



amphibian ark

2021 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

Progress in a challenging year

Conservation is a slow, ongoing process, and as such it's often difficult to measure results over a short time span. Nonetheless, there are some cases where we can point to success. Captive-bred Valcheta frogs have been successfully reintroduced to protected areas in Argentina, a viable population of Lake Titicaca water frogs has been established in Bolivia, and the Loa water frog has been rescued from certain extinction in Chile. The Amphibian Ark played an important role in each of these instances. More often, we measure impact through activity - what AArk has done to increase the chance of survival for threatened species.

In 2021 we reached a milestone: as of the end of the year, over the twelve years of AArk's Conservation Grants program, we had awarded over \$250,000 in small grants to organizations around the globe to initiate captive assurance programs.

The majority of these programs are still up and running, and working with their partners in the field a number have successfully reintroduced amphibians to secure natural habitats. In total, our grants have supported forty-five different programs in twenty-two countries.

This was possible because of support from our donors and we'd like to say thank you to each and every one of you.

Conservation grants

The Covid pandemic continued to have an impact on conservation programs in 2021. We received far fewer proposals for Conservation Grants than usual and awarded only two start-up grants:

- Establishing an *ex situ* conservation strategy for the Persian mountain salamander, *Paradactylodon persicus gorganensis* in Iran (Saeed Hosseinian Yousefkhani)
- Junín giant frog (*Telmatobius macrostomus*) at the Junin Amphibian Conservation Center in Peru (Roberto Elías).

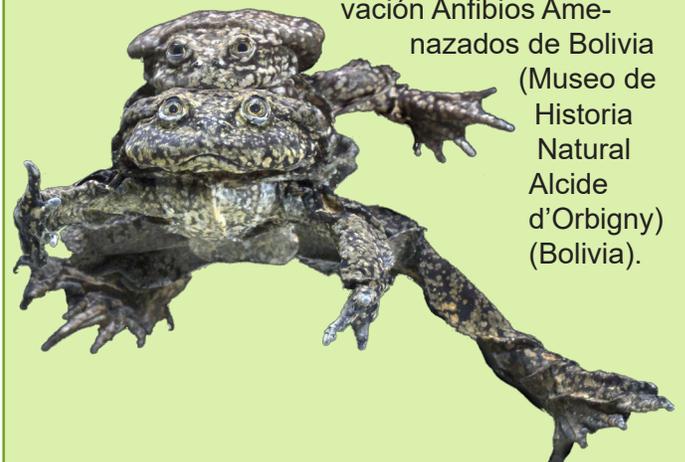


Titicaca water frog (Telmatobius culeus) at Centro K'ayra de Investigación y Conservación Anfibios Amenazados de Bolivia. Photo: D. Alarcón and D. Grunbaum.

Ongoing support

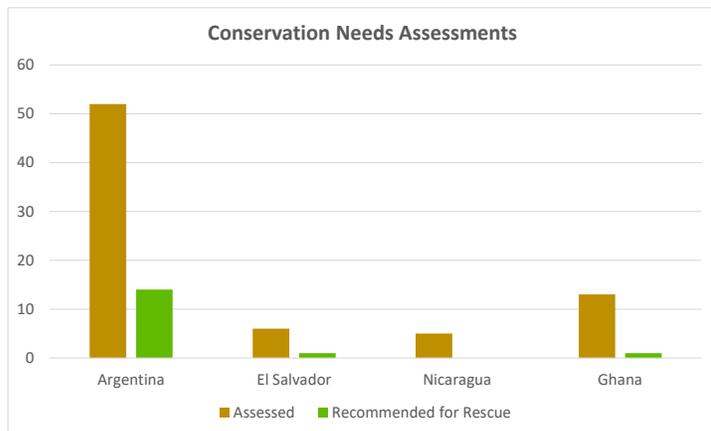


In 2021, we were able to provide an additional \$24,000 in continued support to programs at Fundação Parque Zoológico de São Paulo (Brazil), Conservation Center for Amphibians-Amaru (Ecuador), Delegación Sur de Parques Nacionales (Argentina), La Plata University (Argentina), National University of the Centre of Buenos Aires Province (Argentina), Instituto de Ecorregiones Andinas (INECOA, UNJu-CONICET) (Argentina), and Centro K'ayra de Investigación y Conservación Anfibios Ame-

