

Meetings

ATAG Meeting in Omaha

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo hosted the annual AZA Herp Taxon Advisory Groups' meetings from April 28 to May 4, 2007. Participants got a firsthand view of the Zoo's captive assurance population facilities, which are built in accordance with the strict biosecurity standards developed at a 2006 CBSG/WAZA amphibian husbandry workshop, as well as the Zoo's amphibian-themed educational materials.

During the Amphibian TAG (ATAG) meeting, leaders from AZA institutions reported on significant conservation projects for amphibian species in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa. Participants discussed the unique husbandry challenges presented by each species, highlighting the expertise of the staff at AZA institutions. To learn about opportunities to support ongoing amphibian conservation projects, visit the February 2007 issue of *Connect* (<http://www.aza.org/Publications/2007/02/>) or email ATAG chair Diane Barber (dbarber@fortworthzoo.org).

Species Prioritization Meeting in Fort Worth

ATAG steering committee members and several advisors and experts will work together to prioritize at-risk North American species for conservation action and to update the TAG's regional collection plan. The Fort Worth Zoo is hosting the meeting July 30-August 3, 2007.

Amphibian Biology & Management Course

AZA's Board of Regents is offering its *Amphibian Biology & Management* course for a second time in 2007 to accommodate member interest. Registration for the October 2007 session is already filled with students who were on the waiting list for the April 2007 session. Registration opens in August for the April 2008 session (<http://www.aza.org/prodev/>). Be sure to register early! *ABM* is hosted at the Toledo Zoo. Topics cover husbandry, population management, and global efforts addressing amphibian population declines.

Admin Updates

New Studbook Keeper/Species Coordinator



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The new species coordinator for the Wyoming toad is Bruce Foster (bfoster@wcs.org), from WCS's Central Park Zoo. Sarah Kipp (kippisara@yahoo.com) from Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo is the Wyoming toad's new studbook keeper.

New Staff Position Addresses Amphibian Crisis

AZA is the first regional zoological association to create and fund a position dedicated to helping members engage in amphibian conservation. Shelly Grow joined AZA in this role on May 1, 2007. Contact her with questions or to share your amphibian success stories at sgrow@aza.org or 301-562-0777 x263.

Amphibian Newsletter - Call for Submissions

Help make this newsletter grow by sending announcements about your amphibian efforts, amphibian-related trainings and funding opportunities, news on regulatory changes that affect amphibians, etc. to Shelly Grow, sgrow@aza.org; 301-562-0777 x263.

Year of the Frog

YOTF Task Force Formed

Representatives from five AZA committees/programs and AZA staff will develop educational and public awareness materials to help AZA members celebrate 2008 as the Year of the Frog. Preliminary materials will be featured at AZA's Annual Conference in September. To learn more, visit: <http://www.aza.org/ConScience/>

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The Project Golden Frog/Atelopus Conservation Trust offers grants up to \$5,000 for conservation programs that increase basic knowledge of or protect the endangered Panamanian golden frog and other *Atelopus* species. Submissions are due July 1. For more information, visit: <http://www.ranadorada.org/act.html>.

News from the Field

Kihansi Spray Toad PHVA

By: Andy Odum, The Toledo Zoo

A Population and Habitat Viability Assessment workshop for the Kihansi spray toad (*Nectophrynoides asperginis*) was held 14-18 May in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. AZA members from the Bronx, Toledo, and San Diego Zoos met with CBSG facilitators, scientists, and government and World Bank officials to develop a long-range strategy to reintroduce the spray toad back to Tanzania. The Kihansi spray toad was known as having the smallest distribution of any frog in the world with less than four hectares of habitat in the torrential rain-like spray zones created by the waterfalls of the Kihansi gorge. When the toad's survival was placed in jeopardy by a dam project in the gorge in 2000, the Bronx Zoo transferred 500 toads to the U.S. as an assurance population. This transfer was fortunate, as the wild population crashed in 2003 and the toad is now believed extinct in the wild. The last remaining toads consist of approximately 500+ individuals currently residing at the Bronx and Toledo zoos.



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Particular focus during the workshop was placed on determining the cause of the final extinction of the wild population and appropriate measures to mitigate potential pathogen transfers from U.S. captives to Tanzania. Strategies developed include

outlining suitable bio-secure quarantine procedures both in the U.S. and Tanzania, and essential medical research. Research projects to determine the final cause of extinction were also formulated by attendees.

The travel included a trip to the Kihansi gorge so that AZA zoo personnel could study the habitat of the spray toad. Lessons learned while in the gorge will be used to refine toad husbandry protocols in the United States.

The PHVA was funded by contributions from The Toledo Zoo, The Bronx Zoo, and World Bank and was conducted by the IUCN CBSG, under the auspices of the Lower Kihansi Environmental Management Project.

A CALL TO ACTION

Support the axolotl's recovery

The axolotl salamander (*Ambystoma mexicanum*) is a critically endangered salamander found only in Lake Xochimilco in Mexico City, Mexico. A multi-disciplinary, stakeholder-driven conservation plan with an itemized budget and input from the Toronto Zoo was developed in January 2007. You can support this plan by funding any of its components, such as: a project coordinator (\$22,000/year), long-term monitoring stations (\$20,000), in-country captive breeding research (\$3,000), genetic variability research (\$2,500), water quality analyses (\$15,000), environmental education workshops (\$2,800), curriculum development (\$4,500), educational opportunities for fishermen and boat operators (\$3,000), or other projects. For more information or to pledge your support, contact Bob Johnson (bjohnson@torontozoo.ca).

To all amphibian conservation program leaders: The axolotl salamander's multi-pronged conservation plan includes a detailed list of conservation and education activities and associated costs. This format helps potential donors identify activities and costs that match their resources and may serve as a useful template to other program leaders seeking financial support.

Help find the mountain yellow-legged frog

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is looking for field assistants to help survey for extant populations of the critically endangered mountain yellow-legged frog (*Rana muscosa*) during July and August. USGS has specifically asked for zoo and aquarium help. This is an easy and economical way for zoos and aquariums, especially those in California, to help with a critically endangered species' field project. The work includes hiking to fairly remote areas and may require overnight camping. To participate, contact Andy Snider (asnider@fresnochaffeezoo.com). Due to travel, Andy will respond after June 10, 2007.