

Amphibian Alarm EAZA Year of the Frog Campaign 2007-2008



EAZA Conservation Campaigns

Over the last ten years Europe's leading zoos and aquariums have worked together in addressing a variety of issues affecting a range of species and habitats. EAZA's annual conservation campaigns have raised funds and promoted awareness amongst millions of zoo visitors each year, as well as providing the impetus for key regulatory change.

INTRODUCTION

After thriving for over 360 million years, one third to one half of all amphibian species could disappear in the immediate future. Recognising this, various parties from the global conservation community, including specialists from the relevant IUCN groups and experts from within EAZA and other zoo associations, initiated joint actions designed to halt and hopefully even reverse the global loss of amphibians. A 2005 conference gave rise to the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP), aiming to preserve the world's remaining frog, toad, salamander, newt and caecilian populations.

To address the *ex situ* components of the ACAP, the Amphibian Ark (AArk) was developed. Its three principal partners are the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), and the IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG).

As EAZA was closely involved with the development of the AArk it was natural that its seventh conservation campaign would pick up the same themes, under the title Amphibian Alarm. Some of the funds raised by the campaign went directly to the AArk, with the remainder used to establish an EAZA Amphibian Conservation Fund that would distribute grants to new projects as they are developed.



CAMPAIGN AIMS

Up to 122 amphibian species may have become extinct since 1980 and population numbers are decreasing for at least 43% of species (for more information visit the AArk website). Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation are major causes of declining populations, but the rapid dispersal of disease caused by the chytrid fungus is most disturbing threat.

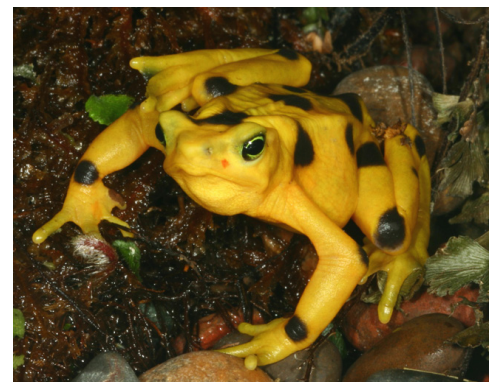
Amphibian Alarm, EAZA's Year of the Frog campaign, had the following aims:

- To generate public awareness and understanding of the amphibian extinction crisis;
- To raise funds for implementing the *ex situ* aspects of the ACAP;
- To encourage further EAZA member participation in amphibian *ex situ* conservation;
- To raise awareness and funds to support and supplement the activities of the Amphibian Ark; and
- To further position the IUCN and the zoo community as leaders in global conservation.

CAMPAIGN ACHIEVEMENTS

At the closing session of the campaign, a fantastic preliminary fundraising result of €410,803 was presented. 40% of these funds were granted to the global Amphibian Ark (AArk) to help it maintain its central coordinating role in amphibian *ex situ* conservation.

The Year of the Frog Campaign was different to other EAZA campaigns as few *in situ* conservation projects for amphibians existed and European activities were mostly focused on *ex situ* breeding programmes. It was thus decided not to raise funds for specific *in situ* projects but rather for an EAZA Amphibian Conservation Fund (ACF), that would support future projects as they are developed. The remaining 60% of funds raised, along with funds that have come in since the campaign closed, are now available from the EAZA ACF for projects which combine both *in situ* and *ex situ* components.



The Panamanian golden frog faces extinction due to the chytrid fungus. (Photo: Gerry Marantelli)

The EAZA Amphibian Campaign was the first campaign launched with a clear link to European fauna. It was this link that inspired EAZA to register for the IUCN initiative: Countdown 2010. The initiative aimed to mobilise governments and members of civil society, at every level, to take the necessary actions to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010.

| PROJECTS SUPPORTED |

The projects that have received grants from the EAZA Amphibian Conservation Fund to date are:

Project	Institution	Funds Granted
Developing the AArk Taxon Management Plan for the yellow-spotted newt <i>Neurergus microspilotus</i>	Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp	€15,000 for the <i>ex situ</i> equipment of the project
Direct research project <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> in Vietnam	Cologne Zoo	€6,000 for amphibian field surveys and the production of brochures in Vietnam
Conservation breeding for reintroduction of the mountain chicken frog	Parken Zoo, Eskilstuna	€10,000 for the <i>ex situ</i> equipment of the project
Conservation status of wild populations and intensive reproduction in captivity of the threatened toad <i>Alytes dickhilleni</i>	ZooBotanico Jerez	€6,000 to recreate the microhabitats <i>in situ</i>
Protection and Conservation of Slovenian Endemic Cave Salamander, the Black Olm (<i>Proteus anguinus parkelj</i>) and unpigmented subspecies, <i>Proteus anguinus anguinus</i> , (Amphibia: Proteidae), from Bela Krajina.	Ljubljana Zoo	€10,000 for the new tented/wooden construction or part of the breeding tanks
Conservation of threatened amphibians in Valle del Cauca, Colombia: a cooperative project between Cali Zoological Foundation, Colombia and Zoo Zürich, Switzerland.	Zoo Zürich	€5,000 for <i>ex situ</i> equipment in Cali Zoo, Colombia

| WHERE ARE WE NOW? |

In close cooperation with the global Amphibian Ark, EAZA decided to focus on the conservation of European and Malagasy species. A species selection tool was produced resulting in a list of species for both Europe and Madagascar which are most urgently in need of attention.

The first EAZA Amphibian Conservation Husbandry Course was held in 2008 in order to improve EAZA member institutions' contribution to global amphibian conservation initiatives.

The global AArk is also active with implementing the Frog Match Maker. The Frog Match Maker is a conservation project list, which includes organisations and projects throughout the world that are currently seeking external support for their amphibian conservation projects. The aim is to foster partnerships between suitable funding and support organisations and amphibian conservation projects.

Last but not least, a survey was sent out to *ex situ* institutions in June 2010 by the global AArk to further the understanding of the amount and variety of amphibian research within the *ex situ* community, to gauge the resources available for amphibian research and to improve the collaboration with ACAP researchers.

| LINKS |

- www.eaza.net – the website of EAZA, the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria.
- www.amphibianark.org – the website of the Amphibian Ark, the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan and the Frog Match Maker can be found here.
- www.amphibians.org – the website of the IUCN's Amphibian Specialist Group.