

# Warts and All

## Communicating the conservation needs of amphibians in a competitively marketed world.

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### Introduction:

Globally, the **decline of biodiversity** has been staggering, with extinction rates estimated at up to 1000 times the background rate<sup>[1,2]</sup>. **Amphibians** are regarded as one of the most **vulnerable** animal-groups on the planet<sup>[3]</sup>, despite being **underrepresented** in scientific reporting<sup>[4]</sup>, receiving **less funding**<sup>[5]</sup> and being **bypassed** in political and media spheres<sup>[6]</sup>.



Raising the profile of amphibians globally is **essential**, but there is also consensus that animals that **do not** fit a **conventional charismatic model** are more likely to be **overlooked** in the public domain, or even actively **vilified** in public media<sup>[7,8,9]</sup>. Thus, it is necessary to **understand** how topics that are more difficult to **communicate** in nature can be presented in **engaging** ways to an audience. This research has been used to aid the **Mountain Chicken frog**.

**Aim:** To obtain a better understanding of how difficult, uninteresting or overlooked science subjects can be better communicated to an audience in order to inspire empathy and interest.

### Method:

Mini-Interviews at Bristol Festival of Nature

- 3 question interviews using toys
- Members of the public - Bristol Festival of Nature

Semi-Structured Interviews

- 13 question interviews
- Researchers and communicators in areas of science considered 'hard-to-sell'
- Purposive, targeted sampling, then snowball sampling



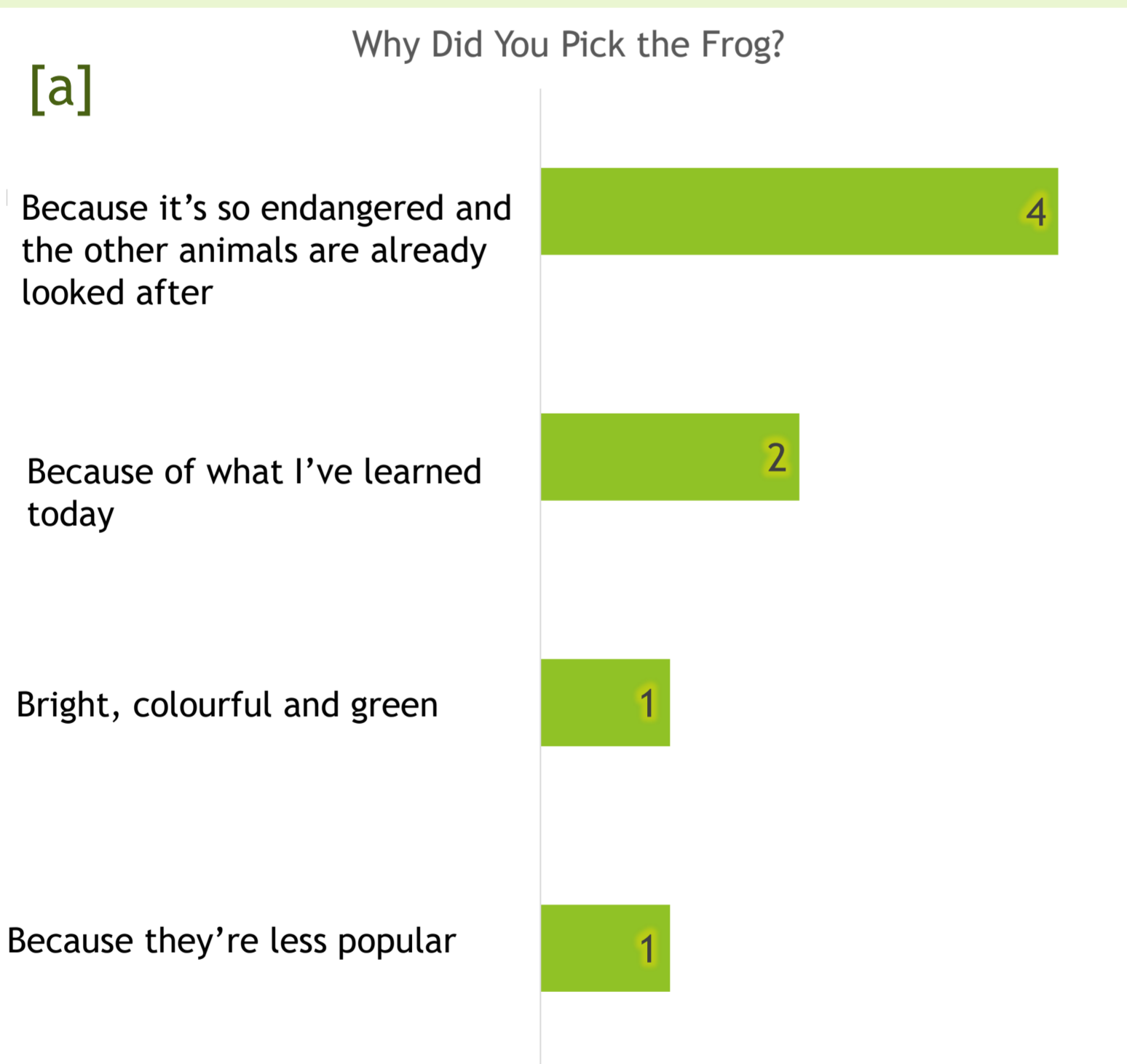
### Results:

