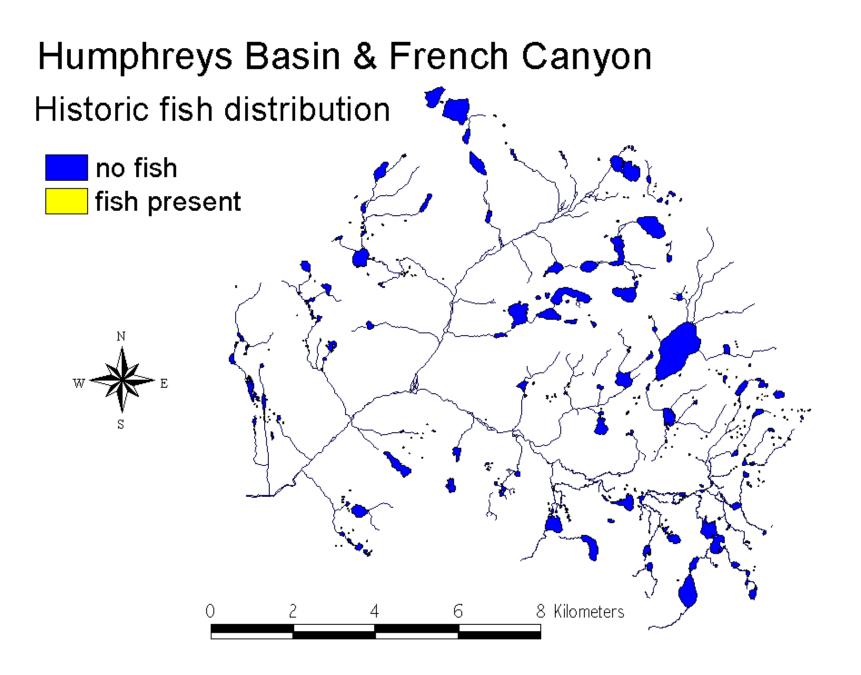




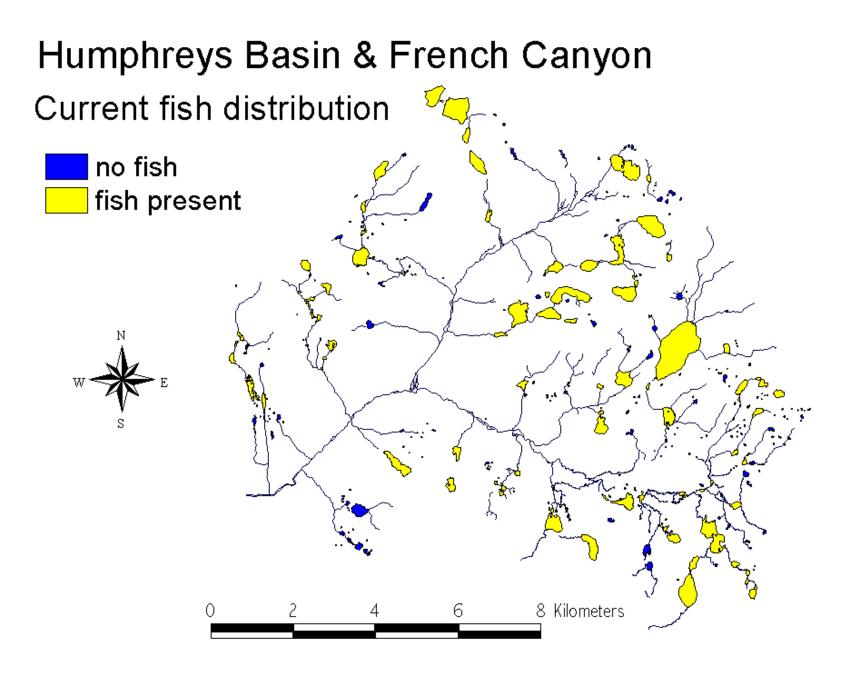
Flying fish can climb mountains

Stephen Ingram

NZIFO



(R. Knapp unpublished)

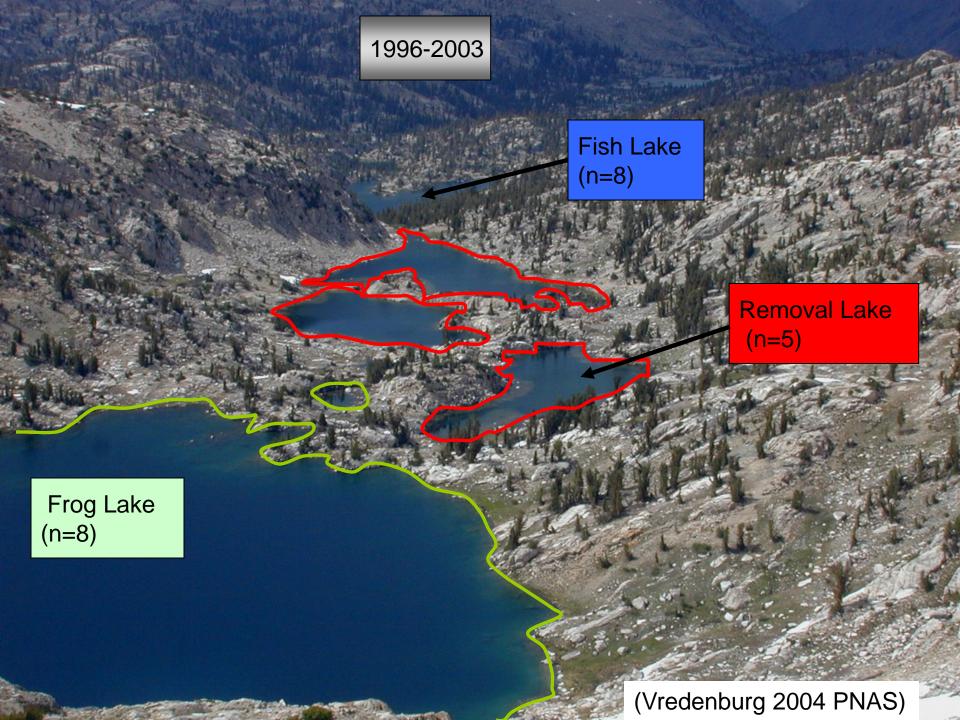


(R. Knapp unpublished)

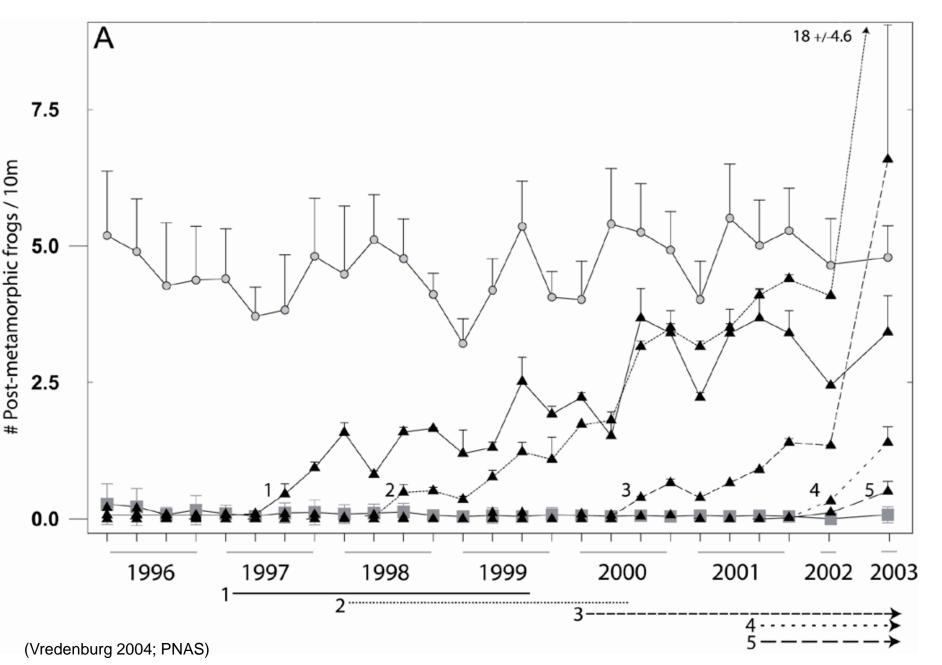
Key life cycle of the Mountain Yellow-legged Frog







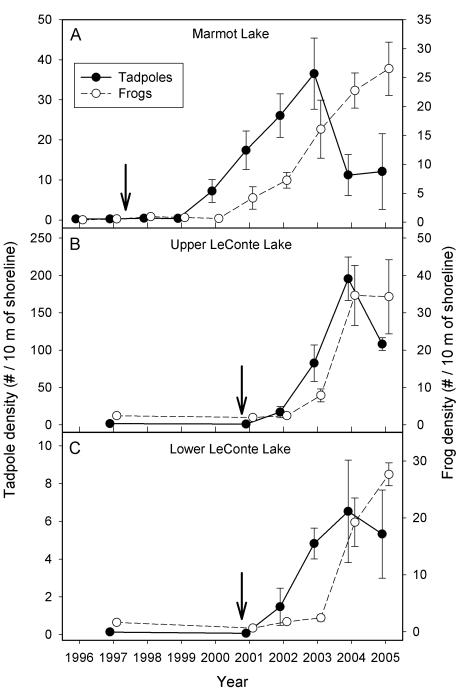
Frog populations can quickly recover



Conservation Biology: A long hard road.

Repeated same experiment in 3 different study areas in the Sierra Nevada

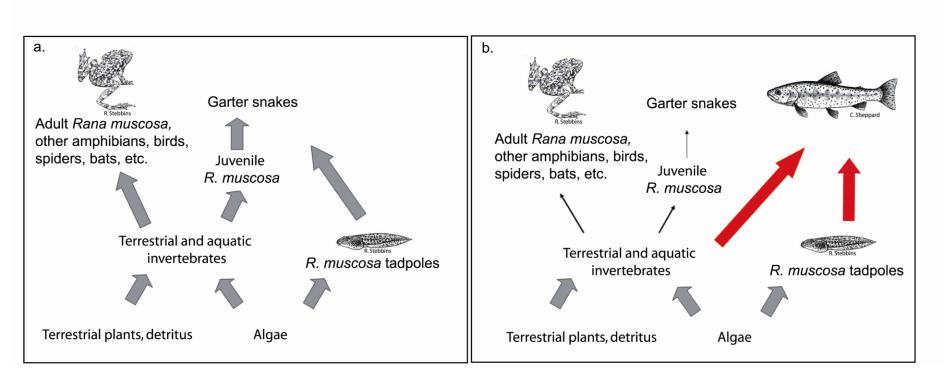
Same result: Removal introduced trout leads to rapid recovery of threatened frog populations.



(Knapp, Boiano and Vredenburg 2007; Biological Conservation)

Does non-native fish removal benefit other native species?

Stable isotope food web study (C, N)



(Finlay and Vredenburg 2007; Ecology)

Science-informed Conservation Recommendations:

NDI

Remove non-native fishes
Restrict planting non-native fish-

Conservation Successes:

We are just beginning!

Journal of Herpetology, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 174-177, 1991 Copyright 1991 Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles

Mass Mortality and Extinction in a High-elevation Population of *Rana muscosa*

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MASS MORTALITY OF RANA MUSCOSA

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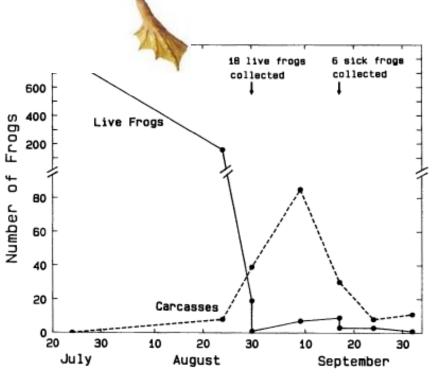


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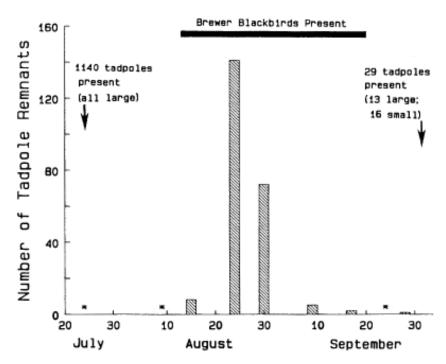
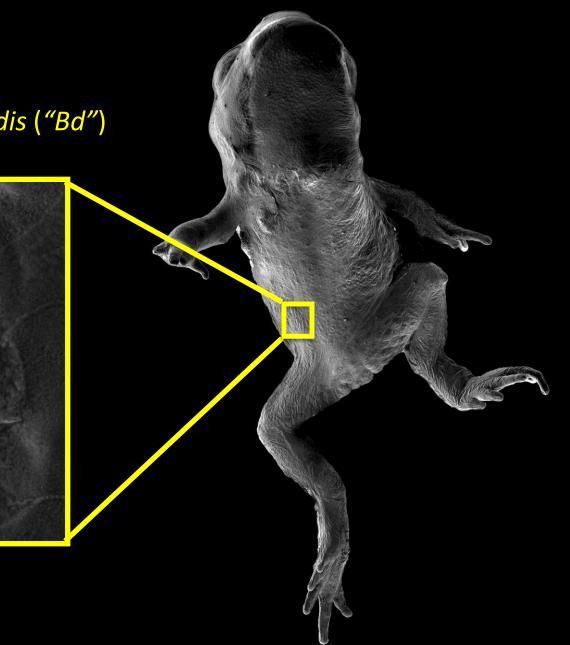


FIG. 2. Numbers of tadpole carcasses collected at Ridge Lake during summer, 1979. Asterisks indicate that no tadpole remains were found on indicated dates.



