
To: AArk Steering Committee and colleagues
From: AArk Staff
Subject: AArk monthly activity report for March 2009
Date: 6 April 2008

*Note: these reports document efforts that are underway; people seeking additional information should contact [Kevin Z.](#)
These monthly reports are now archived [online](#).*

General updates from the amphibian community

News/Publications

- [National Geographic: An exotic fungus is delivering the fatal blow to many amphibians already hit by habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.](#)
- [Froglog 91 issued](#) - features article on [AArk efforts to save the Pirri harlequin frog](#), which were also featured on Amphibiaweb for one week this past month
- AArk [Newsletter #6](#) issued
- [Conservation Needs of *Batrachophrynus* and *Telmatobius* Frogs of the Andes of Peru](#)
- [Toward Immunogenetic Studies of Amphibian Chytridiomycosis: Linking Innate and Acquired Immunity](#)

Funding available

- [AArk Seed Grant](#) program launched. Application deadline 1 May.
- Project Golden Frog/Atelopus Conservation Trust offers grants up to \$5,000 for *Atelopus* conservation programs, <http://www.ranadorada.org/act.html>. Deadline 1 July.
- The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund provides targeted \$5000-25,000 grants to individual species conservation initiatives and they have expressed an interest in seeing amphibian proposals.
- ASG calls for [proposals](#) for up to \$30,000 matching funds for critical habitat protection, no deadline
- Columbus Zoo continuously accepts applications for grants and emergency grants and has a strong record of supporting amphibian conservation work. For more information, contact [Rebecca Rose](#), Field Conservation Coordinator.
- Emergency funds are also available through [Memphis Zoo](#) and [Disney](#).
- Other grant opportunities are described in Appendix 3 of [AZA Amphibian Resource Manual](#).

Funding needed

- For species rescues in eastern Panama ([Houston budget proposal](#))
- For AArk officer support (institutions can also donate staff time)
- For species prioritization workshops in China, Indonesia, India, PNG, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Cuba, Philippines, Cameroon, Honduras, Tanzania, Haiti, D.R. Congo, Jamaica, Chile, Japan, Bolivia, Argentina.
- For husbandry workshops in Peru, China, Indonesia, Chile.

- Other partnership opportunities are available in our online [database](#).

Vacancies

- Zoological Society of San Diego seeks [post-doc](#) in amphibian pathology and molecular diagnostics to be filled by July 2009
- Multiple postings here <http://parcplace.org/jobs.html>

CURRENT

AArk Coordination

- AArk strategic planning meeting held on 17 March in Al Ain, UAE; recommendations coming out of that meeting are being compiled for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- Working with AZA and now US private sector and field biologists to plan distribution of the free bleach from Clorox, which, unfortunately, it turns out can only be given out in the US.
- Working with the SSC to encourage and support *ex situ* conservation efforts in Queensland.
- We are absolutely thrilled to announce a new partnership with the Philadelphia Zoo who will be donating 25% of the time of Amphibian Curator/Conservation Biologist, Dr. Carlos C. Martínez Rivera to the AArk. Carlos will serve as a Regional Taxon Officer focusing on Latin America, specifically on facilitating new rescue programs by fostering partnerships and helping to develop new Taxon Management Groups. He will of course be working closely with our representatives and partners from the regional zoo associations. Carlos can be reached at Carlos@AmphibianArk.org.

Taxon Survival Efforts

- Taxon prioritization workshops planned for:
 - Cameroon in April 2009 **POSTPONED**
 - Brazil likely in late April 2009 (with support from ZSL, NABT)
 - Indonesia in July 2009
 - Sri Lanka in August 2009
 - tentative 2009: Argentina, Chile, Guatemala
- Completed versions of the prioritization data from various workshops are available on the [Amphibian Ark portal](#)
- Testing for Amphibian Infectious Diseases (Chytrid Fungus and Ranavirus) Available from the San Diego Zoo: The Wildlife Disease Laboratories of the Institute for Conservation Research at the San Diego Zoo are pleased to be able to offer low-cost testing for the amphibian chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) and Ranaviruses. The testing is subsidized by an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Leadership grant “Infectious Disease Control and Bioresource Banking for the Amphibian Extinction Crisis” awarded to the Zoological Society of San Diego and Zoo Atlanta. The goal of the subsidized testing is to encourage widespread surveillance of zoo collections for these potentially population-limiting infectious diseases. Hopefully, these efforts will facilitate eradication of chytrid fungal infections from established zoo collections and enable the collection of data of the occurrence and prevalence of these diseases that is needed to make use of disease risk assessment tools for reintroduction programs. The laboratory is also able to provide assistance in working up outbreaks of infectious diseases in captive collections (especially molecular diagnostic testing) working together with your facility veterinarian and pathologist. Available Tests include: Real-Time (Taqman) PCR for Amphibian Chytrid Fungus, Conventional PCR for Ranavirus. Tests are U.S. \$10.00 each for zoos and aquariums. Questions can be addressed to: Dr. Allan Pessier apessier@sandiegozoo.org 619-231-1515, Ext 4510

