Meetings

Developing Local Partnerships
Diane Barber, ATAG Chair, Fort Worth Zoo

As Chair of the Amphibian Taxon Advisory Group (ATAG), I focus on the “big” picture, coordinating efforts for AZA’s response to the global amphibian crisis. At the same time, as Curator of Ectotherms at the Fort Worth Zoo, I evaluate local amphibian conservation opportunities. For local amphibian efforts, I first look for information about threatened and endangered species in my state. Next, I identify any ongoing conservation work and try to match our resources with needs. One of the most crucial and challenging aspects of becoming involved with conservation efforts is to develop contacts with local government agencies.

Like many curators, I have spent hours tracking down government agents and biologists, only to receive guarded, short answers that no help was needed. Ultimately I become discouraged and focus on the papers towering on my desk.

It was therefore quite fortuitous last month when I received an invitation from an esteemed zoo colleague to attend a PARC (Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, www.parcplace.org) meeting. To my surprise and delight, the meeting was tremendously productive. PARC is a national non-profit comprised of regional working groups. Each working group has its own steering committee and focuses on regional issues. The organization is comprised of state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, museums, the pet trade, nature centers, zoos/aquariums, energy industries, universities, herpetological organizations, research laboratories, foresters, and environmental consultants. The PARC approach to conservation is habitat focused, balancing endangered and threatened species-based efforts with those aimed at “keeping common native species common.” I love that phrase! While attending my regional PARC meeting, I developed new contacts and became rejuvenated. I encourage you to join your regional PARC working group, or attend a meeting to cultivate the personal relationships necessary to create effective amphibian conservation partnerships at all levels.

Upcoming PARC Meetings (www.parcplace.org)
Northeast Regional Meeting: August 20-22, VA
Midwest Regional Meeting: September 6-8, IN

International Chytrid Fungus Symposium
The PARC network will hold this meeting on November 5-7, 2007 in Tucson, AZ. Contact Dr. Jamie Reaser if interested in attending or sponsoring this meeting (434-990-9494/pijacscience@nelsoncable.com).

Year of the Frog
Amphibian Education Materials
The AZA Conservation Education Committee is refining educational messages for Year of the Frog and reviewing existing amphibian conservation education materials. If you have experience with any particularly successful (or not!) amphibian activities that you would like to share, please send your ideas to Allyson Atkins at Disney’s Animal Kingdom (allyson.atkins@disney.com).

Learn about AZA’s Year of the Frog Online
Bookmark http://www.aza.org/YearoftheFrog/ and visit often for updates!

NEW RESOURCES


The Institute of Laboratory Animal Research’s (ILAR) most recent Journal (vol. 48, no. 3) focuses on amphibian research, husbandry, lab facilities, reproduction, and disease and can be purchased at: http://dels.nas.edu/ilar/nv/ilarijournal/journal.shtml.

Monthly Report Submission Information
Send Monthly Report submissions regarding amphibian conservation activities and opportunities to Shelly Grow (sgrow@aza.org, 301-562-0777 x263).
Thanks to logistic and financial support provided by more than two dozen AZA institutions, a native amphibian rescue mission is well underway in Panama with the goal of safeguarding threatened species from an advancing chytrid epidemic. The El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center (EVACC) is now providing safe haven for numerous frogs, toads, and salamanders. In fact, according to project directors Edgardo Griffith and Heidi Ross, the following noteworthy species have taken reproduction beyond the stage of amplexus:

**Lemur leaf frog (Hylomantis lemur):** Dozens of clutches have filled five aquariums with tadpoles; the oldest are currently growing hind legs.

**Leopard robber frog (Eleutherodactylus pardalis):** Tadpoles have hatched from four of eight egg clutches. Feeding the froglets a diet of springtails may help keep them alive.

**Dink or common tink frog (Eleutherodactylus diastema):** A single female has produced three egg clutches of eggs; the first yielded 11 tadpoles.

**Horned marsupial frog (Gastrotheca cornuta):** One clutch contained nine froglets, six of which survived after emerging from the female’s pouch. They are faring well thus far on wild-caught food.

**Spiny-headed treefrog (Anotheca spinosa):** four tadpoles recently metamorphosed.

**Green and black poison frog (Dendrobates auratus):** Nine eggs have yielded three tadpoles thus far.

**Hemiphraactus fasciatus:** Two females are now carrying eggs on their backs.

One fertilized clutch has been produced by a pair of Bob’s robber frogs (Craugastor punctariolus), but the eggs failed to hatch. Another clutch from a female Hylinobatrachium vireovittatum produced tadpoles, but they died within days. Three species have produced unfertile clutches of eggs since being moved to EVACC: the Panamanian golden frog (Atelopus zeteki), Craugastor melanostictus and Eleutherodactylus moro.

---

**Notes from the Field**

**Safeguarding Panama’s Amphibians**

Bill Konstant, Houston Zoo

The quarantine, treatment and captive breeding portion of the El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center (EVACC) is up and running in Panama. The goal now is threefold: to complete collection efforts and monitor the advance of chytrid in the El Valle region, to extend collection east of the Panama Canal, and to complete construction of the public exhibit area before year’s end. Estimated costs for the exhibits’ electrical, plumbing, and graphics are approximately $25,000. As construction in El Valle de Anton comes to a close, the Houston Zoo and the Summit Nature Park will collaborate on a satellite facility at the park outside Panama City. Plans are to build enclosures within a fully-outfitted, 40-foot shipping container, as has been done by Australian herpetologists. In addition to holding anticipated surplus animals from the EVACC program, this facility will house amphibian species that will eventually be collected east of the Panama Canal. It is estimated that this unit will also cost $25,000 to complete.

Institutions or individuals interested in supporting these initiatives can log on to http://www.houstonzoo.org/en/cms/?2149 or contact Peter Riger, Manager of Field Conservation Programs at the Houston Zoo (priger@houstonzoo.org).

**Salamander Conservation with AZA-Accredited Mexican Partner**

With 362 recognized species, 62% of which are endemic, Mexico is rich in amphibian diversity. This gift poses a conservation challenge: two-thirds of Mexico’s 135 salamanders are threatened with extinction. Africam Safari’s project will focus on 10 salamander species from the Mexican central plateau that are either endangered or classified as Data Deficient by the IUCN. The objective is to bring them into captive breeding programs while carrying out field research and conservation. In order to accomplish this, we need to procure and equip biosecure containers to be used as breeding units, develop sound education and conservation programs, as well as support projects in the field. For more information contact Luis Carrillo, Africam Safari at: lcarrillo@africamsafari.com.mx.