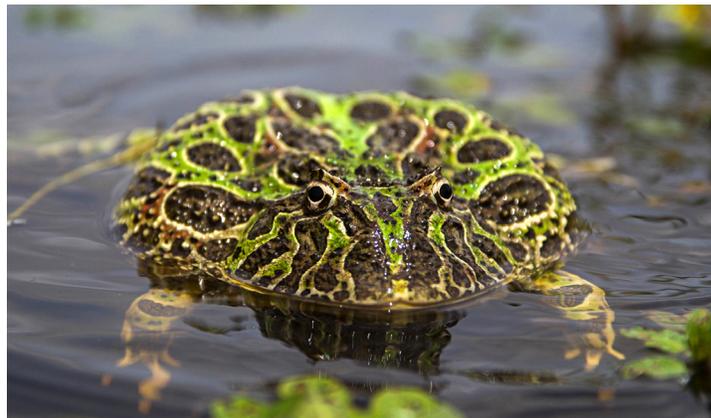


Conservation Needs Assessments

Four Conservation Needs Assessment (CNA) workshops in 2021, held via Zoom, assessed species in Argentina, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Ghana. In all 78 species were assessed and 16 were recommended for captive assurance populations, with a further 13 species recommended as potential husbandry analogs which can be used to develop husbandry protocols. In each of these countries, only threatened species and selected geographical regions were assessed, hence the low number of assessments.



Post-CNA workshop surveys have been distributed to participants from five recent workshops, with twenty-seven responses received so far. Suggestions from the evaluations are informing the workshop process. Articles about the CNA process and subsequent conservation planning activities were published in the WAZA magazine and in ASA's FrogLog.



The Argentine horned frog (Ceratophrys ornata), a high priority species for ex situ rescue. Photo: Gabriela Agostini.

Training and capacity-building

A six-month Amphibian Assisted Reproductive Techniques Webinar series utilized the expertise of renowned experts on assisted reproductive techniques in Anurans and Caudates. The online webinars were designed to allow extensive participation, with the webinars divided into three blocks, consisting in four talks of one hour each on a bi-monthly schedule so participants could arrange their schedule to be able to attend. One hundred and forty participants registered for these webinars with a portion of them attending each session.

AArk staff also participated in two online webinars, giving a presentation Amphibians in Focus (Brazil) on *ex situ* conservation programs in Latin-America during the Brazilian Symposium of Amphibian Conservation, organized by ASG Brazil; and a presentation on veterinary medicine, common infectious diseases, and common husbandry-driven diseases during the Ecuadorian Veterinary Students' Congress.



Amphibian ART Webinar Series
January 31, 2022



Gamete Cryopreservation – Anurans and Caudates

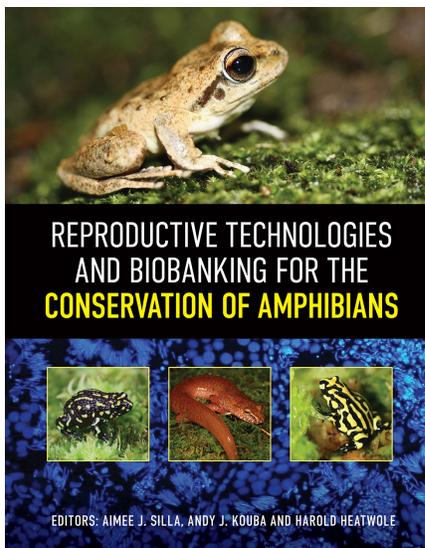


Rose Upton, Cecilia Langhorne, Ruth Marceec-Greaves, Rebecca Hobbs and Justine O'Brien
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Communication

The quarterly AArk newsletters, in both English and Spanish, provide updates on captive conservation programs around the globe. Program managers share their successes, and occasional failures, so others can learn from the husbandry and reintroduction experiences

Our website has continued to grow and was updated in 2021. The Husbandry Document library on the website contains almost 300 articles on topics ranging from enclosure size, to appropriate lighting, to reintroduction and is the most often visited section, providing a wealth of information for amphibian program managers.



In addition to contributing to the Conservation Planning and the Conservation Breeding chapters of the revised Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP), AArk staff co-authored a chapter entitled "Status of Global Amphibian Declines and the Prioritisation of Species for Captive Breeding" in the new CSIRO publication *Reproductive Technologies and Biobanking for the Conservation of Amphibians*. This publication is an invaluable reference for the next generation of conservation practitioners: captive breeding facilities, researchers, and policy-makers involved with biodiversity conservation.

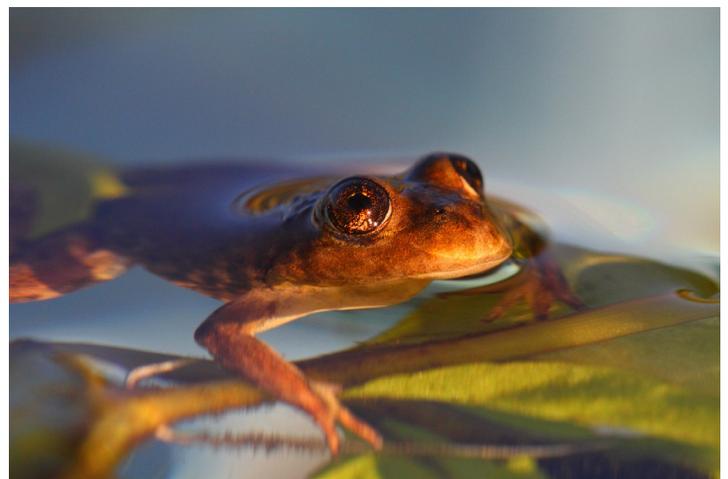
Conservation planning

In addition to the Conservation Needs Assessment tool, which evaluates which species are in need of *ex situ* assurance populations, AArk has developed a program implementation tool that is a useful resource for evaluating how prepared institutions are to manage a conservation program for a particular species. This self-assessment tool was updated and expanded considerably in 2021.