Training & Other Capacity Building

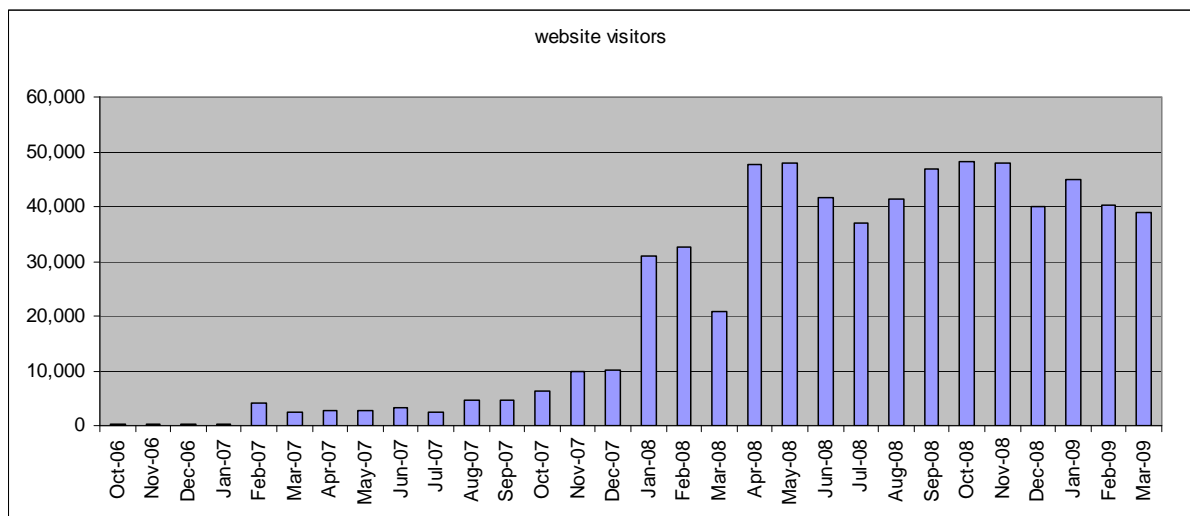
- Training courses planned for:
 - Cameroon in April 2009 **POSTPONED**
 - Cuba in June 2009 (CAZA course)
 - Malaysia (Pt. II: advanced husbandry) in June/July 2009
 - Indonesia in July 2009
 - Sri Lanka in August 2009 (DWCT course)
 - Brazil likely in fall (September?) 2009 (with support from WAZA)
 - tentative 2009: Panama

Research Efforts

- AArk Research Guidelines drafted and under review.
- The role of UV-B and Vitamin D3 in amphibian health is an important factor in conservation breeding programs. We are facilitating international research collaborations to develop non-invasive and benign methods for the assay of bone density and Vitamin D3 levels in amphibians with these then used to support associated research projects.
- We are facilitating research based symposiums/workshops for the distribution, assessment of genetic sub-populations, reproduction technologies, habitat protection, and release of the Chinese giant salamander (*Andrias davidianus*) with Chinese and international workers. In conjunction with this work, articles reviewing survey methods for aquatic salamanders and the conservation biology of cryptobranchids are being produced by Chinese and international researchers.
- A research based program for the conservation of Cameroonian amphibians is being developed between Cameroonian workers and a consortium of international zoos, museums and other institutions. This will involve biodiversity assessments, autecology studies and conservation assessments of threatened species, and conservation breeding programs.

Communications

- **The AArk website:**



- **Online Petition:** An online petition urging politicians and parliaments of the world to commit resources for urgent global action is now available [online](#). The petition is available in English and German, and is currently being translated into Spanish. It is also available in [French](#) on the WAZA website. So far, **8,380** signatures have been received via the online petition.
- **Network sites:** Please pass the word to your contacts to join AArk in our Facebook [Group](#) and [Cause](#) as well as on [MySpace](#). One new initiative here includes working with Frog Friendly

Consulting to have the [1st ever Facebook campaign to save an entire species from extinction!](#) We are also working with Caudata.org on awarding a [\\$1000 grant](#) for salamander research; the winning proposal is “Pandi mushroom-tongue salamander Project: Conservation status assessment of a threatened Andean salamander from Colombia - *Bolitoglossa pandi*” submitted by Giovanni Alberto Chaves Portilla, Fundacion Ecodiversidad Colombia

