



amphibian ark[®]

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



VISION

The world's amphibians
thriving in nature

MISSION

Ensuring the survival and diversity of
amphibian species focusing on those that
cannot currently be safe-guarded in their
natural environments

COLLABORATION



A pair of Titicaca Water Frogs (Telmatobius culeus) in amplexus. Photo: Lizette Bermúdez

Collaboration continued to play an important role in AArk's activities in 2019.

Working with the Amphibian Red List Authority, we completed Conservation Needs Assessments (CNAs) for Honduras, Costa Rica, and Papua New Guinea. In addition, partial CNAs were completed for Colombian and Mexican amphibians. At the request of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), AArk coordinated an amphibian training course for service employees in Bozeman, Montana, the first course of its kind for USFWS.

We continued our work with the Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) to update the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP) and assisted the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) with the development of a grants programs focused on *in situ* projects and conservation education. The ASA grants program parallels the AArk Conservation Grants program, and applicants to both ASA and AArk programs are encouraged to develop comprehensive projects that link *ex situ* and *in situ* components where appropriate.

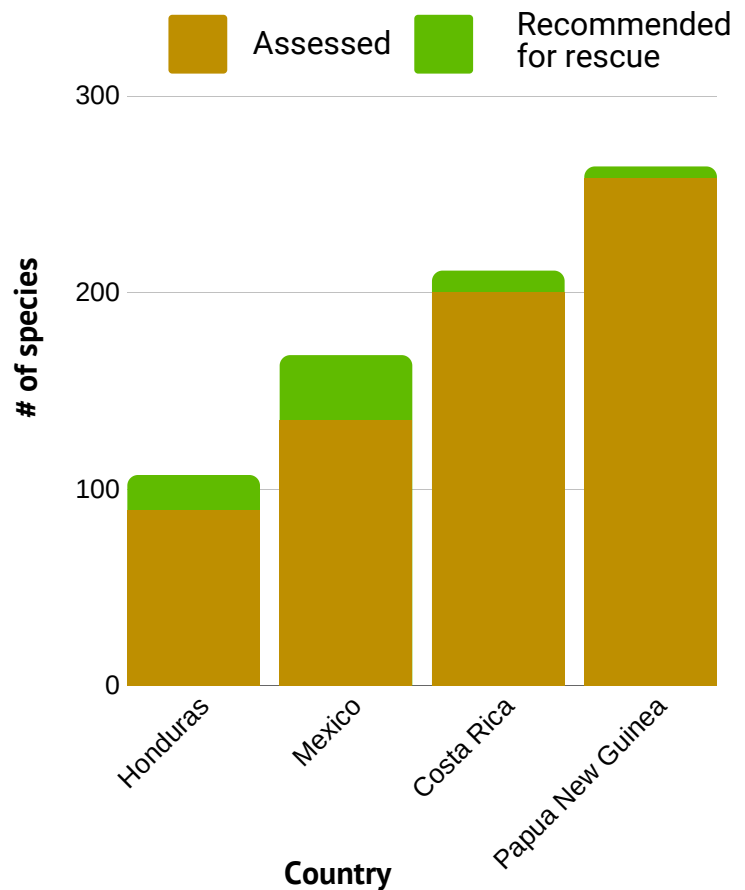
CONSERVATION NEEDS ASSESSMENTS



Participants in the amphibian Conservation Needs Assessment workshop for Papua New Guinea.
Photo: Kevin Johnson

All 2019 assessments were done in a workshop format, utilizing the knowledge of experts from a range of institutions, both within and outside of the country. In 2019, we completed assessments for Honduras, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Papua New Guinea.

Assessments and additional recommendations for these and other amphibians can be found at www.conservationneeds.org.



CONSERVATION GRANTS

The addition in 2019 of a pre-proposal step for AArk's Conservation Grants resulted in substantially higher proposal quality, and four excellent proposals were awarded funding.

