

## Meetings

### Zoos Attend Mississippi Gopher Frog Meeting

Jessi Krebs, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo

On 8-9 January, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service held its annual Mississippi Gopher Frog Meeting in Hattiesburg, MS, on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi (USM). In attendance were representatives from U.S. Forest Service, Gulf Coast Research Lab, Audubon Nature Institute, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, Memphis Zoo, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Nature Conservancy, Western Carolina University, USM, and Mitchell Ecological Research.

The first day of meetings focused on the challenges of managing the last known breeding area and its surrounding uplands in ways that maximize its usefulness as habitat for the frog. Habitat changes pre- and post-Katrina were discussed and concerns over prescribed burns of the area were expressed. Zoo representatives had a chance to experience Glenn's Pond, one of the last known breeding areas for this critically endangered species, and to strategize about future ways to attempt captive breeding.

The second day focused on recovery actions, including drift fence monitoring, egg mass collection, head-starting of froglets, clearing of vegetation, and translocation efforts. Other topics covered centered on the research being done on the



Newly metamorphosed frog at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo.  
Photo: Jessi Krebs

*Perkinus*-like or *Dermomycooides* spp. disease affecting the

gopher frog, and updates from participant zoos. Breeding groups of Mississippi Gopher Frogs are housed at only three AZA institutions. Breeding this species is proving to be very challenging and no attempts to date have been successful. The meeting was a great way to update all involved parties in order to continue the recovery of this critically endangered species.

## 2008 YEAR OF THE FROG

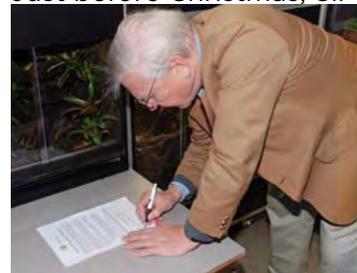
### Grand Openings of Amphibian Exhibits on Leap Day

Jacksonville Zoo: A renovated building will feature native frogs and Puerto Rican crested toads (opening 15 February)  
North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores: A temporary amphibian exhibit  
NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher: Poison dart frog and amphibian photography exhibits  
Saint Louis Zoo: Year of the Frog exhibit  
Tennessee Aquarium: Native amphibians  
Vancouver Aquarium: Native & tropical species  
Additional exhibits are set to open in Spring 2008  
**Visit [www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog](http://www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog)** for educational materials and to donate to the Amphibian Fund.



2008 Year of the Frog got off to a fantastic start with zoos around the world organizing Leap Frog events on New Year's Eve. This generated print, radio, and TV coverage in every country that an event was staged. AZA zoos that took part included Jacksonville, St. Louis, Denver, Sedgwick County, Living Desert and Honolulu. Thanks to all for their support. We will post a full report on the Amphibian Ark website soon. In the meantime, catch up on breaking amphibian conservation news and stories on the 'frogblog' of Amphibian Ark at <http://frogmatters.wordpress.com>.

Just before Christmas, Sir David Attenborough,



Patron of Amphibian Ark and 2008 Year of the Frog, visited London Zoo to unveil a frog sculpture made of recycled materials. This enabled Amphibian Ark to hold a press

call and Sir David rallied the journalists, resulting in fantastic press coverage. Sir David then took some time to visit the amphibian breeding units at the zoo and officially sign the YOTF global petition (photo; available at <http://www.amphibianark.org/online-petition.php>).

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

## News from the Field

### Amphibian Surveys, Capacity Building, and Disease Monitoring in Nicaragua

In 2007, the Saint Louis Zoo received an AZA Conservation Endowment Fund (CEF) award to help fund an effort to catalogue and publish a field guide of the diversity of amphibians and reptiles in the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, Nicaragua; provide training, employment, and technical support to indigenous parabiologists residing in the core zone of Bosawas; and to sample for the presence of the pathogenic fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (*Bd*) in amphibian populations across the spectrum of land-use regimes in Bosawas.

This was the first herpetological survey done in the core zone of Bosawas. 84 herpetofaunal species were recorded during the sampling period: 35 species of amphibians (one caecilian, one salamander, and 33 anurans) and 49 species of reptiles (one crocodylian, four turtles, 18 lizards, and 26 snakes). The survey yielded material that may represent a potentially undescribed species of treefrog (currently undergoing analysis) and a number of species rarely collected in Nicaragua, including the green



climbing toad (*Ollotis conifera*), the yellow-spotted glass frog (*Cochranella albomaculata*), the jumping leaf frog *Agalychnis saltator*, and the snakes *Dipsas bicolor*, *Enuliophis*

*sclateri*, *Imantodes inornatus*, *Nothopsis rugosus*, and *Sibon longifrenis*. Results, combined with previous work done in the reserve's buffer zone, indicate that the reserve is composed of between 112 and 120 species.

In addition to the survey, three indigenous parabiologists, two Miskitu and one Mayangna, received approximately seven weeks of training and field experience in sampling amphibians and reptiles, setting the stage to transition from taxonomic inventory to active monitoring of the reserve's herpetofauna. One 109 skin swabs were collected from 30 amphibian species to detect the presence or absence of *Bd* and are currently undergoing analysis. Additional sampling trips are planned for 2008.

#### Monthly Report Submission Information

Send Monthly Report submissions to Shelly Grow (sgrow@aza.org, 301-562-0777 x263).

## A CALL TO ACTION – GET INVOLVED

### Amphibian TAG Meeting

Participate in the annual meeting of AZA's ATAG, hosted by the Oklahoma City Zoo, 25 March. AZA Snake, Chelonian, and Lizard TAGs will also meet that week. For more information, contact Stacey Sekscienski at 405-425-0232 or [SSekscienski@okczoo.com](mailto:SSekscienski@okczoo.com).

### Pacific Northwest Workshop

On 7 April, the Oregon Zoo and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will host a workshop at the Zoo (in Portland) to address the growing need for amphibian conservation action. Contact Suzanne Rosen ([Suzanne.Rosen@oregonzoo.org](mailto:Suzanne.Rosen@oregonzoo.org)) to learn more about the workshop's goals.

### Ohio Amphibian Research and Conservation

On 15 March, an OH Division of Wildlife and OH Biological Survey-sponsored conference will focus on findings from recent research and conservation projects involving Ohio's frogs, toads, and salamanders. Learn more at: <http://www.ohioamphibians.com/meeting/>

### 2008 Regional PARC Meetings

Southeast: To be held at the University of Georgia 21-24 February. Register at: [www.separc.org](http://www.separc.org)

Northwest: To be held in Missoula, MT 26-27 February. More information at: [www.parcplace.org/regionalupdates.html#northwest](http://www.parcplace.org/regionalupdates.html#northwest).

Southwest: To be held in Austin, TX 5-8 June. More information will be available soon at: <http://chelydra.unm.edu/swparc/>.

Northeast: To be held in Rector, PA 13-15 August. More information at: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/neparc/>.

## FUNDING AVAILABLE

AZA's new **Amphibian Fund** is accepting proposals! Preference is given to projects that strengthen AZA members' capacity to address the global amphibian conservation crisis, that respond to high priority conservation concerns, and reflect the needs outlined in the Amphibian Action Plan ([www.aza.org/ConScience/Amphibians\\_Intro](http://www.aza.org/ConScience/Amphibians_Intro)). Applications are due 4 April. Learn more at: [www.aza.org/ConScience/CEF\\_AmphibFund](http://www.aza.org/ConScience/CEF_AmphibFund).