

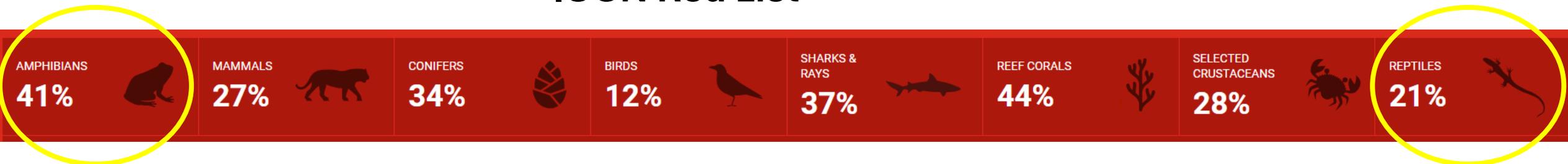
H.230 - Testimony

Allan Strong, PhD
Chair, VT Endangered Species Committee
2 April 2025

§ 4085. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

- **In Vermont:**
- 11 Species of snakes (three species listed in Vermont)
- 7 Species of turtles (two species listed in Vermont)
- 1 Species of lizard (one species listed in Vermont)
- 11 Species of frogs and toads (two listed species in Vermont)
- 10 Species of salamanders

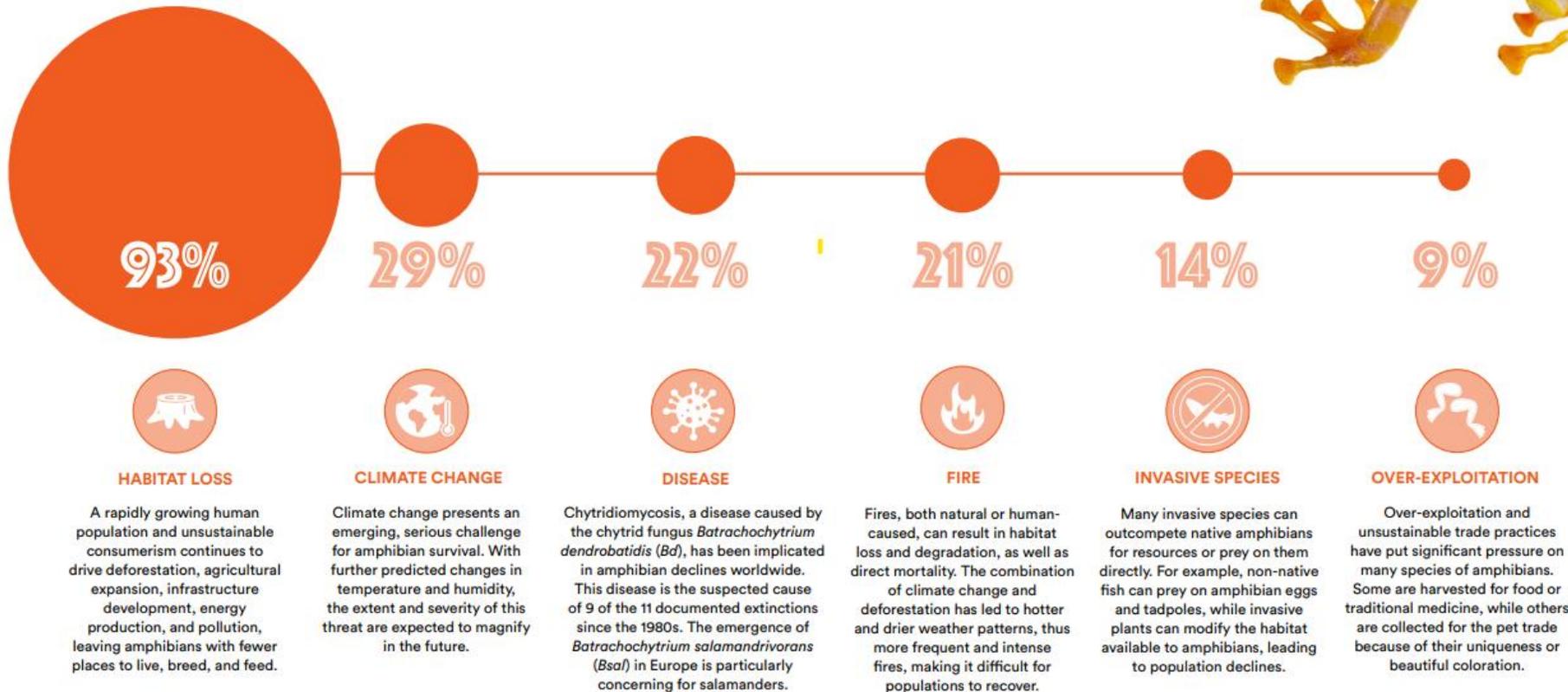
IUCN Red List



Threats Driving Amphibian Declines

The IUCN Red List provides a clear and compelling picture of the many ways in which human activities are driving amphibians towards extinction. Every major threat, from the conversion of habitats to climate change to disease, affects amphibians. In many cases species are impacted by multiple and potentially compounding threats, thereby exacerbating their vulnerability.

