

2008

YEAR OF THE

FROG

PROJECT GOLDEN FROG AWARDS TWO GRANTS IN RESPONSE TO THE AMPHIBIAN CRISIS



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By Hillary Bates, National Aquarium in Baltimore

In August, Project Golden Frog and the Atelopus Conservation Trust awarded two grants that will support the conservation of at-risk harlequin frogs.

Five thousand dollars will fund Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's efforts to evaluate the resistance of Panamanian golden frogs to chytridiomycosis, an infectious disease caused by a fungus. Globally, chytrid is causing sporadic deaths in some amphibian populations and 100 percent mortality in others. The disease has been implicated in mass die-offs and amphibian species extinctions in the past 15 years, but its impact on specific populations remain uncertain.

A second grant of almost \$5,000 was awarded to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens to fund a pilot project investigating the range-country *ex-situ* conservation of two *Atelopus* species in Peru. Similar to Project Golden Frog, this project will attempt to establish captive colonies of two species of harlequin frogs as a

precautionary measure against extinction due to habitat loss and chytrid. In addition, field research on *Atelopus spumarius* and the critically endangered *Atelopus pulcher* will provide data for managing the genetic diversity of captive colonies.

Initially planning to award only one grant in 2007, Project Golden Frog and the Atelopus Conservation Trust have committed to doubling the grants they jointly issue on behalf of these species due to the urgent nature of emerging amphibian diseases.

Project Golden Frog is a coalition of AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, along with university and government partners. The PGF/ACT Grant, newly established in 2007, supports conservation programs that increase our understanding of and our ability to protect the endangered Panamanian golden frog and other *Atelopus* species throughout their range and in captivity. PGF raises money for *Atelopus* conservation through sales and donations. To learn more about PGF or to contribute, visit www.ranadorada.org.