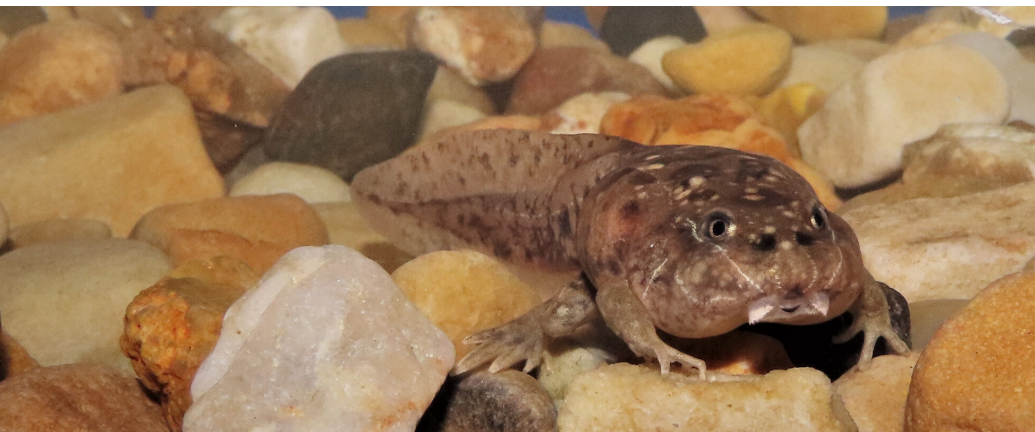
Start-up Grants:

- First steps towards the conservation of Darwin's Blackish Toad (*Melanophryniscus nigricans*). Principal Investigator: Igor Berkunsky, National University of the Centre of Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Project Palaka, Phase II- *Platymantis insulatus ex situ* program. Co-Principal Investigators: Norman Greenhawk Schuyler and Dr. Leticia Espiritu-Afuang, University of the Philippines, Los Banos, Philippines.
- Lake Patzcuaro Salamander (*Ambystoma dumerilii*) "Achoque". Co-Principal Investigators: Margarita Ruiz Flores and Manuel Antonio Perez Rodriguez, CEPinciANAF - Zacango Ecological Park, Mexico.
- Monitoring the reintroduction of an *ex situ* population: Using radio-telemetry to track survival and disease outcomes in the Mountain Yellow-legged Frog (*Rana muscosa*) to inform *ex situ* management. Co-Principal Investigators: Dr. Talisin Hammond and Dr. Debra Shier, Institute for Conservation Research, San Diego Zoo, USA

Initial reports from these grants can be found in AArk Newsletters for March and June 2020 at www.amphibianark.org.

AArk was able to provide two emergency grants, one to Dr. Enrique LaMarca, Rescue of Endangered Venezuelan Amphibians (REVA) Conservation Center, for a generator to sustain his facility during Venezuela's frequent power outages; and one to the National Zoo in Santiago, Chile to establish an insurance colony of the Critically Endangered Loa Frog, (*Telmatobius dankoi*).

In addition, thanks to a generous donor we were able to support insurance colonies in Brazil (*Aparasphenodon pomba*), Argentina (Patagonia Frog, *Atelognathus patagonicus*), Bolivia (Titicaca Water Frog, *Telmatobius culeus*), and Spain (Montseny Newt, *Calotriton arnoldi*); habitat restoration in Costa Rica; and the amphibian facility at the Amphibian Conservation Center of the Amaru Biopark in Ecuador.



A captive-bred Titicaca Water Frog (*Telmatobius culeus*) tadpole at the K'ayra Center for Research and Conservation of threatened amphibians of Bolivia. Photo: Sophia Barrón



Left: An emaciated Loa Frog (*Telmatobius dankoi*) rescued from its disappearing habitat in northern Chile.
 Right: One of the rescued frogs after several weeks at the National Zoo in Santiago, Chile.
 Photo: Corporacion de Cultura y Turismo de Calama; Zoologico Nacional de Chile

