



Species Survival Network

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Agalychnis callidryas
Red-eyed Tree Frog



Agalychnis moreletii
Black-eyed Tree Frog



Agalychnis annae
Golden-eyed Tree Frog



Agalychnis saltator
Misfit Leaf Frog



Agalychnis spurrelli
Gliding Tree Frog

Tree Frogs *Agalychnis* spp.

CoP15 Prop. 13 (Mexico and Honduras) Inclusion of the genus *Agalychnis* in Appendix II in accordance with Article II, Paragraph 2a, of the Convention, and Resolution 9.24 (Rev. CoP14) Annex 2a, Paragraph B, for *Agalychnis callidryas* and *Agalychnis moreletii*, and in accordance with Article II, Paragraph 2b, of the Convention, and Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP 14), Annex 2b, Paragraph A, for *Agalychnis annae*, *Agalychnis saltator* and *Agalychnis spurrelli*

SSN VIEW: SUPPORT Adoption of Proposal

AGALYCHNIS TREE FROGS ARE THREATENED JEWELS OF THE NEOTROPICAL FOREST.

Agalychnis callidryas, the red-eyed tree frog, is among the most familiar of all amphibians as its image is often used in various forms of advertising and promotion. Demand for these frogs, and similar-looking frogs of the genus *Agalychnis*, in the international pet trade is high. The genus *Agalychnis* consists of five species, all included in this proposal, with a distribution that includes ten range States from Mexico in the north to Ecuador and Colombia to the south. *Agalychnis* tree frogs live in the canopies of moist lowland to montane moist forests in Central and South America. They are threatened by habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, climate change, pollution and disease. This situation is aggravated by substantial offtake of *A. callidryas*, *A. moreletii* and, to a lesser extent, of *A. annae* for the international pet trade. The fungal disease chytridiomycosis has significantly reduced *Agalychnis* populations. It is probably the main cause of the disappearance of the Mexican population of *A. moreletii*, a species now seriously at risk of extinction and classified by IUCN (2009) as Critically Endangered. IUCN classifies *A. annae* as Endangered, and the remaining species are classified as Least Concern. *A. callidryas* is decreasing over much of its range (Solis *et al.* 2004; IUCN Global Amphibian Assessment 2006). *A. moreletii* has suffered a drastic population decline, estimated to be more than 80% over the last ten years, and populations continue to decrease (Santos-Barrera *et al.* 2004). *A. annae* has also suffered dramatic population declines, estimated to be more than 50% over the last ten years (Pounds *et al.* 2004; Hoffmann 2005). Populations of *A. saltator* are apparently stable and those of *A. spurrelli* are declining (Jungfer *et al.* 2004).

Species	Common Name	IUCN Category (2009)	Range States
<i>A. annae</i>	Golden-eyed Tree Frog	Endangered	Costa Rica
<i>A. callidryas</i>	Red-eyed Tree Frog	Least Concern	Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama
<i>A. moreletii</i>	Black-eyed Tree Frog	Critically Endangered	Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico
<i>A. saltator</i>	Misfit Tree Frog	Least Concern	Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua
<i>A. spurrelli</i>	Gliding Tree Frog	Least Concern	Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Panama

AGALYCHNIS TREE FROGS ARE IN HIGH DEMAND IN THE INTERNATIONAL PET TRADE.

These colorful frogs are very popular in the pet trade. The only trade figures available are import / export data collected by the U.S. According to these data, within the past decade the U.S. alone has imported 221,960 *Agalychnis*

frogs. Although *A. callidryas* was, by far, the most abundantly imported species, the U.S. also imported 183 Critically Endangered *A. moreletii* during the last decade. Furthermore, during the past decade, the U.S. imported almost 10,000 specimens of “*Agalychnis* sp.” that were not identified to species level. The main countries exporting *Agalychnis* frogs to the U.S. are Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala and Honduras. The other three species are also found in trade. Although no import data are available, internet surveys illustrate that *Agalychnis* frogs are also in demand in the pet trade in Europe and Asia.

THERE IS ILLEGAL TRADE IN AGALYCHNIS TREE FROGS.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service import records show that in the last decade, more than 13,000 *Agalychnis* specimens - mostly *A. callidryas* but also *A. moreletii* - have been illegally exported from Guatemala to the U.S., although these species are protected in Guatemala. By listing the species on CITES Appendix II, the U.S. would no longer accept imports from that country without a CITES permit issued by the Management Authority of Guatemala. Listing the species on CITES Appendix II would support domestic conservation measures of range States, because importing countries would no longer be able to accept imports without a CITES permit issued by the Management Authority of the exporting country. Furthermore, domestic law in the EU, one of the major importers of *Agalychnis* tree frogs, requires the issuance of import permits for Appendix II species, providing a further check on illegal trade.

AGALYCHNIS FROGS IN TRADE ARE FROM THE WILD.

According to the U.S. import / export data, most specimens in trade have been caught in the wild, “ranching” or “farmed”. Ranching and farming operations for *Agalychnis*, however, rely on wild populations. Captive breeding for commercial trade, in a manner that meets CITES requirements, is not known to occur on a large scale.

AGALYCHNIS CALLIDRYAS AND A. MORELETII QUALIFY FOR APPENDIX II BECAUSE THEY ARE TRADED INTERNATIONALLY AND POPULATIONS ARE DECLINING.

A. callidryas and *A. moreletii* qualify for listing on CITES Appendix II under Criterion B in Annex 2a of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14) because “...regulation of trade in the species is required to ensure that the harvest of specimens from the wild is not reducing the wild population to a level at which its survival might be threatened by continued harvesting or other influences.” Indeed, *A. moreletii* meets the criteria for listing on CITES Appendix I.

AGALYCHNIS ANNAE, A. SALTATOR AND A. SPURRELLI QUALIFY FOR APPENDIX II BECAUSE THEY ARE SIMILAR IN APPEARANCE TO A. CALLIDRYAS AND A. MORELETII.

A. annae, *A. saltator*, and *A. spurrelli* are only occasionally sold in the international market, but qualify for listing on Appendix II under Article II.2(b) of the Convention and Criterion A in Annex 2b of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP14) because “The specimens of the species in the form in which they are traded resemble specimens of a species included in Appendix II...such that enforcement officers who encounter specimens of CITES-listed species, are unlikely to be able to distinguish between them.” The five *Agalychnis* species in this proposal are similarly colored and patterned. Herpetologists who have worked on Mesoamerican amphibians for a decade or more (Prof. Dr. Patricia Burrowes, University of Puerto Rico; Dr. Karen Lips, University of Maryland; Dr. Joseph Mendelson, Utah State University; Dr. Robertson, University of Idaho, all in litt. Feb 2010) have attested to the fact that there is dramatic geographic and developmental variation within and among the species in this genus (e.g. in iris, flank and dorsum color) and that non-experts are likely to have difficulty identifying them to the species level.

SIX OF TEN RANGE STATES HAVE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL.

This proposal by Mexico and Honduras is supported by at least four other range States: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. The remaining four range States have yet to make their views on the proposal known. The proposal is also supported by experts such as Dr. Twan Leenders (letter attached to the proposal) and Dr. Kevin Zippel from the Amphibian Ark (*pers. comm.* to A. Goyenechea, Defenders of Wildlife).

The five species in the genus *Agalychnis* qualify for listing on CITES Appendix II. Listing the entire genus *Agalychnis* in Appendix II listing will improve control of trade through enhanced cooperation between range States and importing Parties. SSN strongly urges Parties to support this proposal.

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