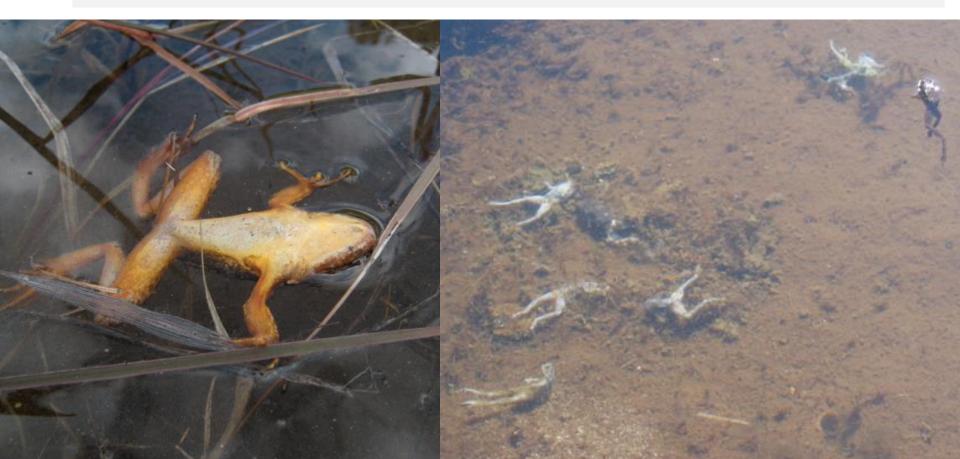
The disease: Chytridiomycosis The pathogen: Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis ("Bd")





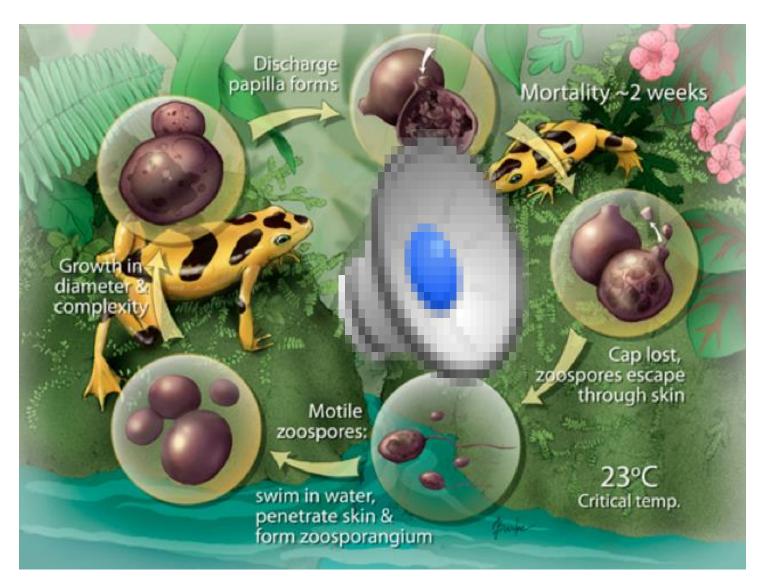
Fungal Pathogen:Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis (Bd)FrogChytridiomycete
fungusFirst described in a
dendrobatid frog

Disease: chytridiomycosis



Emerging disease in Asia

Chytridiomycosis (chytrid)



M.Forza n

Detection methods:

- Real time PCR assay
 - Non-destructive
 - Quantitaive estimate
 - Comparison to standards
- Histology
 - Time consuming
- Culture







(Boyle, et. al 2004)

Amphibian skin is a physiologically active organ epidermis dermis

-Regulates exchange of respiratory gases oxygen, carbon dioxide

-Maintains osmotic balance water, electrolytes

-Involved in amphibian immunity

Epidermal Dysfunction Hypothesis: *Bd* disrupts cutaneous osmoregulatory function, leading to osmotic imbalance and death.

THE INTERNATIONAL WEEKLY JOURNAL OF SCIENCE

FEAR OF FUNGI

Emerging pathogens threaten natural ecosystems and food security MCE 186

REVIEW

Emerging fungal t and ecosystem he

Matthew C. Fisher¹, Daniel. A. Henk¹, Cheryl J. Briggs², & Sarah J. Gurr⁵

The past two decades have seen an increasing number landscapes. In both animals and plants, an unpreccaused some of the most severe die-offs and extinsecurity. Human activity is intensifying fungal diseanew opportunities for evolution. We argue that nase with wider implications for human and ecosystem 1

The second secon

However, pathogenic fungi (also known as mycoses) have n widely recognized as posing major threats to animal health. Th ception is changing rapidly owing to the recent occurrence of high-profile declines in wildlife caused by the emergence of pre unknown fungit?. For example, during March 2007, a routine co bats hibernating in New York State revealed mass mortalities". V group of closely clustered caves, four species of bats were mark striking fungus growing on their muzzles and wing membranes, name 'white nose syndrome' (WNS) was coined. After the init break, the ascomycete fungus Geomyces destructans was shown Koch's postulates and was described as the cause of WNS in As bat species⁴¹⁰. Mortalities exhibiting WNS have subsequent found in an increasing number of bat overwintering sites a 2010, the infection was confirmed to have emerged in at least 11: across the United States and Canada, spanning over 1,200 km (Bat numbers across affected sites have declined by over 70% at lyses have shown that at least one affected species, the little bro Myotis lucifugus, has a greater than 99% chance of becoming extinct within the next 16 years (ref. 11). Other species of bats



Institute of Medicine, Board on Global Health National Academy of Sciences

Fungal Diseases: An emerging challenge to human, animal, and plant health.

<u>Human</u>

<u>Animal</u>

Cryptococcus gattii

Coccidioidomycosis (Valley

Fever) Coccidioides immitis

Aspergillosis Aspergillus fumigatus

Candida Candida albicans Colony Collapse Syndrome (bees) Nosema apis

Aspergillosis (birds) Aspergillus fumigatus

White-nose Syndrome (bats) Geomyces destructans

Chytridiomycosis (amphibians)

Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis

<u>Plant</u>

Sudden Oak Death Phytophthora ramorum

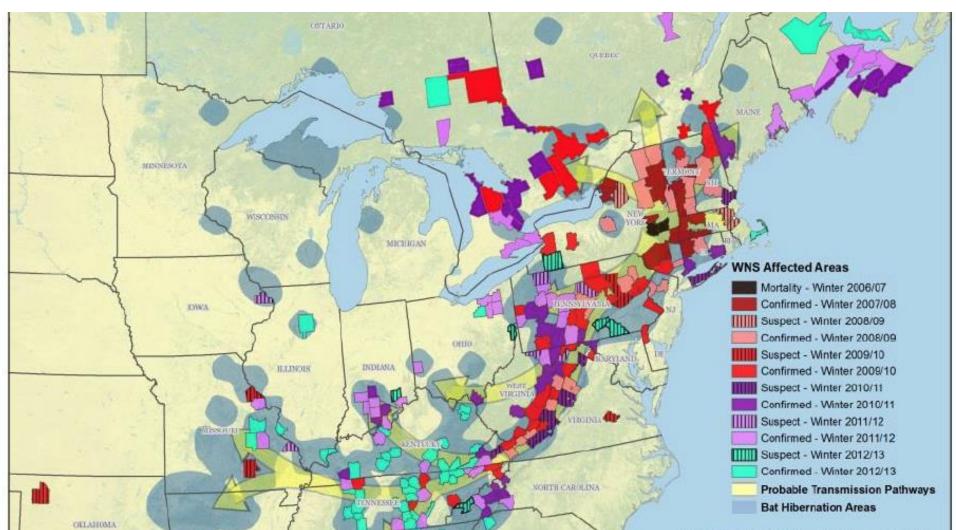
Fusarium wilt (tomatoes etc.)

Fusarium oxysporum

Stripe rust (wheat) *Puccinia striiformis*

Chestnut blight *Cryphonectria parasitica*



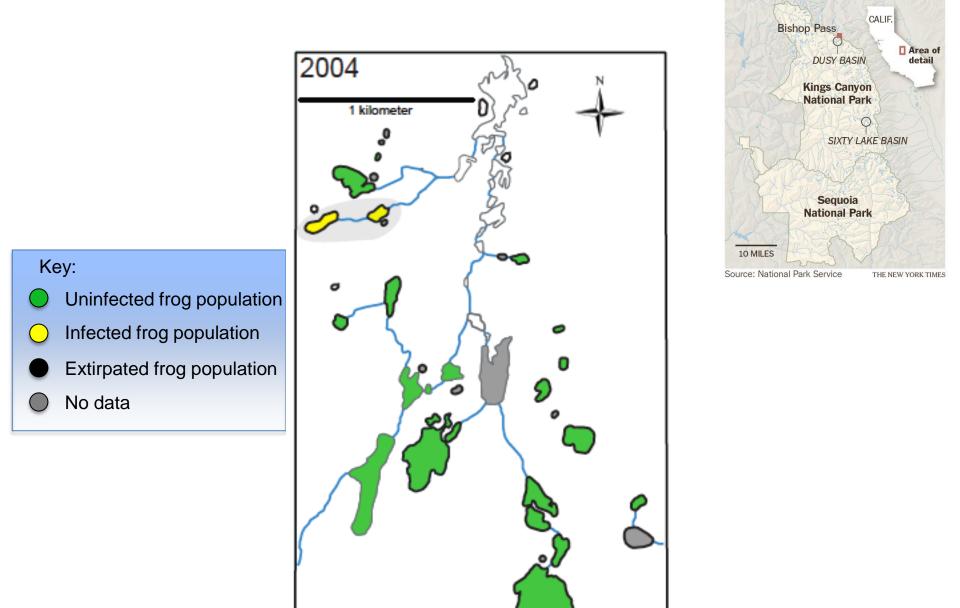


Sierra Nevada, California

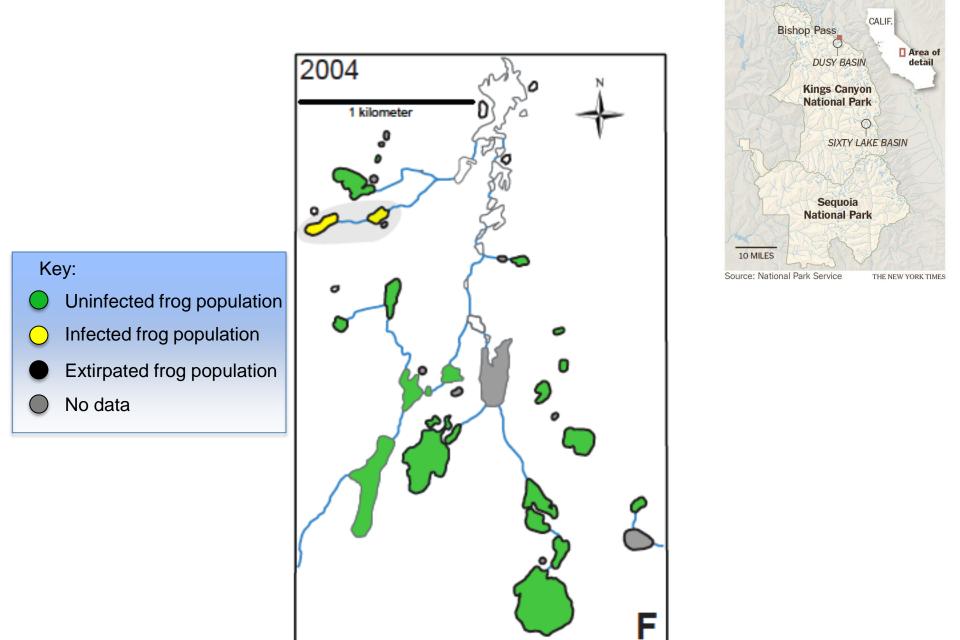
How does this pathogen work???

