

Upcoming Meetings

Register Now for the Herp TAG Meetings

The AZA Herp TAGs' annual meeting will be hosted this year by the National Aquarium in Baltimore (NAIB) March 9-13, 2009. AZA's Amphibian, Snake, Chelonian, and Lizard TAGs will all be in attendance and the meeting will include TAG and SSP updates, along with tours of NAIB and a field trip to Smithsonian's National Zoo and the National Aquarium in DC.

Please register before January 31, 2009. For more information or registration materials, contact Vicky Poole at 410-576-1193 or vpoole@aqua.org.

Northwest PARC Meeting at Oregon Zoo

The Northwest chapter of Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NW PARC) will hold its 2nd annual meeting at the Oregon Zoo on February 17, 2009. The NW region extends from northern California north to Alaska, across to Alberta, and down to Wyoming. All are welcome to come brainstorm regional needs and issues, create new task teams, or join existing task teams (Inventory and monitoring, training, funding, and Web site) to advance regional herp conservation. Keynote speakers include Andrew Blaustein and Thomas Biebighauser. Early registration ends January 27, 2009. Contact Co-Chairs Elke Wind (ewind@telus.net) and Dede Olson (dedeolson@fs.fed.us) for more information or registration materials.

NEW RESOURCE AVAILABLE

Mendez, D., R. Webb, L. Berger, R. Speare. 2008. Survival of the amphibian chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* on bare hands and gloves: hygiene implications for amphibian handling. *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms* 82:97-104. Available at: www.wbwg.org/conservation/papers/chytrid_Mendez_DAO.pdf. Key findings provide empirical evidence that using a new, unused pair of gloves for each amphibian handled (*in situ* or *ex situ*) is still the only way to ensure that *Bd* will not be inadvertently transmitted between amphibians.



Free Bleach

Clorox® is a corporate sponsor of the Amphibian Ark (<http://savethefrog.com>). In addition to helping fund the Year of the Frog campaign, the Vanishing Frog documentary with Jeff Corwin, and an exhibit at El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center (EVACC) in Panama, they are donating 15,000 gallons of bleach. If you are interested in receiving coupons for free bleach to use in your amphibian programs, please contact Dustin Smith (dustsmi@miamidade.gov).

The Amphibian Diseases Research Group at James Cook University has initiated a Global Bd Banking Project (<http://www.bdbank.org/>). This resource will "facilitate important research on topics including genetic variation, differential virulence, origin and global spread" and hopefully lead to mitigation of this threat in the wild. If you are in a position to contribute information or isolates, please consider doing so.

Submitted by: Kevin Zippel, Amphibian Ark Program Director



Listen for Frog Calls

Frogs and toads will begin calling in the southern U.S. in late January. Register your FrogWatching site and begin learning local calls and monitoring protocols at www.frogwatch.org. Accompanying training materials will be available soon; contact Shelly Grow (sgrow@aza.org; 301-562-0777 x263) if you would like these materials sent to you electronically in mid-January.



Spring Forward!

Promote your "Spring Forward" events on Sunday, March 8, 2009 by contacting Courtney Jordan (cjordan@aza.org; 301-562-0777 x235). The Spring Forward initiative links amphibian awareness activities to the day that coincides with the switch to Daylight Savings Time. Continue sharing information about the amphibian conservation crisis and utilizing educational materials developed for Year of the Frog (available at: www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog).

