

BEST PRACTICES



The Oregon Spotted Frog (*Rana pretiosa*)

Thurston County's Most "Precious" Frog

The Oregon spotted frog, *Rana pretiosa* (precious), inhabits only a few large marshes in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. In Washington State, the frog occurs in only six sub-watersheds, including Thurston County's Black River and a few tributaries of Black Lake.

The frogs occupy wetlands that are characterized by a combination of habitats that support each life stage:

- Adult Oregon spotted frogs overwinter in deep wetlands. By February, they seek nearby shallow (3-4 inches) water to lay eggs (oviposition), which are sometimes laid in large communal clusters.
- Approximately 3 weeks later, larvae hatch and pool on surface of the egg jelly.
- Tadpoles feed on algae, diatoms, bacteria and small aquatic insects. Like other frogs, tadpoles develop lungs and legs and move to deeper water within about 4 months.
- Adult frogs feed and seek shelter in permanent water until the next spring.

The Oregon spotted frog is in decline due to loss of habitat. The species has been listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Factors contributing to its decline stem partially from its unique habitat requirements. This frog is highly aquatic, but lays its eggs in the shallowest portions of the wetlands. The slightest water level declines after egg deposition can leave egg masses high and dry, desiccating the egg masses.

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Source: Stream Team News, Spring 2017