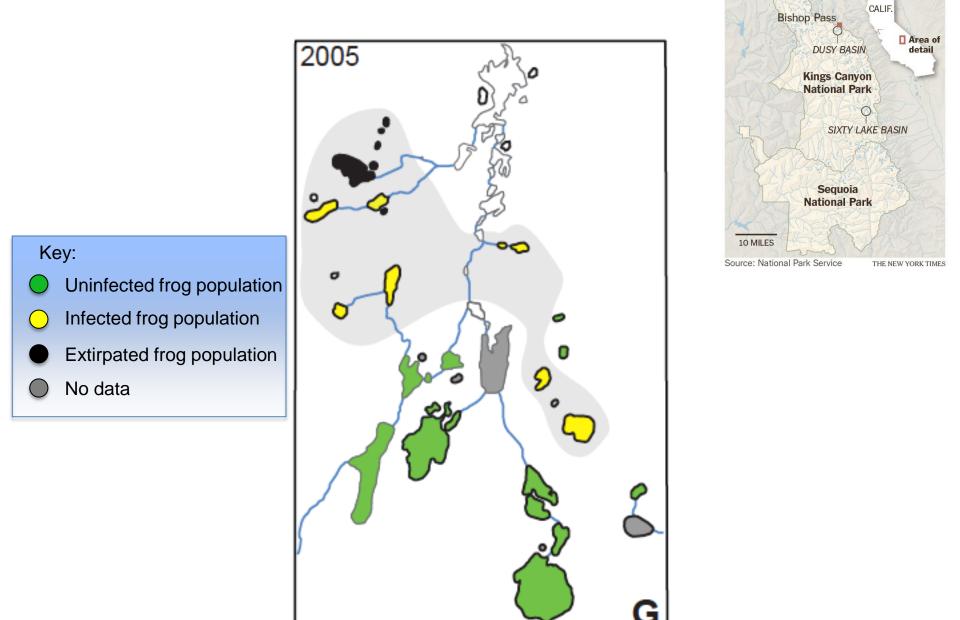
Repeated visual population counts (>900; 1996–2008) Skin swabs (> 6,000; 2004-2008)

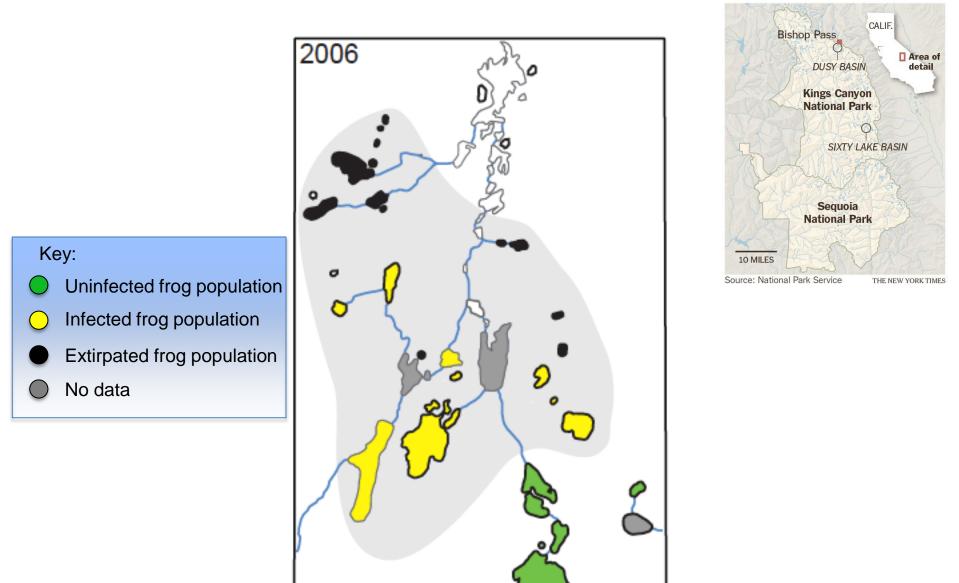




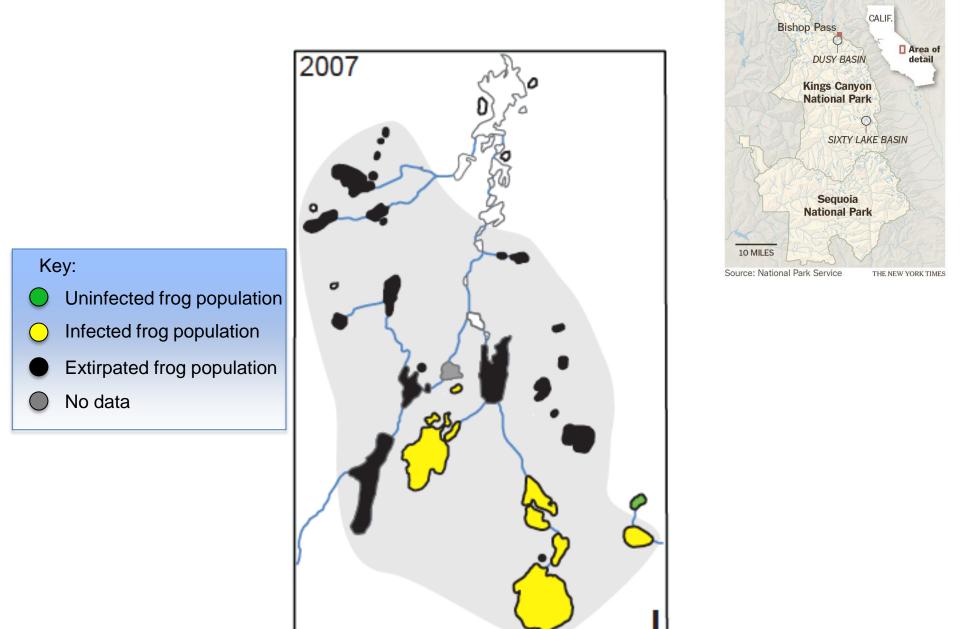
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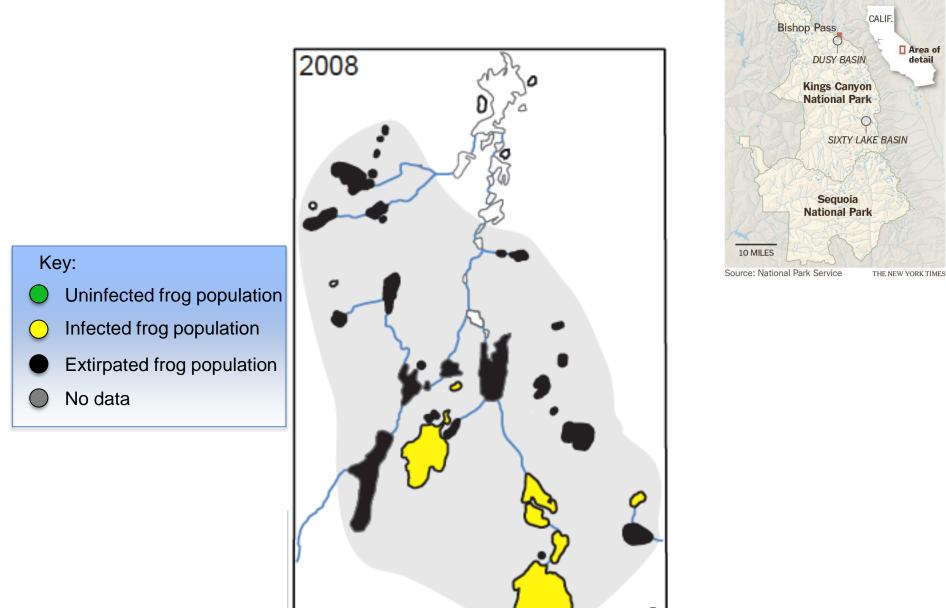




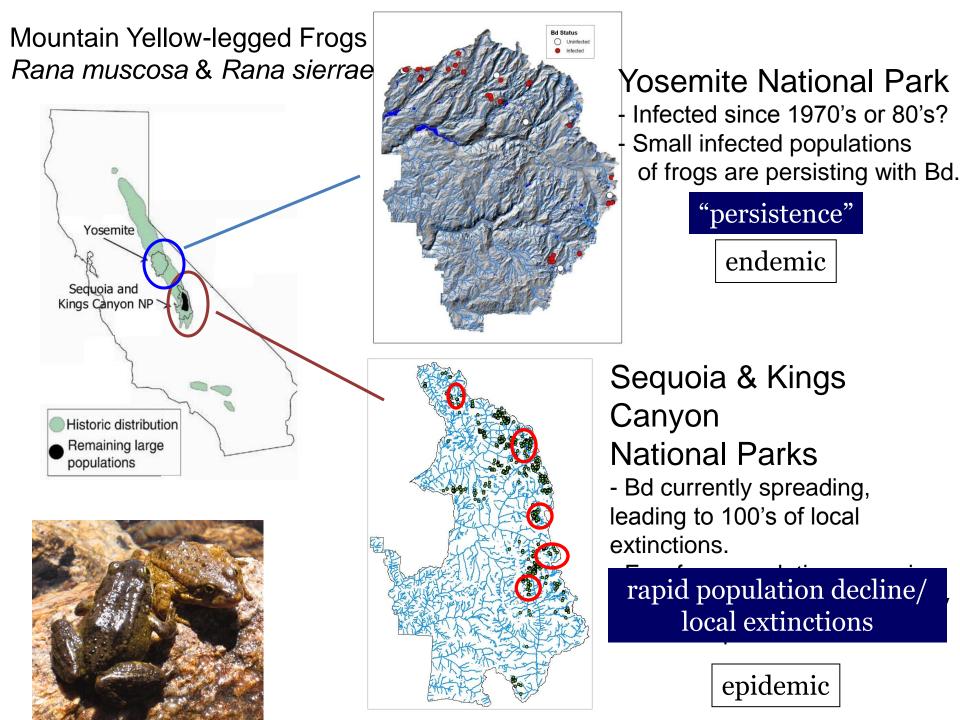


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(Vredenburg, et al. 2010; PNAS)



Different Outcomes in Different Species

Lithobates catesbeiana



Litoria moorei

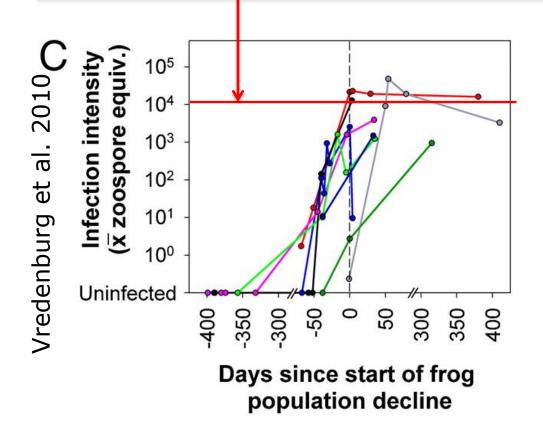


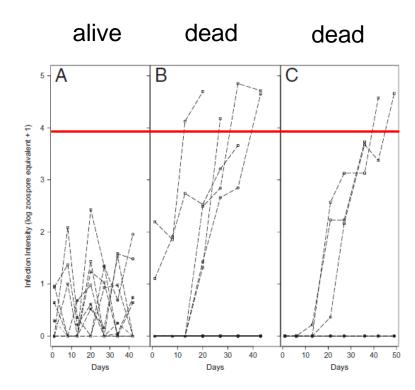
Xenopus laevis





We discovered a Mortality Threshold





Cheng et al. 2011

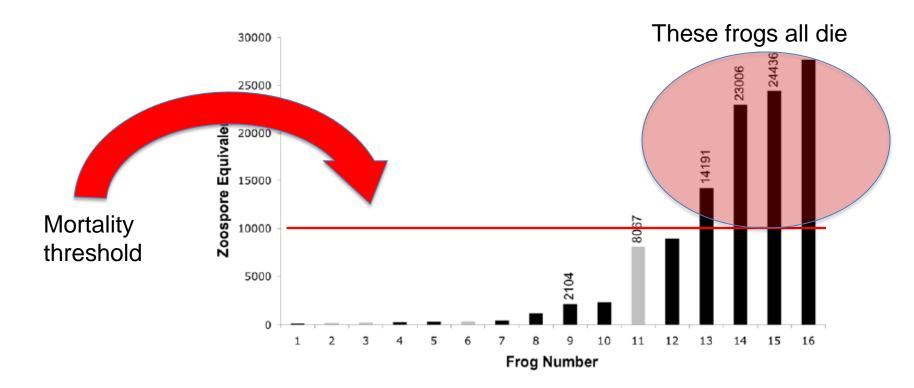
How does Bd work?

