

Loneliest frog seeks mate for survival of species

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COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA: With Valentine's Day approaching, please spare a thought for Romeo the lonesome Bolivian frog. Ten years a bachelor, the childless amphibian has had to enlist human help to mount a last-ditch search for a Juliet which, if it fails, could mean the end of his species.

Romeo, you see, is the last known frog of his kind. And he has been fruitlessly calling for

a mate from his tank at the Cochabamba Natural History Museum for years. "We don't want him to lose hope," said Arturo Munoz, a conservation scientist associated with the Global Wildlife Conservation, which has hooked up with dating website Match to raise money for Romeo's last shot at romance.

The funds will be used to scour Bolivian streams and rivers for signs of a female Sehuencas water frog, even in tadpole form.

"We continue to remain hopeful that others are out there so we can establish a conservation breeding programme to save this species," said Munoz.

If Romeo croaks, he could follow the route of "Lonesome George", a childless Galapagos tortoise who died in 2012, taking his entire subspecies with him. Sehuencas water frogs live for about 15 years. To raise \$15,000 by Valentine's Day, the team has created a Match profile for Romeo.



• Romeo, the Sehuencas water frog, at the Cochabamba Natural History Museum. AFP