The report generated by the tool clearly identifies any areas of potential concern which can be addressed prior to implementing the proposed program. The tool is available on our website in both English and Spanish versions.

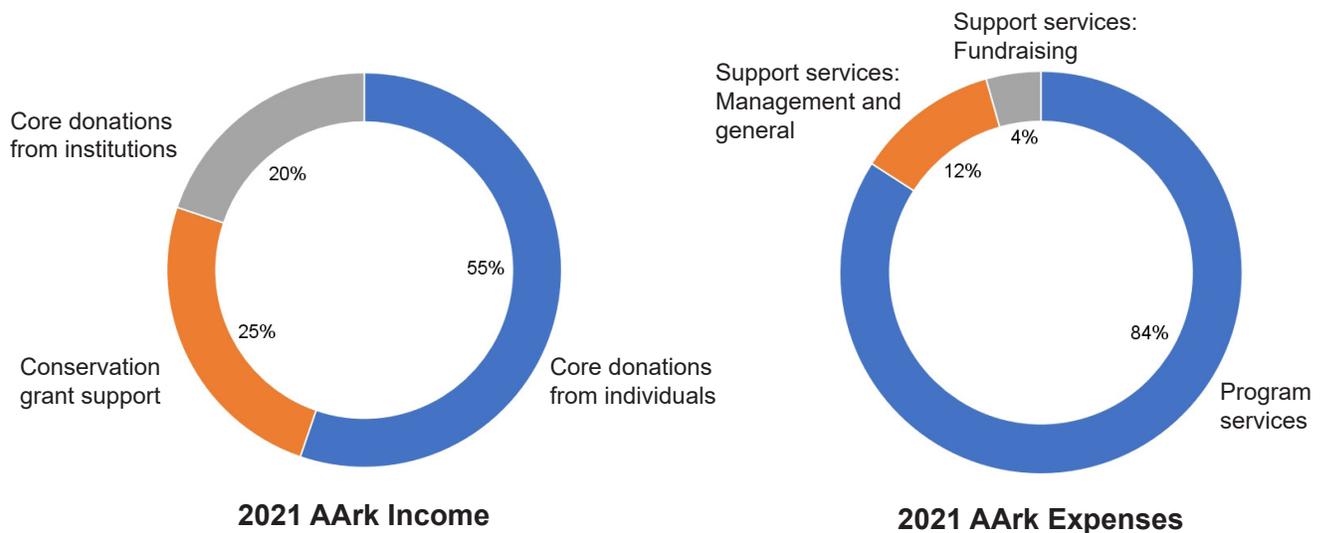
Looking ahead

Conservation Grant proposals returned to previous levels in June of 2022 and we were able to award four start-up grants, two program extension grants, and one mentorship grant. In a promising new development, Dr. Federico Kacoliris, from the University of La Plata in Argentina, has joined AArk on a one-year assignment, working half time to assist facilities in Argentina in responding to the Conservation Needs Assessment recommendations with the establishment of new programs for those species identified as needing assurance populations. We've already seen the results of his efforts in the 2022 Conservation Grant proposals.



The El Rincon stream frog (*Pleurodema somuncurense*) in Argentina. Photo: D. Podestá.

Financials



2021 Amphibian Ark donors

It's only with the support of our generous donors that we're able to help secure a future for threatened amphibian species around the world. Our most sincere thanks to all of you.

Up to \$60,000

Anne Baker and Robert Lacy, in memory of George Rabb
Bernard and Nancy Karwick
Synchronicity Earth
The George and Mary Rabb Fund for Conservation

Nathan Spaun
Twardy Family Charitable Fund
Woodland Park Zoo

Leopold Avallone
Beastly Threads
Roman Bodinek
David Corsini
Richard Cox
Janine Crane
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Jocelyn Metzger for Lori Kandl
David Mitchell
Joseph Moreira
Taj Mumma
Stephan Schwinn
Douglas Widener

Up to \$10,000

Saint Louis Zoo
Zoo Garten Leipzig

Up to \$500

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Richard Lawson
Tamara Pazos
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Troy Woodruff

Up to \$5,000

Aquazoo – Löbbbecke Museum
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
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Rosamond Gifford Zoo
Sedgwick County Zoo
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*Front cover: The Junín giant frog (*Telmatobius macrostomus*) is endemic to Peru and is endangered due to habitat degradation, introduced predator species and overexploitation. Photo: Oscar Damian.*