OPEN ORCESS Freely available online



Seasonal Pattern of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* Infection and Mortality in *Lithobates areolatus*: Affirmation of Vredenburg's "10,000 Zoospore Rule"

Vanessa C. Kinney¹, Jennifer L. Heemeyer¹, Allan P. Pessier², Michael J. Lannoo³*





A Reservoir Species for the Emerging Amphibian Pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* Thrives in a Landscape Decimated by Disease

Natalie M. M. Reeder¹*, Allan P. Pessier², Vance T. Vredenburg¹

1 Department of Biology, San Francisco State University, San Francisco, California, United States of America, 2 Wildlife Disease Laboratories, Institute for Conservation Research, San Diego Zoo Global, San Diego, California, United States of America



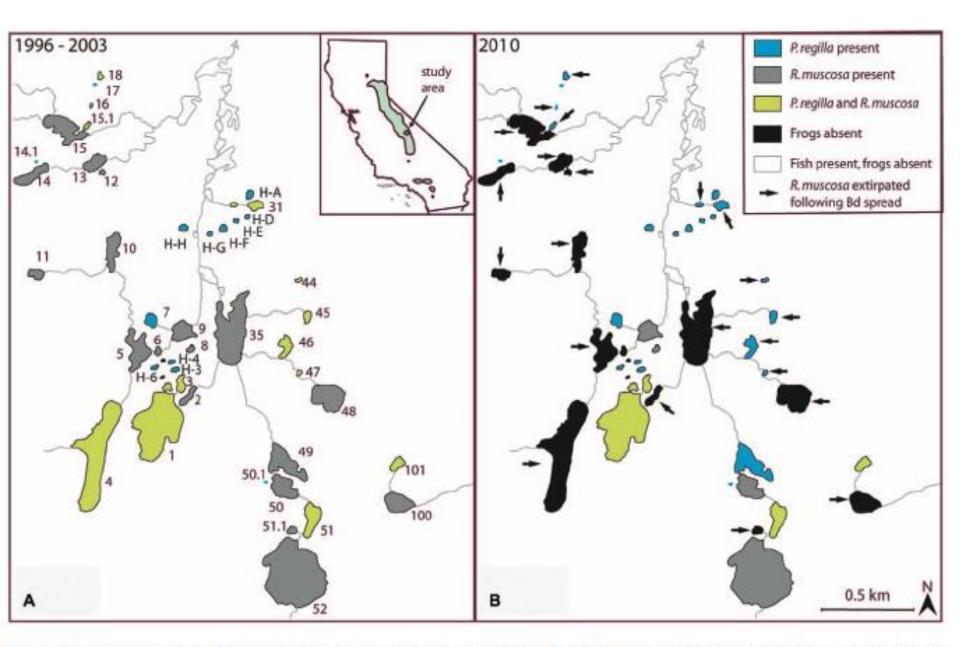
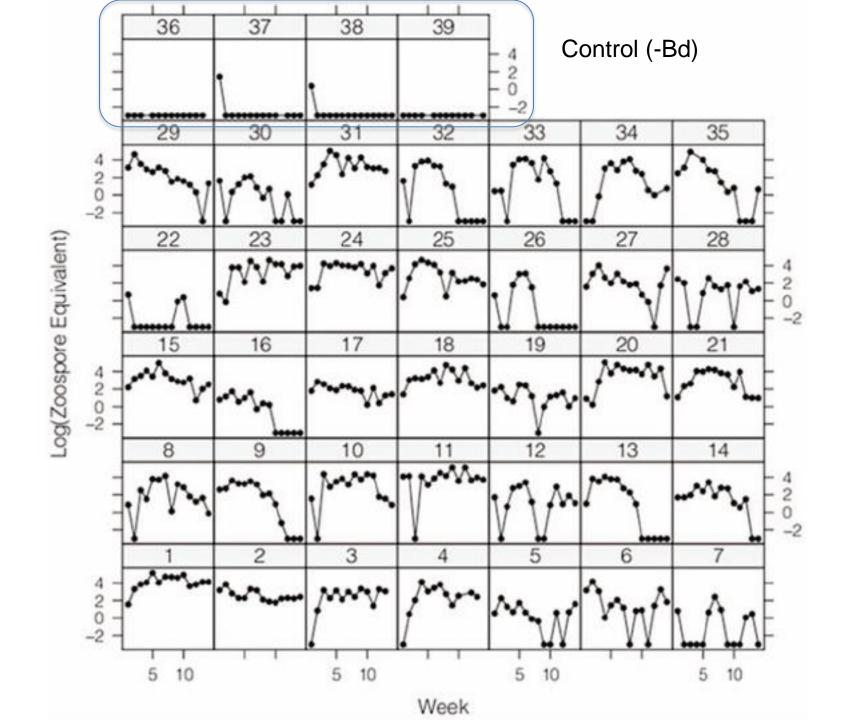


Figure 1. Habitat occupancy before and after disease spread. Range of *P. regilla* and *R. muscosa* in 60 Lake Basin (a) before and (b) after the spread of *Bd* through the basin. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0033567.g001



Bd infection is localized on the skin – most of the skin continues to function

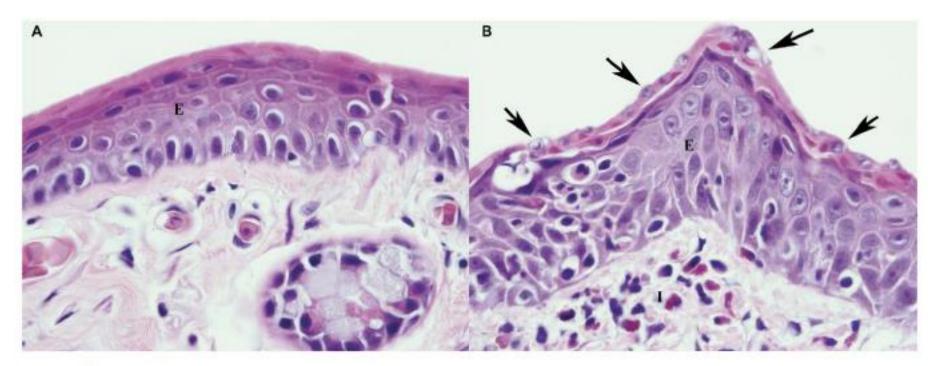
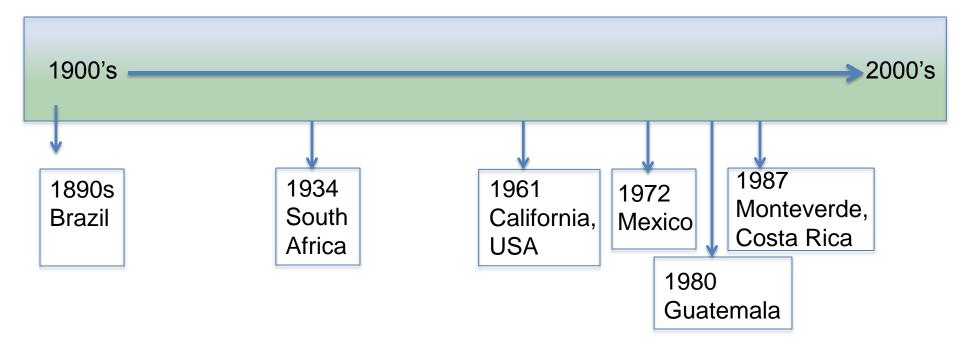


Figure 5. Histological views of skin from an infected but asymptomatic individual. Photomicrographs of histologic sections from the foot webbing of *P. regilla* # 32. In (a) the epidermis is well organized with minimal variation in nuclear size and a single keratinized layer consistent with normal foot skin. However, (b) shows an adjacent area of skin with disorganization of the epidermis (hyperplasia), hyperkeratosis and numerous *Bd* thalli (arrows). There are infiltrates of inflammatory cells in the epidermis and dermis. E = epidermis; I = inflammatory cells. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0033567.g005

Bd Timeline: Where did it come from? When and how did it emerge?



Major Worldwide Amphibian Declines Began in the 1980's.

Introduced frogs spread Bd

The transport and release of *Xenopus laevis* or other non-native carrier species followed by spread of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in native amphibians.



Vredenburg et al 2013 PLOS ONE

Frog legs anyone?

American Bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*)

Introduced amphibians may be carriers of *Bd*

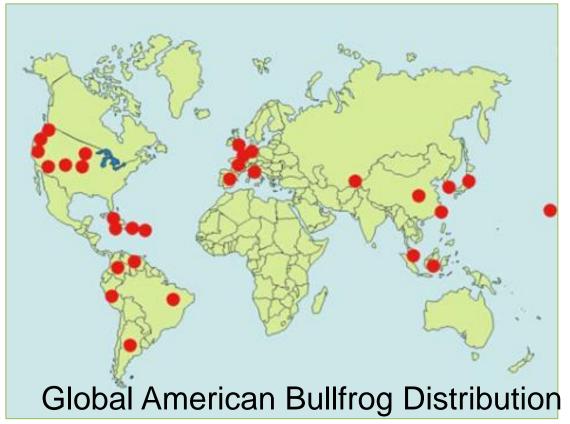
Bullfrogs

Xenopus

*Pet stores and meat markets provide a steady supply of Bullfrogs

How did Bd spread?

- Not all species are susceptible
- Some act as disease reservoirs or vectors



Lannoo 1993

Farms, Pet and Food Trade in Asia (Yunnan, China)

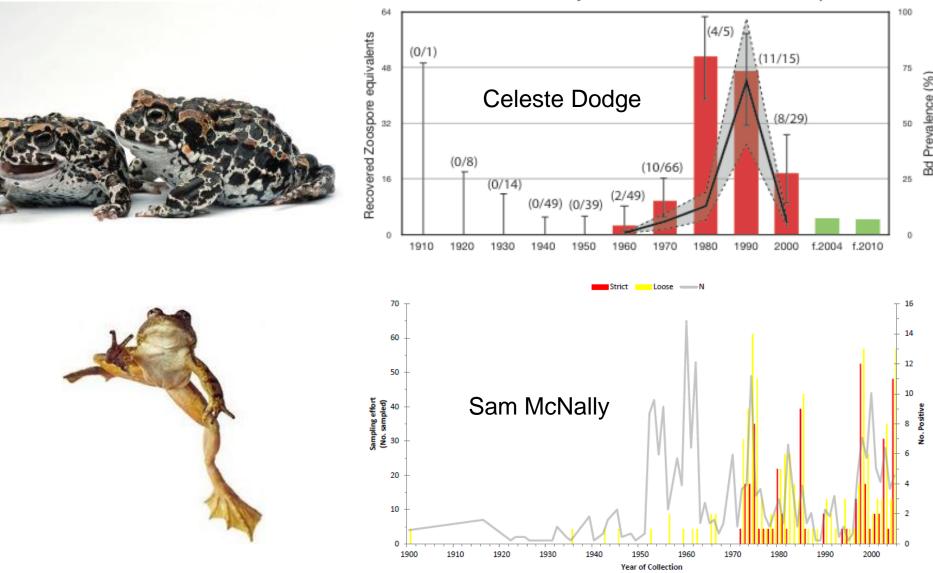






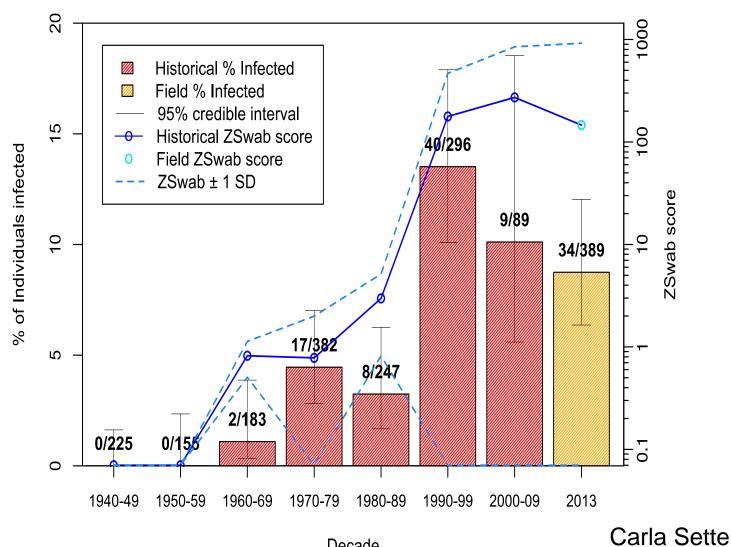


When did Bd invade California?



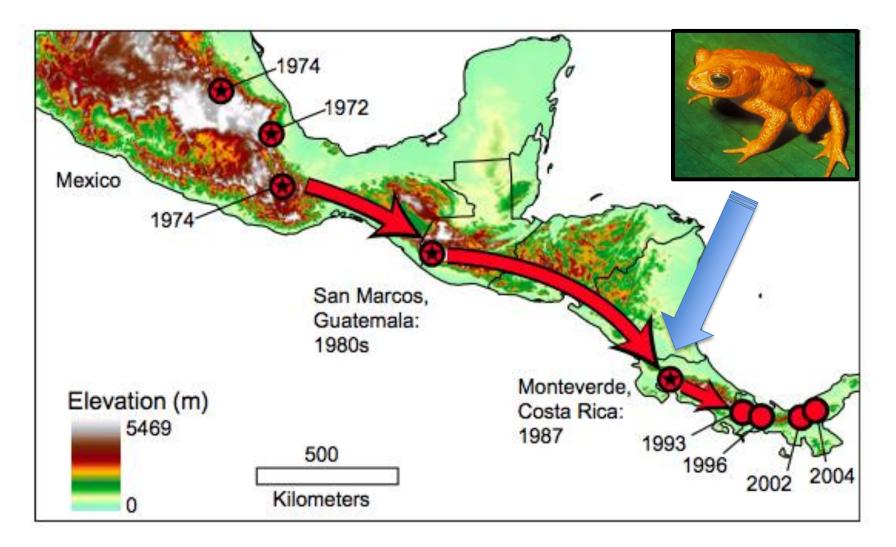
Historic Bd Infection Intensity and Prevalence in Preserved B. canorus specimens