CAPACITY BUILDING

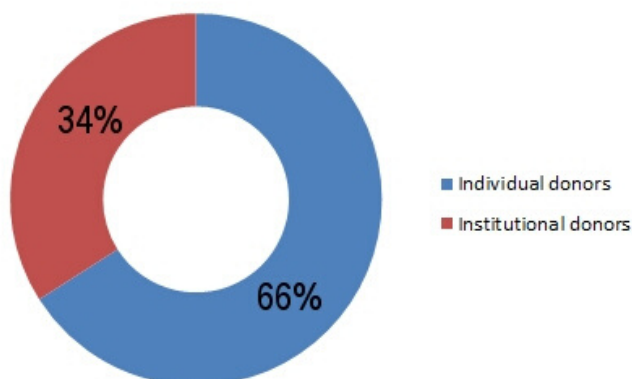
With AArk's Amphibian Translocation for Conservation Symposium, we initiated our first online course in 2019. Divided into four sections covering the theoretical framework underlying translocation, habitat management/restoration, reintroduction program examples, and post-release monitoring, the course was designed to allow speakers and participants to learn from each other's successes and failures, receive new and unpublished information, and connect with amphibian management experts and other program managers from different regions of the world.

Thirty-three speakers representing zoos, aquariums, government, universities and NGOs from Europe, Australia, US, Africa, and Latin-America comprised the faculty. A total of 80 participants from Latin America, US, Canada, Europe, and Asia registered for this online symposium, representing organizations ranging from universities and museums to zoos, NGOs, and governments. The course was very successful, with 93 percent of the participants saying they would recommend it to a colleague.

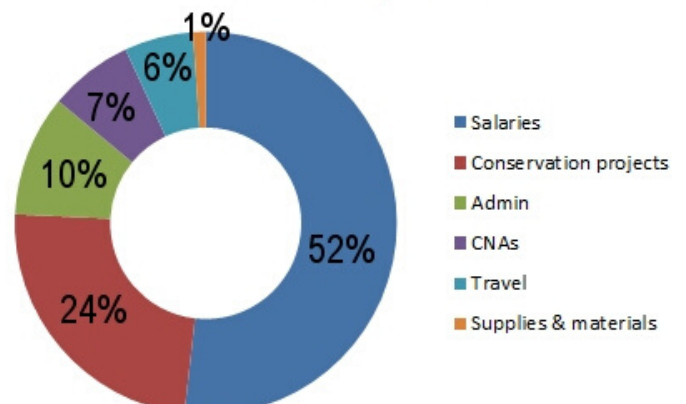
Another first was a request from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to teach a course in Amphibian Disease and Diagnosis. This hands-on course, presented by AArk at the USFWS Bozeman, Montana's Fish and Technology and Health Complex, better prepared USFWS staff to diagnose and manage disease within their captive amphibian populations.

FINANCIALS

2019 AArk Donors



2019 AArk Expenses





*The White Lagoon, in Laguna Blanca National Park in Argentina, is the only permanent waterbody within the range of the Critically Endangered Patagonia Frog (*Atelognathus patagonicus*). Photo: Federico Kacoliris*

COMMUNICATIONS

AArk reaches the amphibian community through a variety of channels. Over 9,000 people follow us on Facebook, and in 2019 over 55,000 people visited at least one page on the AArk website. There are 5,484 subscribers to our English newsletter and 422 subscribers to AArk's Spanish newsletter. AArk's Latin American husbandry WhatsApp chat group has 33 members who've shared eight husbandry videos and twelve husbandry documents and hundreds of discussions on amphibian husbandry and veterinary issues.

A highlight of the year was a presentation by one of AArk's previous grant recipients at the annual meeting of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) annual conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Dr. Federico Kacoliris from La Plata University in Argentina presented his work on captive breeding and reintroduction of the Critically Endangered Valcheta Frog (*Pleurodema somuncurensis*).

WHAT'S AHEAD

In early 2020, we'll be developing a series of online "nano-courses," two-hour segments addressing specific topics related to amphibian disease, husbandry, and conservation. An online webinar on Artificial Reproduction Techniques is planned for the second half of the year.

The USFWS has asked us to develop a course for their Southwest units on salamander husbandry.

Conservation Needs Assessments are in the works for India, Australia, and Uganda.

And, of course, we'll continue our quarterly newsletters and regular updates on our website and Facebook page.

2019 AMPHIBIAN ARK DONORS

Thanks to our donors who've supported us over the past year. We can only accomplish what we do because of your support and we're truly grateful.

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*Front cover: *Aparasphenodon pomba* is a Critically Endangered tree-frog from Brazil. Photo: Cybele Sabino Lisboa*