Mini-Interviews: Bristol Festival of Nature

- 54 mini-interviews conducted
- Charismatic species **more** popular
- Seven people chose the frog, giving 8 reasons for their decision<sup>[a]</sup>
- "What would make you donate to frog conservation?"<sup>[b]</sup>

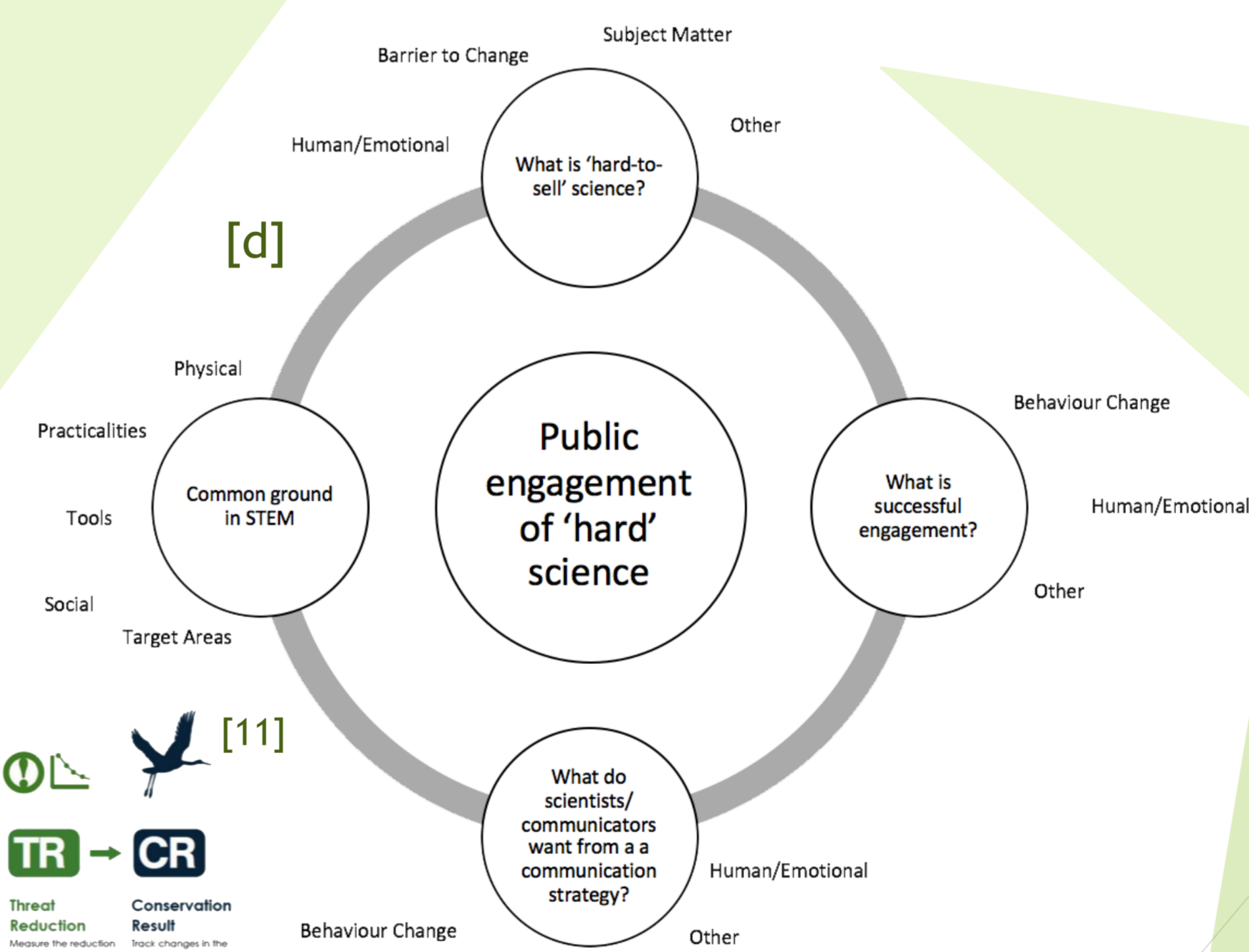


[b] Info about specific species  
More awareness/education  
Make them relevant  
Specific issues  
Festival stalls  
Don't know



Semi-structured Interviews:

- 15 interviews completed
- 69 codes emerged from the dataset
- 22 code groupings/themes could be distinguished
- Human/Emotional and Behaviour Change were most predominant across the interviews<sup>[c, d]</sup>



### Conclusions:

- Human/Emotional and Behaviour Change themes strong throughout.
- Important to be clear on your aims and use existing techniques to build engagement strategies.
- Know your audience and what you want to achieve.
- Work closely with marketing to streamline science into easy-to-engage material.
- Limitations
  - \* Broad questions, lots of material covered
  - \* Hard to distinguish what people considered as engagement
  - \* Frog toy not realistic, and festival audience already engaged
  - \* Would have liked more time to explore and interpret data

### Recommendations:

- Clear, actionable message.
- Empower people through actions.
- Put shared information in context.
- Be memorable and relatable.
- Convey certainty in the science and its recommendations<sup>[10, 11]</sup>.



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