

ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

Amphibian Husbandry Resource Guide

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For more information about AZA and its amphibian programs, visit
http://www.aza.org/ConScience/Amphibians_Intro/



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* This chapter has been previously published. The recommended citation is:
Schad, K., editor. Amphibian Population Management Guidelines. Amphibian Ark Amphibian Population Management Workshop; 2007 December 10-11; San Diego, CA, USA. Amphibian Ark, www.amphibianark.org; 2008. 31 p.

Foreword

The global zoological community is responding to an unprecedented conservation crisis; amphibian populations are declining and one-third to half of all 6,000 known amphibian species are threatened with the possibility of becoming extinct within the next decade. The threats facing many amphibian species cannot be abated in the wild in time to save them; in these cases, *ex situ* conservation and captive breeding may be their only hope of survival.

To address this crisis as effectively and efficiently as possible, Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) institutions must pool their herpetology expertise and experiences. Most of the species in greatest need of *ex situ* conservation have never been bred in captivity, and facilities are being requested to develop conservation programs from the ground up.

The AZA Amphibian Taxon Advisory Group (ATAG) encourages you to lead the charge on behalf of these species and has already developed a number of resources within the past year to help you get started (available at: www.aza.org/ConScience/Amphibians_Intro/).

The ATAG has identified species in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean that are in greatest need of *ex situ* conservation. The list of these species is available in the **Action Plan for Ex Situ Amphibian Conservation in the AZA Community**. The Action Plan also includes a detailed description of current amphibian collections and spaces within the AZA community.

The ATAG also published a **Conservation Resource Manual** to help you develop successful amphibian conservation and/or research programs (either *in situ* or *ex situ*; internationally or domestically) that are well-evaluated, fit into your institution's collection plans, are appropriate given your resources, and incorporate complementary education programs. The manual also identifies potential funding sources and provides species-specific action plans and currently available husbandry manuals.

Finally, this **Amphibian Husbandry Resource Guide** will help you provide the best care possible to the amphibians under your watch. The exact protocols for maintaining populations of many species in need of *ex situ* conservation are unknown, but this guide will help ensure that you are using some of the best husbandry techniques known, particularly in the face of emerging diseases whose arrival in collections must be minimized and whose emergence and transport must be managed. Chapters on assisted reproduction of amphibians and managing small amphibian populations for genetic purposes will be added to this guide in Spring 2008. To further refine your amphibian husbandry techniques and to benefit from other AZA herpetologists, the ATAG recommends that you attend the AZA Board of Regent's *Amphibian Biology and Management* course (<http://www.aza.org/prodev/>) and participate in networking opportunities at the annual ATAG meetings.

I thank all of the authors that have dedicated so much time to making these resources available to the AZA and global community, and look forward to hearing about new projects being developed. Together, we can meet this conservation challenge.

The ATAG is here to help you. Feel free to contact me, Diane Barber, ATAG Chair, at dbarber@fortworthzoo.org, or (817) 759-7180.

Good luck!

Diane Barber