

Breakthrough in the Killer Frog Fungus

Researchers announce they may have a cure for the deadly frog fungus.

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New Zealand scientists have announced what appears to be a cure for the disease that is responsible for killing many of the world's frog populations.

Chloramphenicol, an eye ointment for humans, may be save the amphibians, the researchers said.

The researchers found frogs bathed in the solution became resistant to the killer disease, chytridiomycosis.

The fungal disease has been blamed for the extinction of one-third of the 120 species lost since 1980.

Fearful that chytridiomycosis might wipe out New Zealand's critically endangered Archey's frog (*Leiopelma archeyi*), the researchers have been hunting for a compound that would kill off the disease's trigger, the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*.

They tested the chloramphenicol candidate on two species introduced to New Zealand from Australia: the brown tree frog (*Litoria ewingii*) and the southern bell frog (*L. raniformis*).

"We found that we could cure them completely of chytrids," Phil Bishop from the University of Otago told BBC News. "And even when they were really sick in the control group, we managed to bring them back almost from the dead."

The Zoological Society of London expressed caution at the news. Wildlife epidemiologist Dr. Trent Garner told BBC News that there would be reluctance to use chloramphenicol, especially in Europe and North America, because of the chemical's link to harmful side-effects in humans.

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