

2008 | YEAR OF THE **One Hundred Leap Day Celebrations!**
FROG



Congratulations! Over one hundred AZA zoos and aquariums participated in the Leap Day launch of Year of the Frog, yielding both strong media coverage and positive public turnout.

Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund donation.

DWCF generously donated \$250,000 to AZA's Amphibian Fund. Dr. Jackie Ogden, VP for Animal Programs and Environmental Initiatives at Walt Disney World and Disney's Animal Kingdom said, "Disney hopes that those visitors, and everyone who cares about our planet, will contribute to the AZA Amphibian Fund too and help double the donation to save the frogs."

Donate at: www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog.

Join us in Birmingham. "The Next Leap for Year of the Frog Programs" workshop will be held at Birmingham's Regional Meeting on Thursday, March 6, 10:30-12:00 to share ideas about maintaining momentum throughout the Year of the Frog. Learn from curators, keepers, educators, marketers, and fundraisers about planned or completed amphibian conservation programs and plans for visitor education and engagement. Sharing materials is encouraged.

New activities available. Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo's *Wanted Alive!* poster and bilingual educational activities courtesy of Africam Safari are available at www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog.

Amphibian Ark has received support from Jean-Michel Cousteau, the natural history filmmaker and environmentalist. Commenting on behalf of Amphibian Ark in pre-Leap Day press releases about the great start to the 2008 Year of the Frog, he said "We've successfully raised the consciousness of millions of people around the world that frogs, unfortunately, are croaking...and we're accelerating our efforts to raise the needed funds to save them. We're delighted by the early international groundswell of support."

Zoos globally have geared up for the Leap Day 'International Day of the Frog.' Among the many fantastic initiatives taking place, Tokyo's Ueno



Zoo designed a week long festival, featuring among other activities, amphibian pinball games (see image). Thanks to all zoos for their energy and commitment.

Amphibian Ark now has pages on MySpace and Facebook to alert the 'cyber-generation' to the plight of amphibians and hopefully to inspire them to take action. If you are a social networker, make friends with Amphibian Ark. In addition, the Amphibian Ark website now has an AArk shop featuring some of the many generous donations of profits that it has been offered. More will be added soon. (www.amphibianark.org/shop.htm).

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

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Applications to AZA's **Amphibian Fund** are due 4 April 2008. Guidelines are available at: www.aza.org/ConScience/CEF_AmphibFund.

Applications to the Amphibian TAG's **Conservation Grant** are due 15 March 2008. Contact ATAG chair, Diane Barber for more information (dbarber@forworthzoo.org).

The **Project Golden Frog/Atelopus Conservation Trust** offers grants up to \$5,000 for conservation programs specific to the Panamanian golden frog and other *Atelopus* species. Submissions are due 1 July. Learn more at: www.ranadorada.org/act.html.

NEW RESOURCE AVAILABLE

The Amphibian TAG published the "Amphibian Husbandry Resource Guide" to help you provide the best care possible to the amphibians under your watch.

www.aza.org/ConScience/Amphibians_Intro.

Monthly Report Submission Information

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

News from the Field

Mississippi Gopher Frog Tadpoles Produced

Rachel Hansen, Memphis Zoo

The Mississippi gopher frog (*Rana sevosa*), possibly the most endangered amphibian in North America, was bred in captivity for the first time by the Memphis Zoo in February, as a result of five years of experimentation and research.

The tadpoles were produced by in-vitro fertilization utilizing a hormone cocktail developed by Memphis Zoo researchers. The Zoo previously has had success with the hormonally induced reproduction of the Wyoming toad (*Bufo baxteri*) however, an adjustment in methods was needed to transfer the techniques from a Bufonid to a Ranid species. The Northern leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*) was used as a model and proved instrumental in the development of a successful protocol for *Rana sevosa*.

With this protocol, spermiation was induced in the single male Mississippi gopher frog currently housed at Memphis.



Rana sevosa
© Rachel Hansen

The day the male received hormones resulting in sperm production, a hormonal dose was administered to a female to induce ovulation. The eggs were expressed from the female 24 hours later and immediately mixed with sperm collected the previous day and refrigerated

overnight. The result was over 200 tadpoles that are now developing in the Zoo's research lab.

The Mississippi gopher frog is critically endangered, with less than 100 individuals left in the wild. This is the first captive breeding event for this species and infuses hope for the wild population with the possibility of future reintroductions of this frog into its native habitat.

A CALL TO ACTION

A Studbook/Population Manager Plan keeper is needed for the Mississippi gopher frog (*Rana sevosa*). Applications and instructions regarding the vacancy are found at: www.aza.org/AnMgt/PLH/. Apply to Diane Barber, Amphibian TAG Chair at dbarber@fortworthzoo.org

New Developments at EVACC, Panama

Heidi Ross, EVACC and Bill Konstant, Houston Zoo

One of the first steps to combating the effects of amphibian chytrid (*Batrachochytridium dendrobatidis*, *Bd*) is to determine the absence or presence of the fungus on wild-caught animals. Timely detection is necessary due to the speed at which infected animals perish. Prior to February 2008, it took over a month to determine if amphibians housed at Panama's El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center (EVACC) or local wild-caught animals were infected; today the answer can be had in a day or less.

Although devastating in the wild, detection and disease treatment is relatively simple with the proper equipment. Thanks to a grant from the Bay and Paul Foundations, the Houston Zoo purchased and sent a portable Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) unit and accessories to Panama so that EVACC staff can conduct rapid response screening for *Bd*. A grant from AZA's Conservation Endowment Fund paid for lab supplies and for sending Dr. Allan Pessier and Tammy Tucker of the San Diego Zoo to train EVACC staff in the use of this essential tool.

EVACC staff also now raise invertebrates to feed the collection, thanks to training, logistical support, and financial assistance from Lou Perrotti and the Roger Williams Park Zoo. Thanks to Kate Woodle from the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, a new mural in the public education area features local amphibian conservation work.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Wyoming toad SSP and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with the Wyoming Toad Recovery Team, seek summer volunteers to monitor and survey reintroduced Wyoming toads in the Laramie basin. Field assistants will be placed at release sites three times during the summer: June 1-21, July 28-August 2, and Aug. 25-30. Activities will include population surveys, tadpole and toadlet releases, temperature and *Bd* monitoring, and water quality testing.

Gain experience in the breeding and rearing of endangered amphibians at the USFWS Wyoming toad facility at Red Buttes Environmental Lab. Learn hormone-assisted reproduction techniques, care of tadpoles using native food sources, and husbandry of young Wyoming toads. Contact Bruce Foster, Wyoming toad SSP Coordinator to learn more (bfoster@wcs.org, 212-439-6505).