Bd emergence in *Batrachoseps attenuatus*



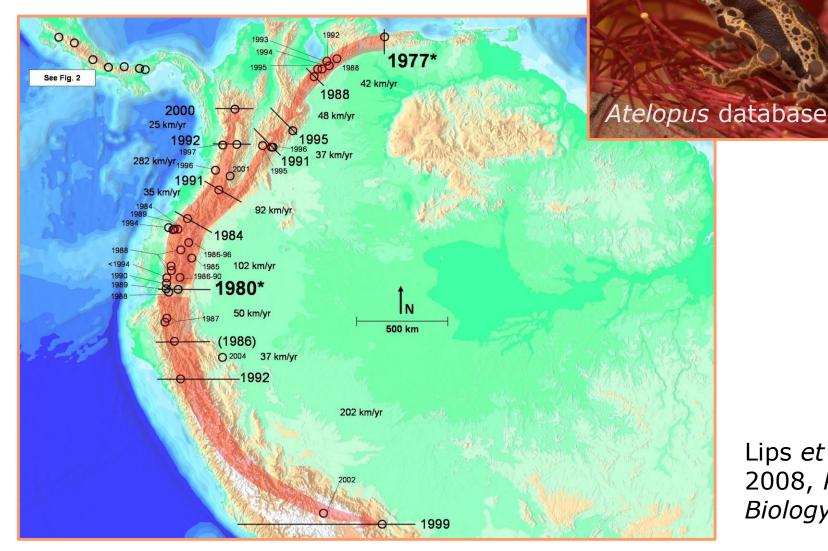
Decade

Museum specimens reveal how fungal epidemic spread in amphibians



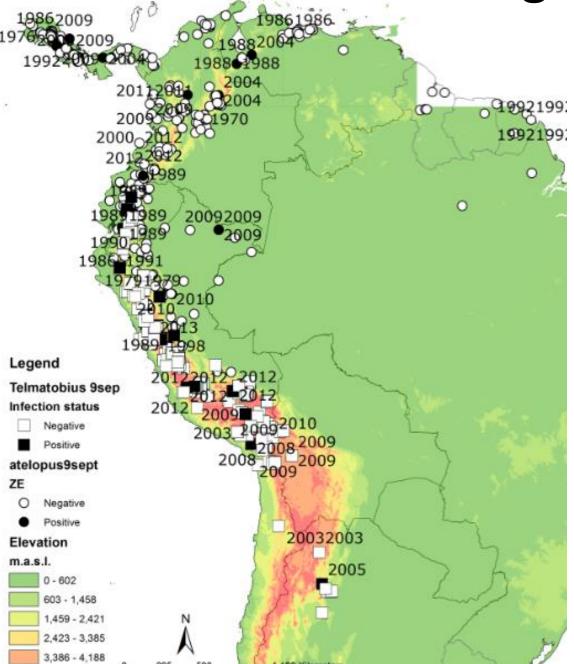
Cheng, T. L., S. M. Rovito, D. B. Wake, and V. T. Vredenburg. 2011. Coincident mass extirpation of neotropical amphibians with the emergence of the infectious fungal pathogen Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Timeline of proposed Bd epidemics in the Andes



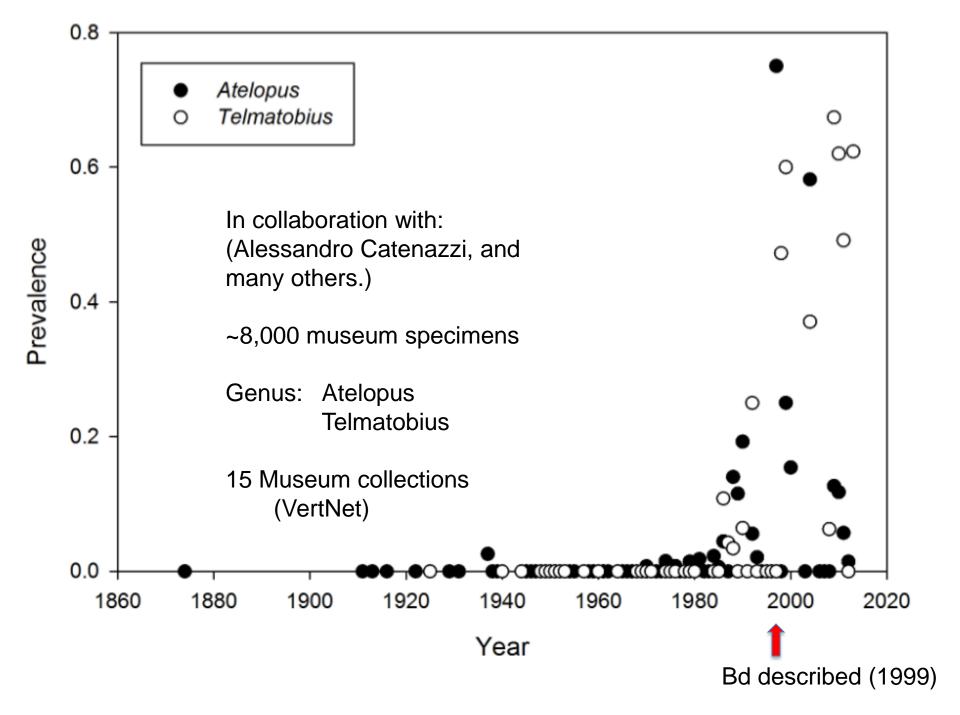
Lips et al. 2008, PLoS Biology

When did Bd emerge in S. America?



In collaboration with: (Alessandro Catenazzi, and many others.)

- ~8,000 museum specimens
- Genus: Atelopus Telmatobius



Susceptibility trials

- Which of the surviving species are most at risk from chytridiomycosis?
- Experimentally expose frogs to Bd infection
- Compare survivorship between infected and treated frogs
- 9 species of 4 families
- 213 frogs
- 3-6 weeks in June-August 2012

Wayqecha Biological Station http://www.acca.org.pe/



hot water & internet





makeshift lab



spectacular views

socializing education



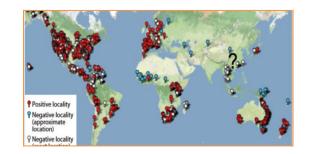
earthy food

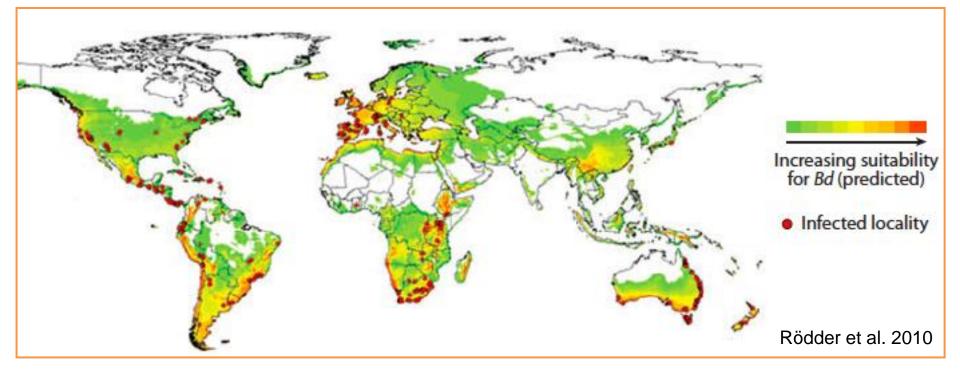
Susceptibility trials: Peru highlands





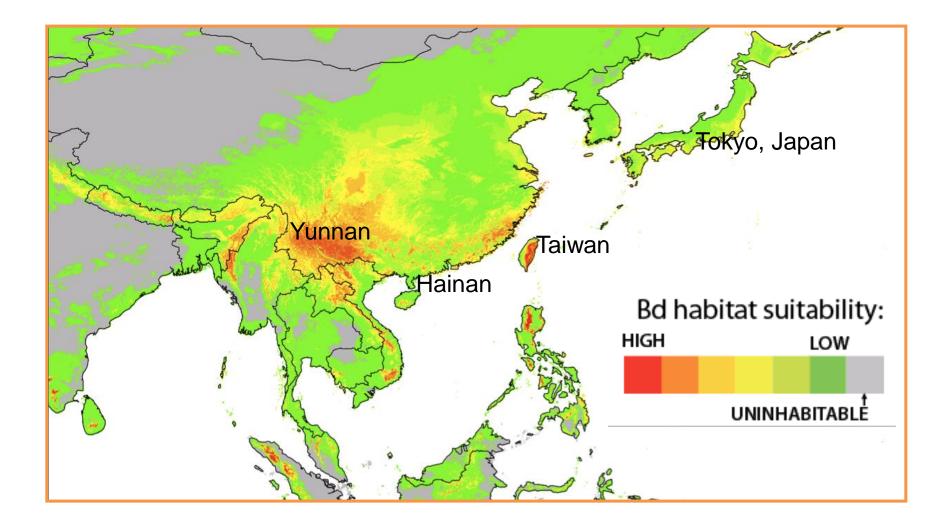
Predicted suitable habitat for Bd





Emerging disease in Asia

Asia is Vulnerable



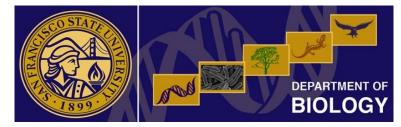
Yunnan Province, China (Sept 15, 2013)



Raul Figueroa

Retrospective survey suggests recent emergence of Chytridiomycosis in Japanese amphibians

Gabriela Rios-Sotelo Vance Vredenburg PhD San Francisco State University

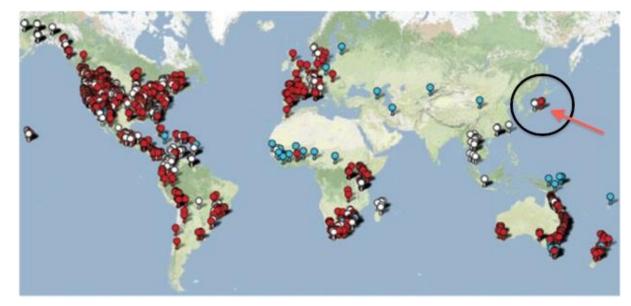




Emerging disease in Asia

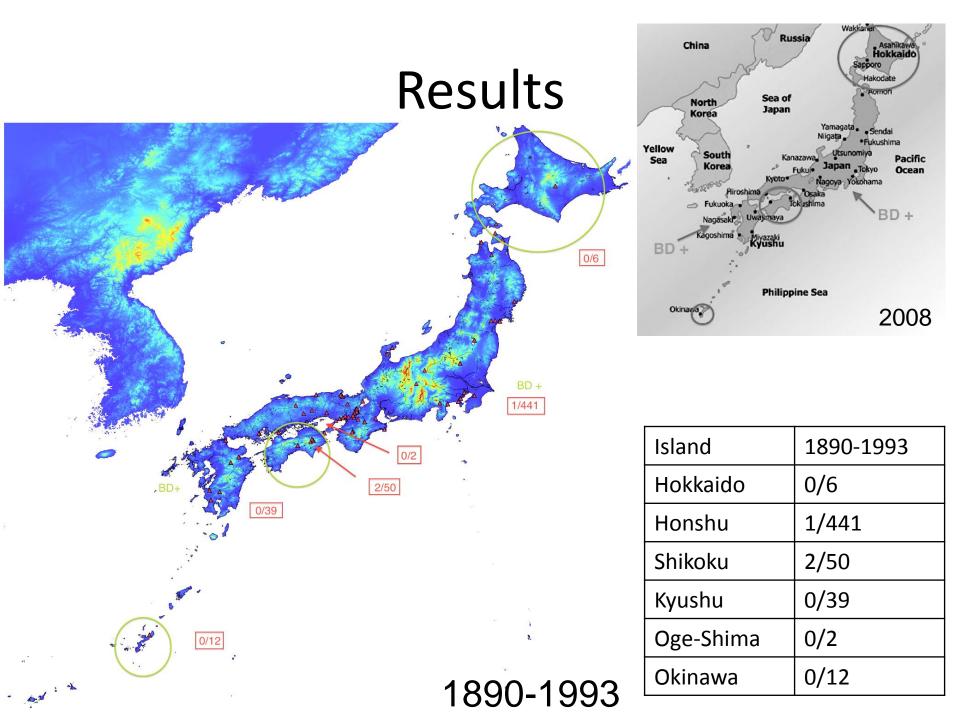
First report of Bd in Asia

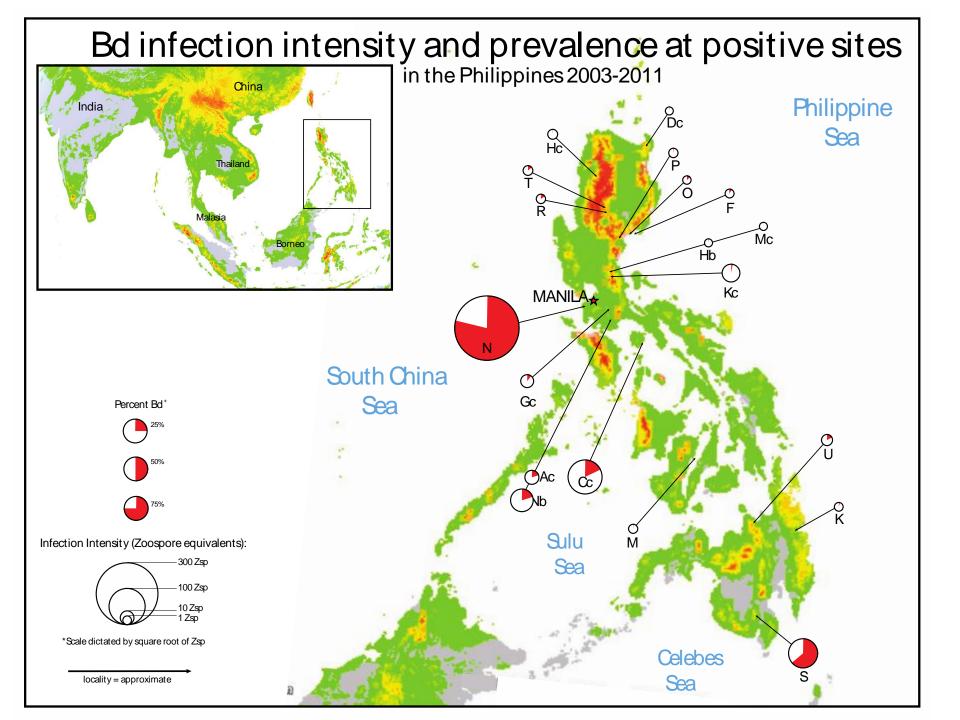
- Outbreak in Japan, 2006, Tokyo
- Suspected disease imported by trade



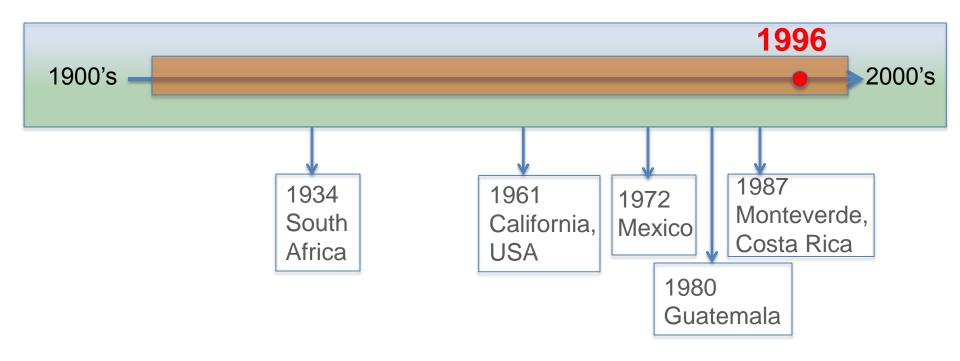
"There is an urgent need to monitor Bd in amphibians in Asia..."