2873 TOTAL THREATENED SPECIES



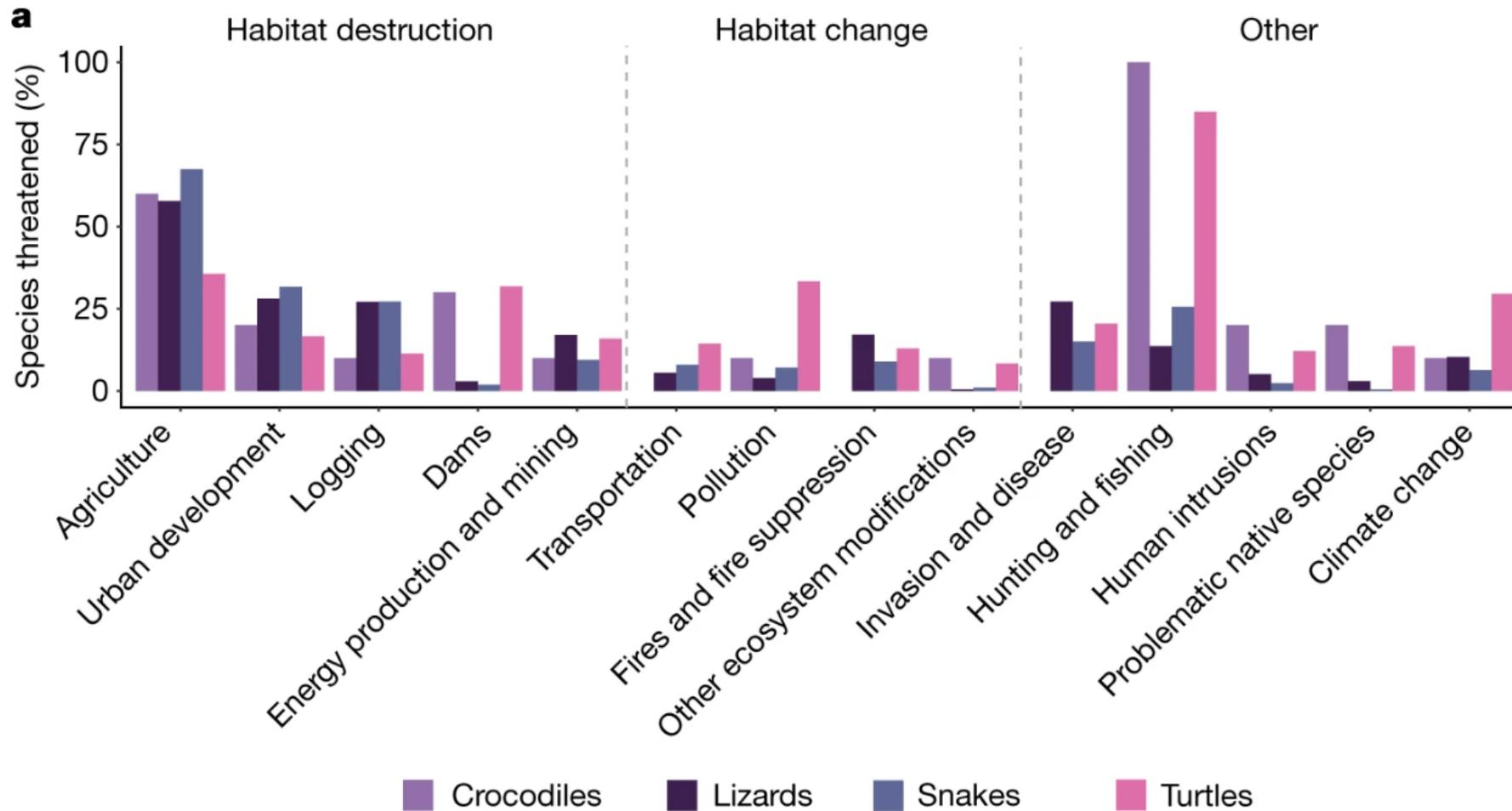
The Ornate Rainfrog *Pristimantis ornatissimus* is Endangered because of a population decline, suspected to be at a rate of more than 50%, due to habitat loss driven by industrial agriculture and commercial logging on the Pacific slopes of the Ecuadorian Andes.

© Jaime Cuadros



Fig. 3: Threats to reptiles and other tetrapods.

From: [A global reptile assessment highlights shared conservation needs of tetrapods](#)



Cox, N., Young, B.E., Bowles, P. et al. A global reptile assessment highlights shared conservation needs of tetrapods. *Nature* 605, 285–290 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-022-04664-7>

§ 4085. REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

- (1) Prohibit the possession and importation of species that pose threats
 - Currently, the Red-eared Slider is posed to be an issue in VT
 - Competition, disease transmission, hybridization
 - (2) Grandfather clause for current pet owners
- (3) Prohibit taking, currently a loophole in legal framework for wildlife protection
 - Given the threats to these species, overharvest is likely an additive mortality factor
 - (8) Restrictions would protect sensitive life history stages
- (4) Establish seasons and possession limits for common species
 - Bullfrog seasons and bag limits established in many states
 - Non-native species

§ 4709. TRANSPORT, IMPORTATION, POSSESSION, AND STOCKING OF WILD ANIMALS; POSSESSION OF WILD BOAR OR FERAL SWINE

- (a) Would provide further protections for reptiles and amphibians, especially around disease transmission
- (e) and (f) provide additional protection with respect to commercial and personal uses

Sec. 8. 10 V.S.A. § 5403(a)

- (5) Import and export of endangered species
 - Another loophole in our current protections of fauna and flora
 - Not only protection for reptiles and amphibians, but also for plants

§ 5410. LOCATION CONFIDENTIAL

- Masking the location in permit applications that involve sensitive species can reduce the potential for unauthorized takes
 - Relatively easy to scour public notifications for permit applications
 - Pet trade, plant collectors, medicinal uses

Summary

- The changes to our current laws are supported by the Endangered Species Committee
 - Closes loopholes in current wildlife laws and regulations
 - Provides significant protection for at-risk reptiles and amphibians
 - Allows discussion of permitting process to proceed without fear of additional harm to populations