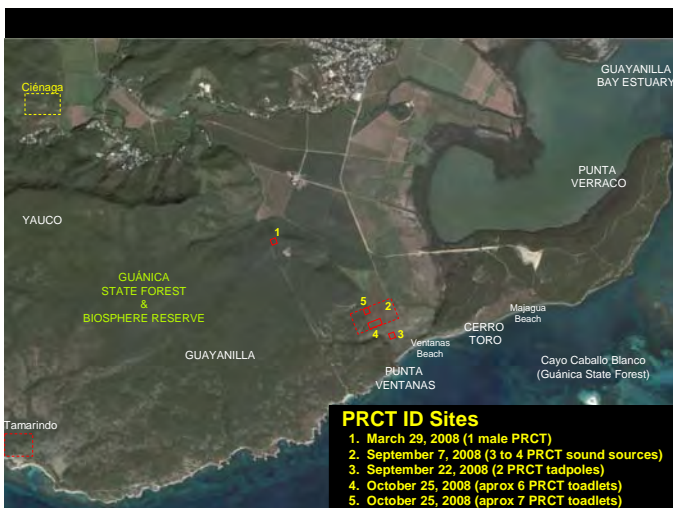
Send **Monthly Report Submissions** to Shelly Grow (sgrow@aza.org, 301-562-0777 x263).

From the Field

New PRCT Population Discovered

Diane Barber, Fort Worth Zoo

On March 29, 2008 a single male Puerto Rican crested toad (*Peltophryne lemur*) was discovered by biologists while searching for bats on private property adjacent to Guánica National Forest (map site 1). After heavy rains in September, crested toad breeding events occurred in the wetlands approximately three miles east of Tamarindo (map sites 2-5) and hundreds of toadlets were observed in October by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists. Due to the toadlets' proximity to the last remaining population of crested toads in Tamarindo, this group of toads is likely part of a metapopulation of toads in Guánica.



The Ventana pond mirrors the Tamarindo pond in terms of habitat, but Ventana is much larger.



This site is currently privately owned, but the landowner has committed to donate the property to the Puerto Rican Department of Natural and Ecological Resources (DNER)

and is receptive to biologists visiting the site and monitoring the population until negotiations are finalized. Unfortunately, the surrounding area is slated for windmill installation and the potential effects of habitat alteration and noise/vibration to the toads are unknown. Further research is needed to determine what, if any, effects the windmills will have on this newly discovered group of toads. The FWS, DNER and SSP plan to begin population monitoring and habitat usage studies for Ventana in 2009.

Vernal Pool Creation/Enhancement and Wood Frog Repatriation Project

Terry Robison, Cleveland Metroparks

Northeastern Ohio is addressing local amphibian conservation through a vernal pool habitat and wood frog repatriation project, public education and engagement, and partnerships. As part of the habitat efforts, Buckeye Trail Association and Cleveland Metroparks staff constructed retaining walls and elevated portions of a trail at the Bedford Reservation to restore natural pools; previous trail usage and water erosion had created outlet areas that allowed the pools to drain prematurely. Trail elevation will be completed this spring and park staff will look for signs of pool colonization by nearby wood frog populations. At the Brookside Reservation, Cleveland Metroparks staff and volunteers planted 50 native trees, mostly bur and swamp white oak, to increase canopy cover over existing wetlands and soon-to-be created vernal pools.

The vernal pool project served as the keystone for a "Leap into Action" (LIA) public awareness and fundraising initiative. More than 35 organizations joined Cleveland Metroparks and the Zoo to hold over 100 family-friendly amphibian and wetland events, activities, displays, and program to provide opportunities for people to learn, get involved, and even actively participate in amphibian and wetland conservation. "Vern Al Pool" the wood frog served as the LIA mascot.

Public education materials were designed and created as part of LIA, including a Web site (<http://www.clemetzoo.com/forfrogs/>), printed materials, and a video about the global plight of amphibians and what people can do to help. LIA events were featured in local radio and television programming and in regional and national news.

Future activities will include additional habitat enhancement, research on the amphibian population genetics and colonization dynamics at the created vernal pools, signage about the project, and management of invasive species.

In 2008, \$17,050 was raised to support this project from grants provided by the Cleveland Zoological Society, the Aquarium & Zoo Facilities Association's Clark Waldram Conservation Fund, AZA's Amphibian Taxon Advisory Group, and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Cans for Conservation Fund; contributions by Bob Evans Restaurants of Northeast Ohio and Shearer's Foods; and through a LIA Passport program, where kids purchased a Passport for \$1 and got their passports "stamped" at each LIA event they attended.