Une et al 2008





Bd Infection Timeline: Philippines



We tested 1200 samples collected in PH from 1906-2009

Conclusion: Bd has recently emerged in the Philippines

Introduced frogs spread Bd hypothesis

The transport and release of *Xenopus laevis* or other Non-native species ibrought forth the spread of *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* in native amphibians.

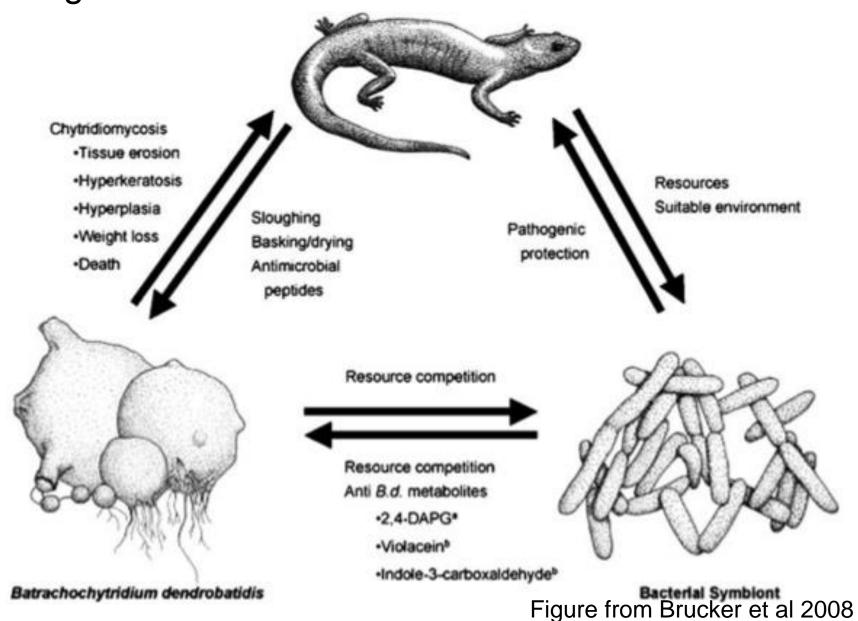


What can we do to save the amphibians?

Bioaugmentation of skin microbiome may save amphibians in the wild



Mutualistic bacteria play a role in amphibian resistance to fungal disease Host Amphibian

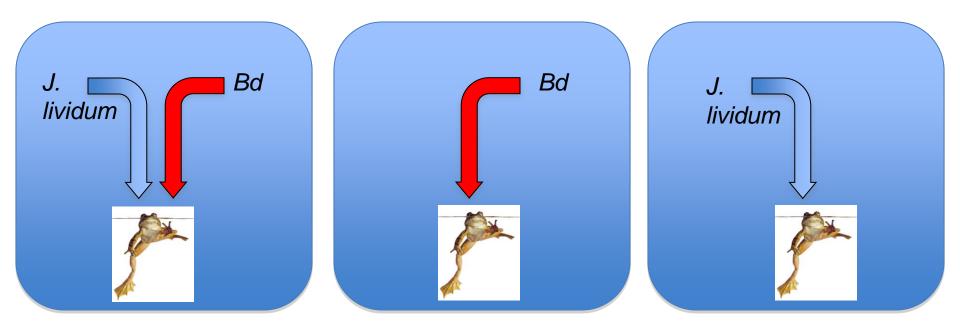


Skin microbes on frogs prevent morbidity and mortality caused by a lethal skin fungus

Reid N Harris¹, Robert M Brucker², Jenifer B Walke³, Matthew H Becker¹, Christian R Schwantes⁴, Devon C Flaherty⁴, Brianna A Lam¹, Douglas C Woodhams⁵, Cheryl J Briggs⁶, Vance T Vredenburg⁷ and Kevin PC Minbiole⁴

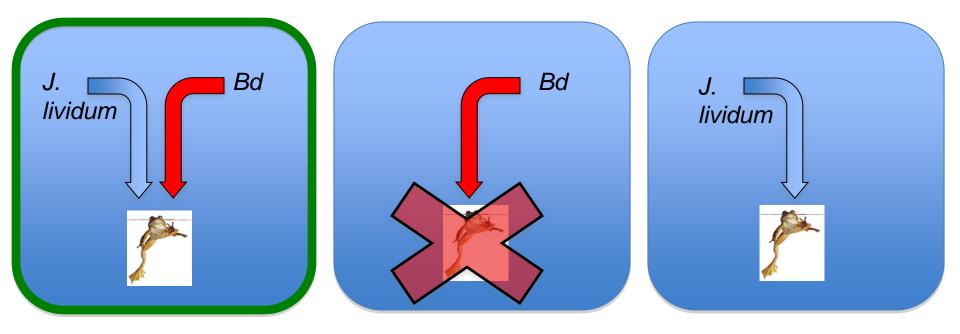
In the Lab, we measured:

- 1. Survival
- 2. Weight gain or loss
- 3. Bd load (infection intensity)



Harris et al. 2009. The ISME Journal 3:818-824

Bioaugmentation works in the Lab!



Can we protect susceptible frogs in the wild?

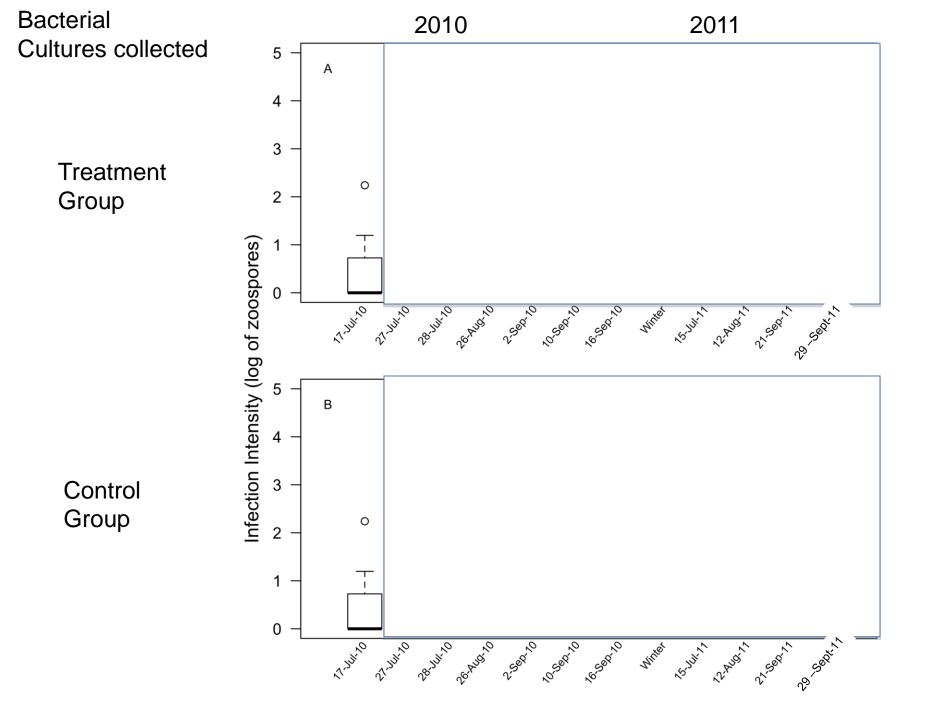
Harris et al. 2009. The ISME Journal 3:818-824

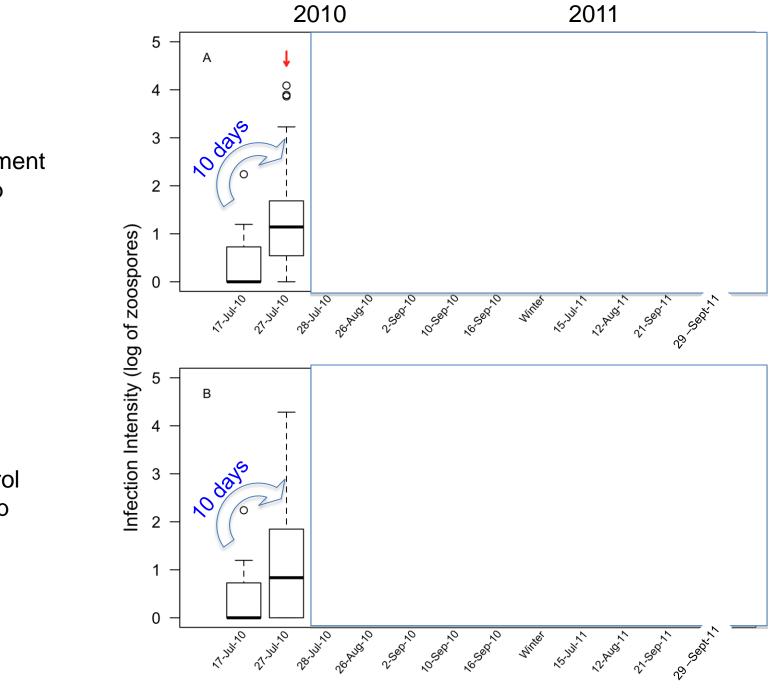
Bioaugmentation of skin microbiome may save amphibians in the wild



