

Meetings

ATAG Meeting in Oklahoma City

The Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden hosted the annual AZA Herp Taxon Advisory Groups' meetings 24-28 March 2008. The Amphibian TAG (ATAG) meeting included presentations about new captive rearing efforts, conservation initiatives, and exhibits, as well as health issues facing wild and *ex situ* amphibians. The ATAG steering committee reported on an upcoming Regional Collection Plan (RCP) that emphasizes the dedication of holding space to species of conservation concern.

Discover new ways to engage in amphibian conservation by contacting ATAG chair Diane Barber (dbarber@fortworthzoo.org), checking out the March issue of *Connect*, or reviewing the monthly amphibian conservation reports at www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog/AmphibianNews/.

2008 | YEAR OF THE
FROG

Visit www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog

Amphibian Conservation Teacher Workshop

On 1 March Woodland Park Zoo hosted a workshop to inform and inspire over 30 teachers, representing 12 school districts, and zoo docents. The day included frog calling and dress-up adaptation activities, presentations by high school students, lectures, tours of Zoo exhibits, and discussions about conservation project implementation. Take-home packets included a menu of opportunities for conservation action.

Frogs and Blogs

Seneca Park Zoo, the Houston Zoo, and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo have launched Web sites and FrogBlogs to educate Internet visitors about amphibians and raise awareness about conservation issues and efforts. Visit these sites at: <http://spzfrogblog.wordpress.com/>, <http://www.houstonzoo frogs.com/>, and <http://www.ForFrogs.org>.

Party for Amphibians - and the Planet

Find a Party for the Planet/Earth Day celebration, including those with amphibian themes, near you at www.aza.org/Promotions/Party. Contact Jackie Marks (jmarks@aza.org) to list your event.

ABM IN NOVEMBER

The *Amphibian Biology and Management* course will be offered for a second time in 2008 (November 8-14). Many thanks to AZA's Board of Regents, the Toledo Zoo, and the Course Instructors for their work and support. Online registration will begin in August (www.aza.org/prodev/).



Dr. Robert Browne, based at the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, has joined the Amphibian Ark (AArk) staff. Robert spends 50% of his time as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow for the Society and dedicates the other 50% to AArk, as the AArk Research Officer. Robert will turn his considerable research background to the pressing prioritization and research needs of threatened amphibians and can be contacted at: robert@amphibianark.org.

AArk will distribute a global 'shadow resources' survey to try and clarify the significant resources that zoos, aquariums, and botanical gardens are investing in amphibian conservation, through new facilities, additional species housed in the past year, or the creative ways they are raising awareness in the Year of the Frog. Look for the survey soon and please return this important information to help demonstrate the global impact of zoos and their collaborating institutions on amphibian conservation.

AArk continues to assist in the development of amphibian husbandry skills worldwide. AArk staff Richard Gibson and Kevin Johnson will participate in a South African husbandry and prioritization workshop in Johannesburg in late April.

Submitted by: Lesley Dickie, 2008 Year of the Frog Global Campaign Manager

Monthly Report Submission Information

Send Monthly Report submissions regarding amphibian conservation activities and opportunities to Shelly Grow (sgrow@aza.org, 301-562-0777 x263).

Meetings

Blanchard's Cricket Frog Conservation Meeting

Eric T. Hileman, Racine Zoo

On 14 March representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC), the Racine Zoo, Indiana University School of Medicine, University of Wisconsin Madison, and University of Wisconsin Milwaukee met for a regional meeting in Fitchburg, Wisconsin, to discuss potential conservation projects for the Wisconsin Blanchard's cricket frog (*Acris crepitans blanchardi*).

Blanchard's cricket frog was once extremely abundant in Wisconsin, ranging the entire southern half of the state. A major population collapse in the 1970s throughout much of its range prompted the WDNR to list the species as endangered in 1982.



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Until recently, it was believed to be restricted to the southwestern corner of the state. However, surveys conducted by the US Geological survey in 2000 through 2005 have revealed several small, isolated populations scattered elsewhere within the

historical range. It is unclear whether these populations are relictual or recent expansions. The group discussed gaps in current knowledge of Blanchard's cricket frog natural history and compiled a list of potential research projects and possible sources for funding. It was concluded that the following projects should take priority:

- 1) Expand the current range to unoccupied areas within historic range via incremental, contiguous steps or "stepping stones."
- 2) Establish a new population within the historic range disjunct from southwestern population to reduce chances of extirpation due to environmental and/or demographic stochasticity.
- 3) Conduct niche modeling to elucidate environmental factors that permit some populations to persist while others "wink out."
- 4) Develop long-term monitoring methods, and define and characterize movement patterns and over-wintering sites.
- 5) Develop a captive management/propagation program and maintain a viable captive population that could be used for future head-starting if necessary.

A CALL TO ACTION

PGF Becomes the Third Amphibian SSP!

Vicky A Poole (vpoole@aquarium.org)
National Aquarium in Baltimore
Panamanian Golden Frog Species Survival Plan®
Coordinator

The two managed species of golden frogs from Panama, *Atelopus zeteki* and *A. varius*, are the newest amphibian Species Survival Plan® (SSP) program. Panamanian Golden Frog (PGF) was elevated from a Population Management Plan (PMP) due to the breeding program's success and on-going research, public awareness efforts, and conservation projects in Panama.

The PGF captive effort currently includes 49 AZA institutions with over 1,200 specimens from three distinct populations. An additional 21 institutions are awaiting specimens from this year's offspring, so the program is expanding.

In addition to the *Husbandry Manual* and a PDF slideshow of *Panamanian Golden Frog Exhibits*, an updated *Species Action Plan for Panamanian Golden Frogs* will soon be available on the Members Only portion of the Conservation Programs Database. These resources provide information and guidance about husbandry, research, education, and fundraising needs for folks thinking of joining or supporting the SSP.

AZA will contact institutions holding golden frogs and ask them to assign an Institutional Representative (IR) to the SSP. An election for a Vice Coordinator will be held once I receive the list of IRs, so please identify an IR promptly.

The first goal of the SSP will be to complete a PGF Master Plan. Other priorities will be to continue fundraising for the Project Golden Frog/Atelopus Conservation Trust (PGF/ACT) grant program, facilitate Action Plan projects, and support the El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center (EVACC) in Panama, a facility built and maintained by the Houston Zoo, with support from over two-dozen AZA institutions. EVACC's golden frogs are genetically valuable to the captive population and the facility is a potential site for staging reintroductions prior to release and/or establishing in-country breeding pairs from which offspring can be utilized. EVACC is also critical for ongoing monitoring, rescue, quarantine, treatment, and public education.