- Our wonderful friends at Froguts Inc. have very generously offered to give a free copy of their virtual dissection software to any interested AArk partner institutions. You can review the product at www.froguts.com, and request your copy from David Hughes, Co-Founder Froguts Inc. david@froguts.com.
- The [International Reptile Conservation Foundation](#) publishes the semi-technical journal *Iguana: Conservation, Natural History & Husbandry of Reptiles*. The publication is being reinvented as simply *Conservation and Natural History of Reptiles*, and despite the name, will include substantive work on amphibians as well (see the March 2009 issue with an article on Amphibian Ark by our Ron Gagliardo). Each new issue of the journal will include a section called "Focus on Conservation" (FOC). This is essentially a one-page item featuring a specific project that solicits support in the form of information, volunteer help, or even funds (see [example](#)). If anyone is interested in having their project and request for help featured in the FOC, please contact Editor Robert Powell at anolis@swbell.net. They are also seeking full articles, and in general, projects featured in the FOC are usually featured in full articles in a subsequent issue.
- AArk is now featured as a link on the [SSAR Conservation page](#) (thanks Joe!)
- Clorox’s amphibian conservation website has been moved from www.savethefrog.com to www.fightforthefrogs.com.
- AArk [Newsletter #6](#) issued
- Filmmaker Allison Argo’s wonderful documentary featuring amphibian efforts in Panama, Ecuador, Australia and the US airs on PBS Nature on April 5 at 8 pm. Cross-promotion of the film and AArk being done via websites.

Membership/fundraising

- The concept of formalizing AArk as a membership-based organization was supported at the AI Ain meeting and staff are finalizing a proposal of for the Steering Committee’s consideration.
- Luis Coloma has donated a number of copies of his new book *Sapos* to AArk for fundraising purposes; see [the post in our shop](#).
- AArk credit cards are [here!](#)
- The Amphibian Project is selling a number of items on [their site](#) to raise money for Africam Safari and their program to save the large-crested toad *Ollotis crisata*.
- Business partners selling items and donating a percentage of the profits to AArk can be found in our online [shop](#). AArk now has an [account with MissionFish](#) to accept donations from eBay sellers, and also with [Network For Good](#) and [Just Give](#). [Check out one of our new artist partners on eBay](#).
- Funding applications submitted to:
 - John Ball Zoo for Guatemala prioritization
 - AZA/CEF for “Veterinarians without Borders: Helping range country amphibian breeding programs reach higher levels of success” (great job Ron!)
 - CBOT for “Saving the Marsupial Frog *Gastrotheca plumbea*: Unique partnerships to protect amphibian biodiversity in Northwest Ecuador.”
 - Morris Animal Foundation and AZA/CEF for “*In-situ* Status Surveys and *Ex-situ* Captive Husbandry of IUCN Red Listed Mexican and Guatemalan Salamanders”
- Funding received from North of England Zoo Society to cover some expenses associated with AI Ain strategic planning meeting (thanks Gordon!)

Travel and Workshop Schedule

This schedule changes frequently; contact the AARK Staff for further details.

Dates	Meeting Description	Location	AArk Staff, SC member, affiliates
APRIL 2009			
15-16?	EVACC public opening	El Valle, PANAMA	Zippel
18-24	AZA Amphibian Biology & Management	Toledo, OH, USA	Gagliardo, Mendelson
25-26?	prioritization workshop	BRAZIL	Gibson, Johnson
May 2009			
June 2009			
19-22	Advanced husbandry workshop	Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA	Gagliardo
29-3	Chiapas amphibian conservation workshop	Chiapas, MEXICO	Mendelson
July 2009			
TBD	prioritization workshop	INDONESIA	Johnson
TBD	husbandry workshop	INDONESIA	Gagliardo
August 2009			
1-2	prioritization workshop	SRI LANKA	Gibson
3-11	husbandry workshop	SRI LANKA	Garcia, Gibson
September 2009			
13-18?	husbandry workshop	Sao Paulo, BRAZIL	Gagliardo, Odum
October 2009			
1-8	CBSG/WAZA annual meetings	St. Louis, MO, USA	Gagliardo, Zippel
August 2010			
12	Association of Zoo & Aquarium Docents	Chicago, IL, USA	Zippel



MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

Acknowledgements 31 March 2009

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Up to \$200,000

EAZA

Up to \$50,000

Chester Zoo

Conservation Breeding

Specialist Group (CBSG)

Philadelphia Zoo

Royal Zoological Society of
Antwerp

St. Louis Zoo

World Association of Zoos
& Aquariums (WAZA)

Zoo Leipzig

Up to \$10,000

ARAZPA

Chicago Zoological Society

Columbus Zoo

Denver Zoo*

JAZA

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo

Up to \$5,000

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Up to \$100

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MONTHLY ACTIVITY REPORT

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***And through
contributions in memory
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Vicky Poole
Kevin Zippel & Lynn Kirkland