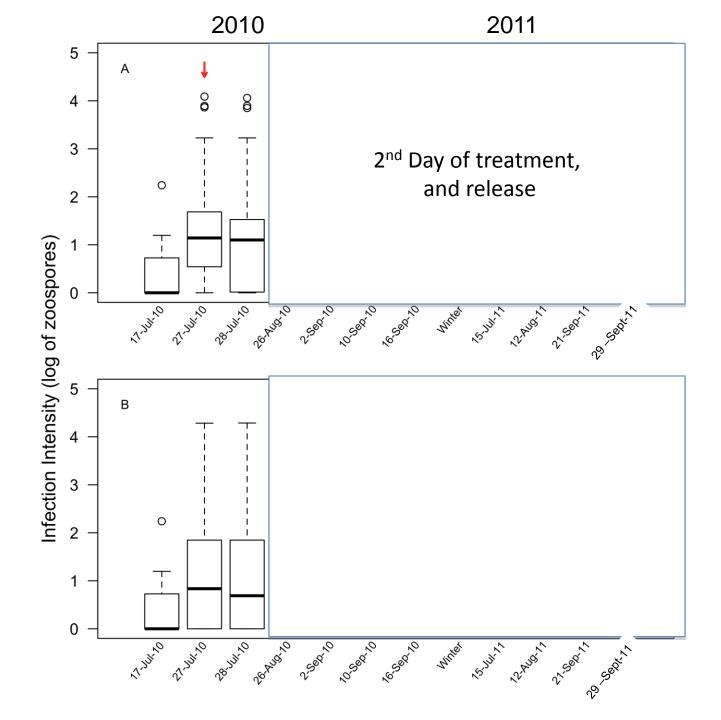




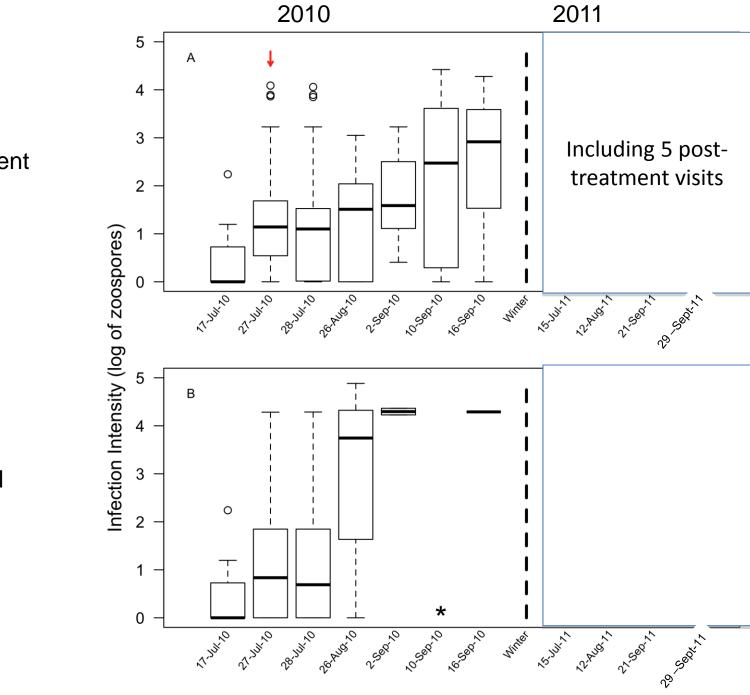




Treatment Group



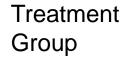
Treatment Group



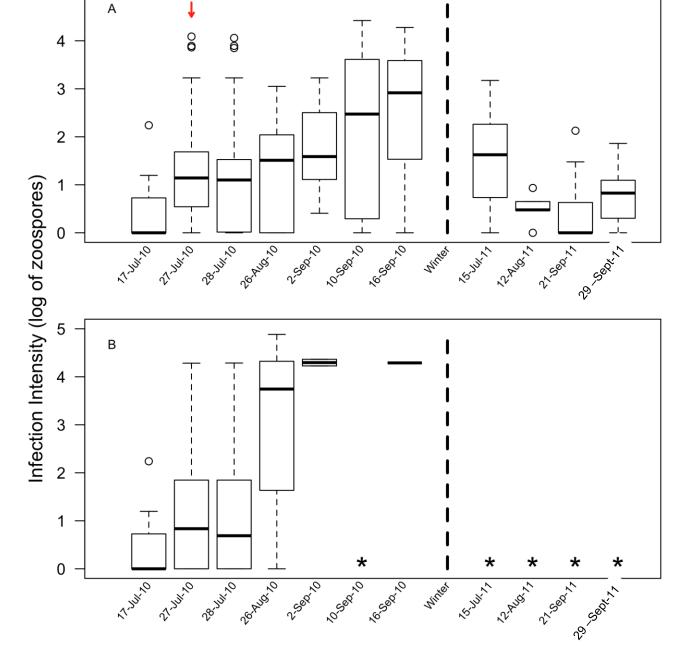
Treatment Group



2011



5



Dusy Basin July 16, 2010

GAN

(re)

Dusy Basin July 14, 2011

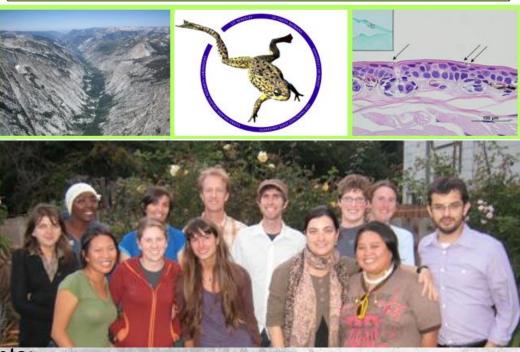
Dusy Basin July 17, 2012



Vredenburg Lab

Amphibian Biodiversity and Conservation



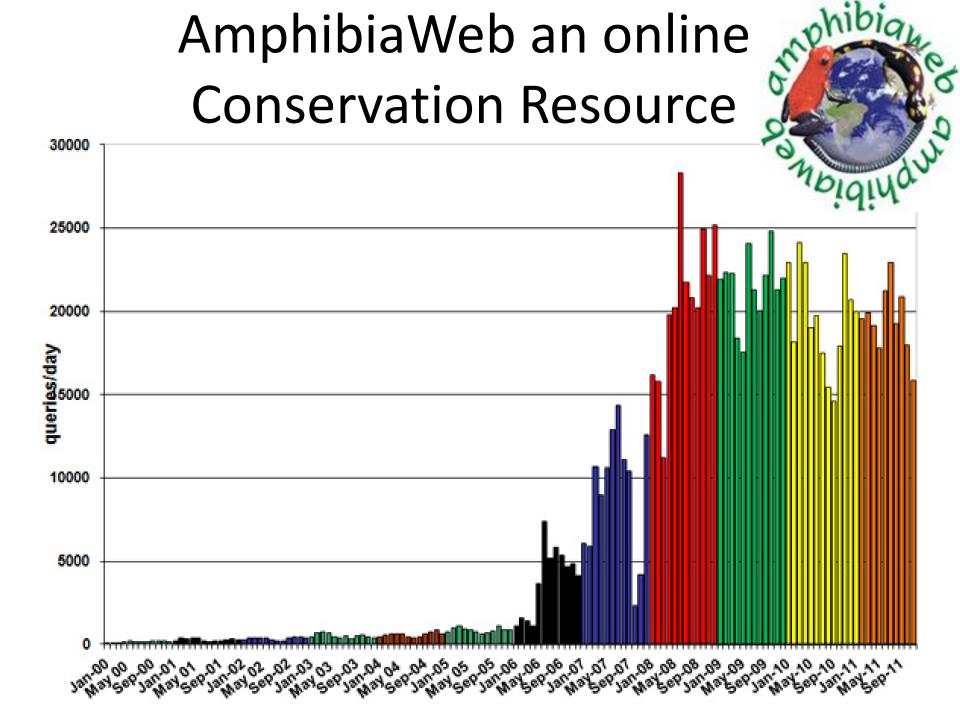


Graduate students:

Celeste Dodge, Silas Ellison, Gabriela Rios-Sotello, Cory Singer, Raul Figueroa, Sam McNally, Danqing Shao, Stephanie Hyland,, Andrea Manzano, Jacobo Conde, Jonathan Young (rencetly finished: Tina Cheng, Natalie Reeder, Meghan Bishop) <u>Undergraduates:</u>

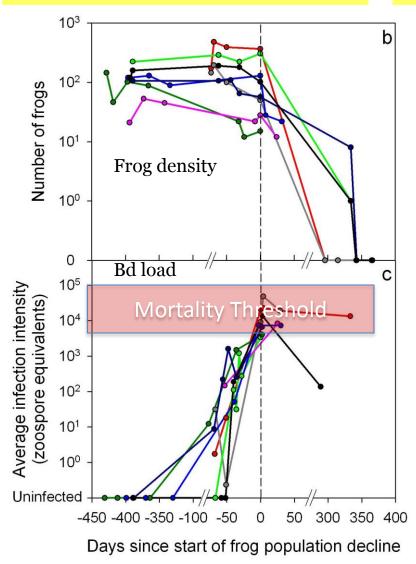
Mark Russell, Nina Hang, Alex Harencar, Amanda Carbajal, Bo Heinz, Corinna Inmann, Hahn Pham, Hannah Durbin, Ivet Lolham, Jason Anders, Jina Kim, Jourdan McPhetridge, Karl Alicando, Kirsten Liaz, Laurece Henson, Mackenzie Beaschler, Robert Tom





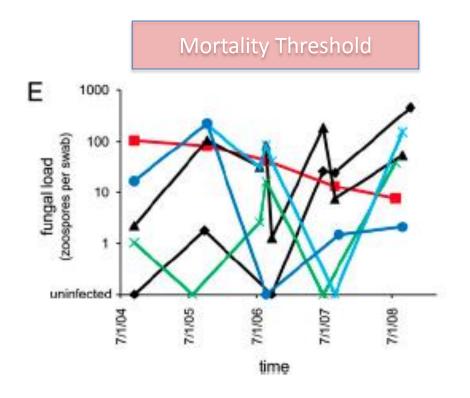
At "die-off" sites:

Bd load increases rapidly to high levels



At "persistent" sites:

Bd load is low and does not reach critical threshold





ADDRESSING FUNGAL DISEASES

"Fatal frog fungal disease figured out." Nature News October 27, 2009

"Bats and frogs share a common plight: New disease paradigms for wildlife." Live Science January 18 2011

"Secrets of a frog killer laid bare." BBC October 22, 2009

"Could Bacteria Save Frogs From Extinction?" Scientific American July 10, 2010

"Stopping a frog killer.... a tool for saving species in the wild BBC, June 6 2008

"Amphibians afloat and fighting" BBC October 13, 2008

"Biologists solve a great mystery of modern ecology." USA Today October 22, 2009

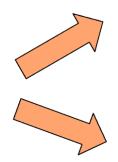
Telmatobius *frogs*

Telmatobius lady







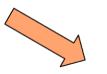


5 control: 7-day itraconazol

15-20 infected: no itraconazol

Experimentally infected frogs

Night surveys

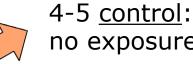


8-25 frogs/species





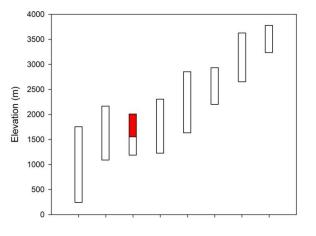
all frogs: 7-day itraconazol



no exposure

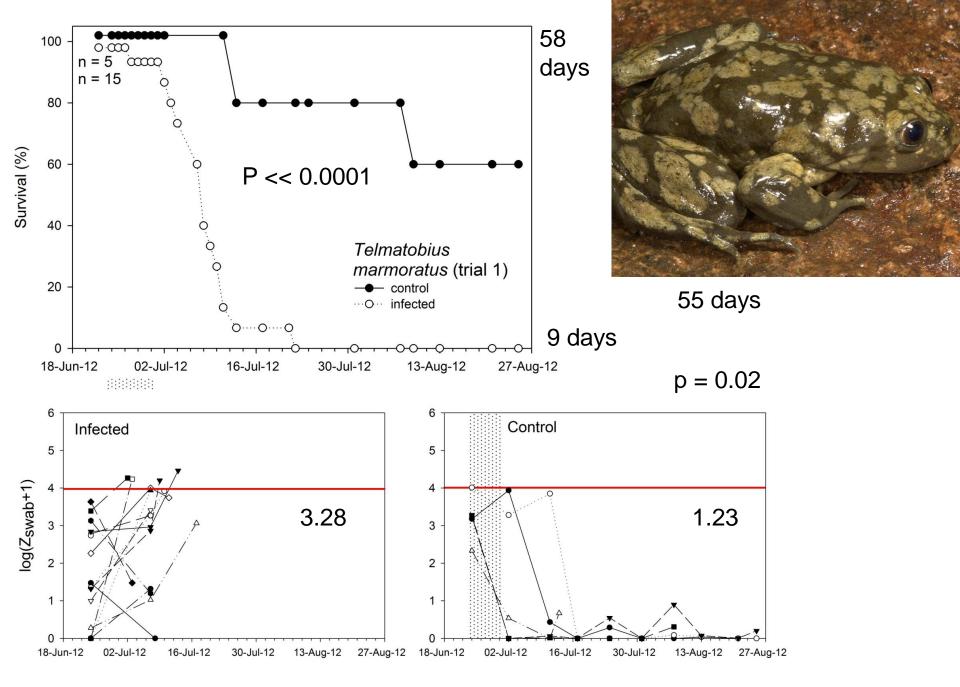


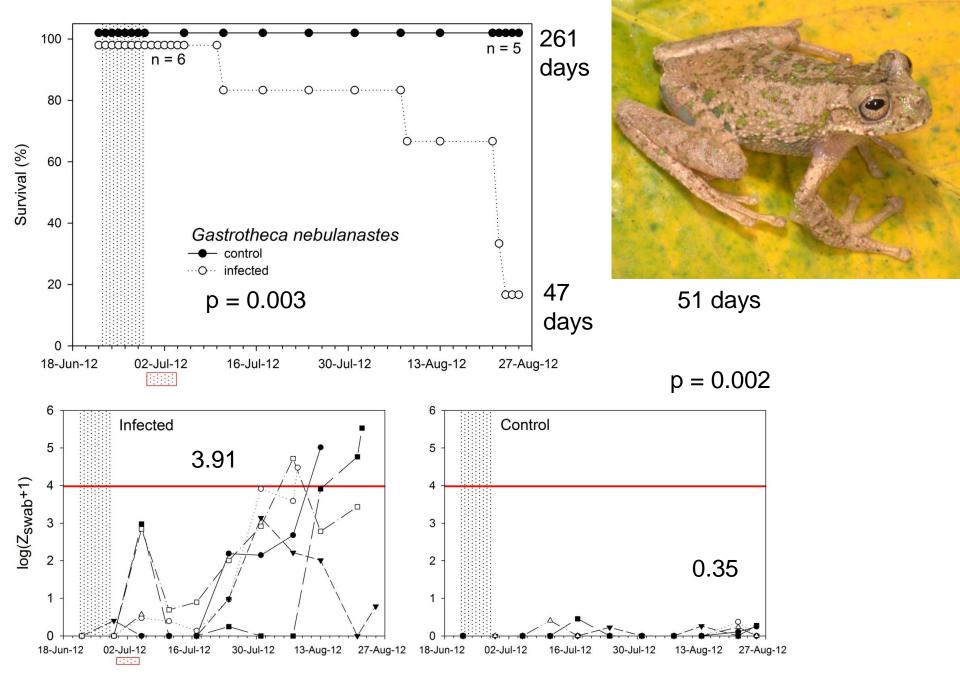
4-20 infected: Telmatobius exposure

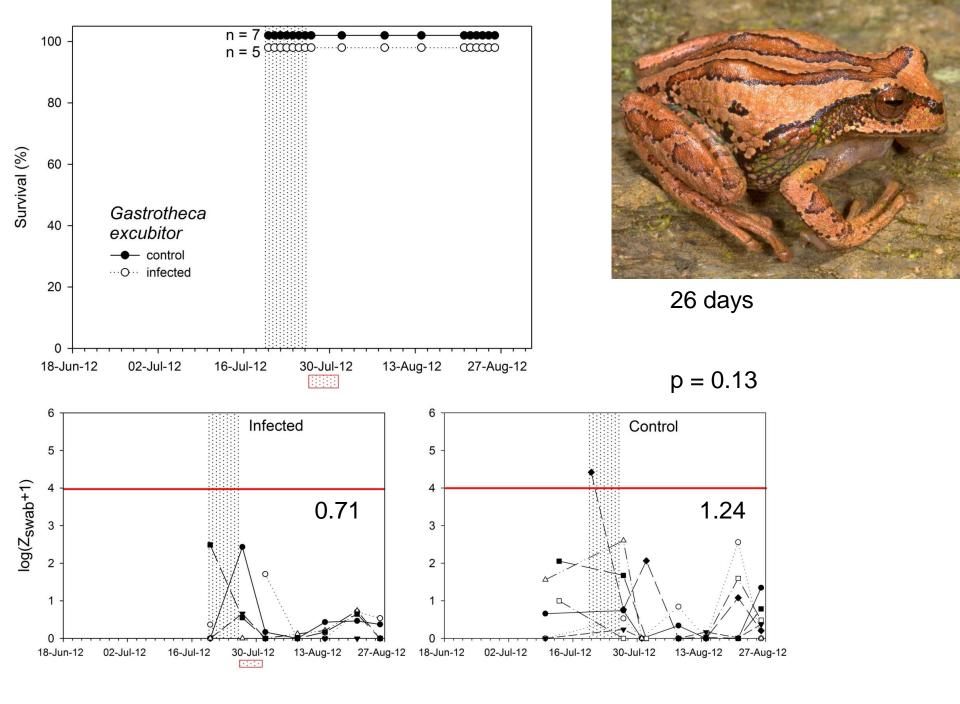


Peru Bd susceptibility trials: experimentally infected frogs

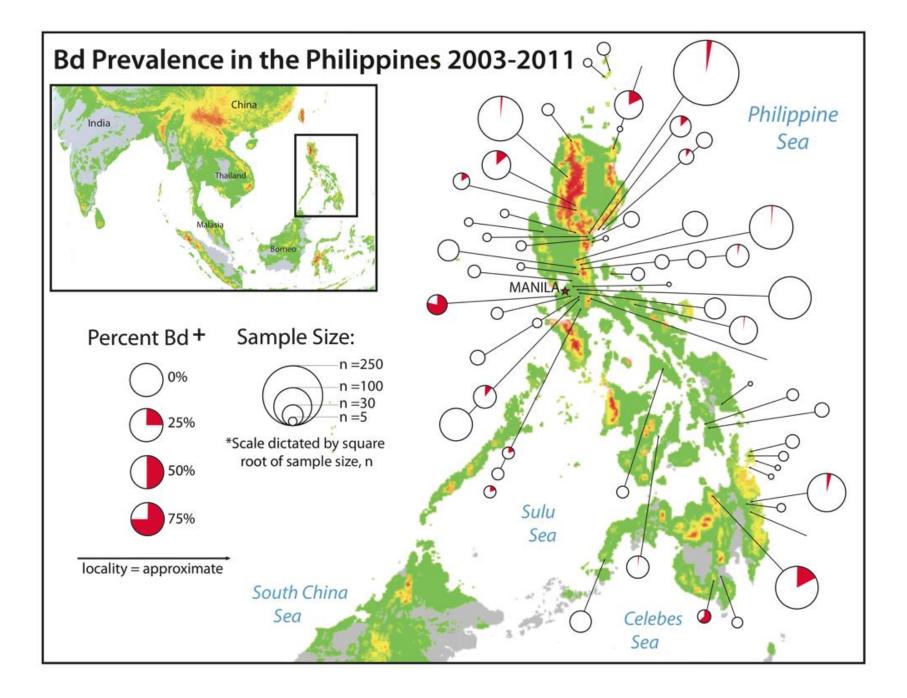




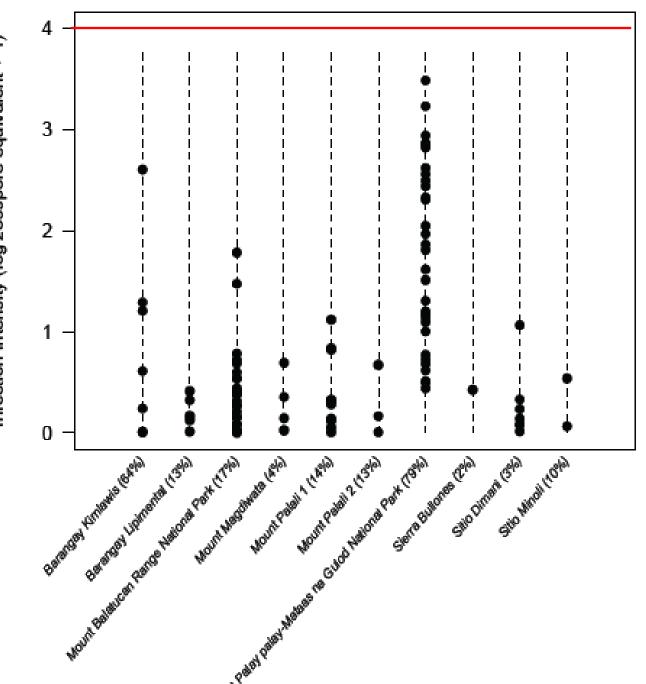




Frogs along the elevational aradiant Elevation (m) 10 13 16 19 22 25 28 31 34 37 40 43 46 49 52 55 58 61 64 67 70 73 76 79 82 85 Species ranked by elevation



Bd Infection Intensity by Site

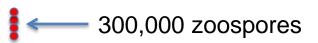


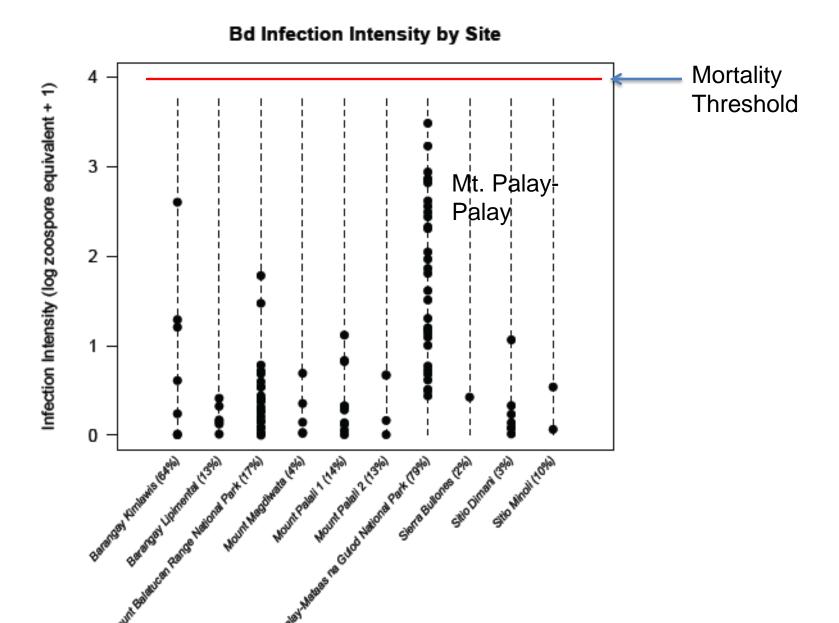
1 Infection Intensity (log zoospore equivalent + 2011

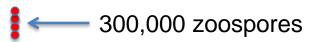
Bd Infection Intensity by Species

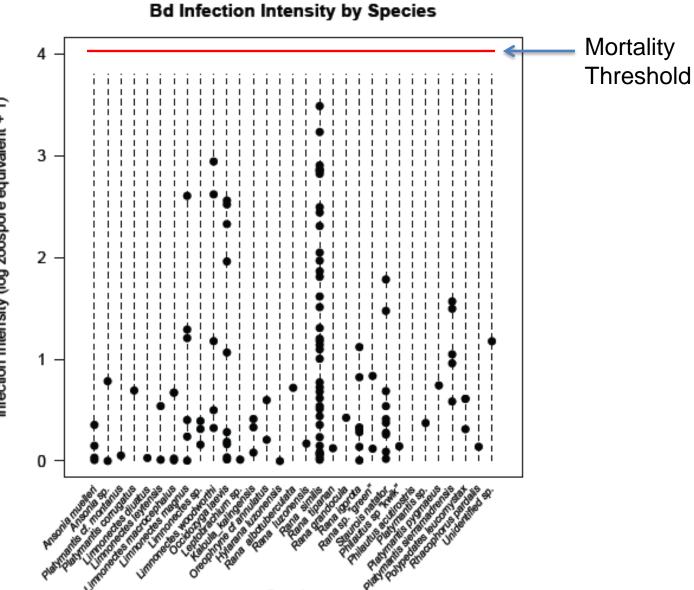
Infection Intensity (log zoospore equivalent + 1)

2011

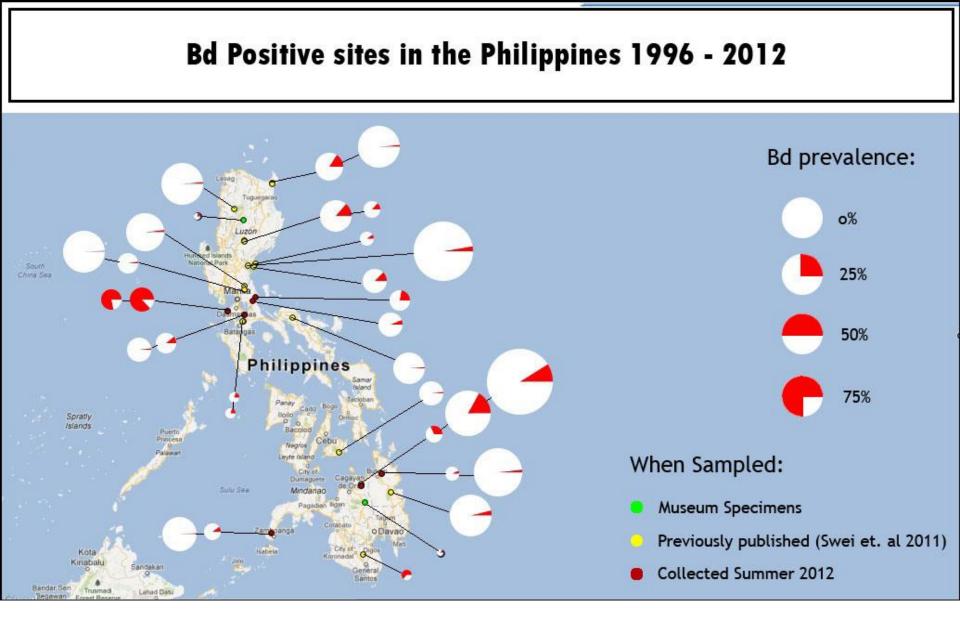








Infection Intensity (log zoospore equivalent + 1)



First Bd outbreak in Asia: Mt Palay-Palay

Bd Susceptibility Lab Trials SF State University

Animals purchased from pet trade (Petco, San Francisco, CA)

All tested Bd+ on arrival at SFSU

Raul Figueroa (SFSU master's)

100

80

60

40

20

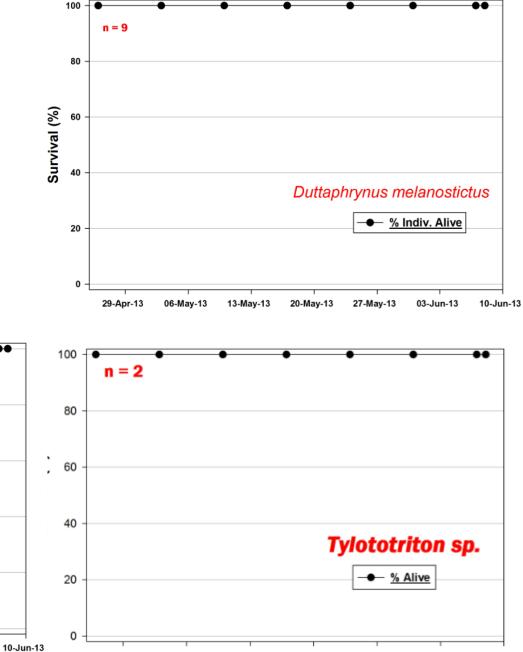
0

29-Apr-13

06-May-13

Survival (%)

n = 10



un-13 29-Apr-13 06-May-13 13-May-13 20-May-13 27-May-13 03-Jun-13 10-Jun-13



20-May-13

13-May-13

Bombina orientalis

– % Alive

03-Jun-13

27-May-13

Bd Susceptibility Lab Trials SF State University

Animals purchased from pet trade (Petco, San Francisco, CA)

All tested Bd+ on arrival at SFSU

Raul Figueroa (SFSU master's)

100

