

Our Challenge

The resources are simply not available to rescue and manage the large numbers of critically endangered amphibian species.

- North American zoos have the resources to manage only 10 of the 500 species in danger of immediate extinction—2% of species requiring immediate rescue—in the best case scenario.
- The global zoo community has the resources to manage only 50 of the 500 species—10% of species requiring immediate rescue—in the best case scenario.

“The global zoo and aquarium community has taken on this challenge with enthusiasm and is providing appropriate facilities and breeding grounds within their institutions. But implementation calls for financial and political support from all parts of the world...”

— Sir David Attenborough

To provide the necessary resources, Amphibian Ark and participating organizations must raise \$50 million. This money is urgently needed to preserve these species by funding:

- Research on amphibian populations to prioritize those most in need of immediate rescue
- Collaboration among institutions to rescue breeding populations and place them in appropriate facilities
- Coordination to avoid duplication of efforts
- Construction of additional biosecure facilities to house rescued populations
- Training keepers to manage the rescued populations
- Other startup costs entailed in the rescue operations



NORHAVATI AHMAD

ONLY YOU CAN SAVE AMPHIBIANS



PHIL BISHOP

We need your help to ensure that birds, reptiles, and mammals—many already struggling to survive—will not disappear because of loss of a major part of their diets. We need your commitment to avoid the loss of scientific knowledge and medicines that can come from further study of amphibians. We need your support to avert the loss of amphibians that control pest insects—mosquitoes, flies, termites, agricultural pests, etc.—and maintain major health and agricultural benefits for all humans. We need your participation to preserve these wonderful creatures so that our children and their children will be able to experience the compelling sense of wonder that comes from watching tadpoles change into toads or frogs and listening to their songs.

- Contact Amphibian Ark and become involved.
- Volunteer your time.
- Contribute funds.
- Be a spokesperson.
- Write to your Senators and Representatives to encourage public funding.

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*Amphibians need your help:
Jump in!*



DIRK PETZOLD

The Amphibian Crisis

After thriving for more than 360 million years, amphibians—frogs, toads, salamanders, newts, and caecilians (legless, tailless tropical amphibians that resemble eels or earthworms)—are dying in alarming numbers. About 122 species are believed to have become extinct since 1980. About half of the world's 6,000 species could become extinct within our lifetime, with at least 500 species facing imminent extinction. This rate of extinction is unprecedented since the demise of the dinosaurs.

Destruction of habitat, invasive species, pollution, global warming, and other human influences threaten many species throughout the animal and plant kingdoms. In addition to these challenges, amphibians are being attacked by a lethal disease that has caused unprecedented and unexpected losses. The chytrid fungus quickly and quietly destroys entire species when introduced into new populations in the wild. Chytrid fungus has now been identified in association with amphibian die-offs on every amphibian-inhabited continent. This disease has decimated or wiped out species that had not been considered critically endangered. It happens so quickly that species disappear before anyone realizes they are in trouble.

Amphibians are faring worse than other animals, as shown by the rates of threatened species:

- 30% of amphibians
- 21% of mammals
- 12% of birds
- 5 % of reptiles
- 4% of fish

(Number of threatened species as percentage of species described, according to the 2008 IUCN Red List)



JOHN GARDNER

For amphibians, the potential impact of chytrid fungus across all species is probably underestimated, and a significant number of amphibian species that have been described are too rare and too poorly known to assess their level of endangerment.

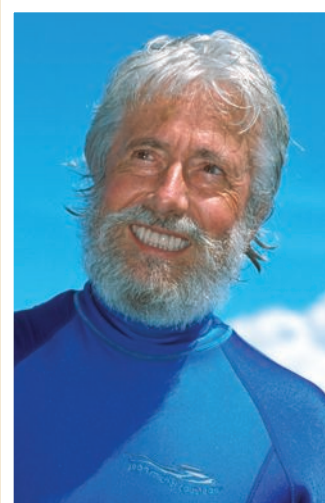
AArk is focused initially on rescuing 500 species of amphibians that cannot be saved in the wild, primarily because of the threat from chytrid fungus. At current rates, ten or more species of amphibians are facing extinction every year, *so time is of the essence.*



DON CHURCH

"I'm Jean-Michel Cousteau, and I'm writing to you on behalf of Amphibian Ark, the global non-profit organization which is coordinating the emergency rescue of the most threatened amphibian species. I am joining Sir David Attenborough, Jeff Corwin, and thousands of zoos, aquaria, and other conservation organizations in rallying our planet to avert this threatened mass extinction."

Jean-Michel Cousteau Seadragon Foundation, Inc.



www.amphibianark.org

The Impact of Losing Amphibians

- Amphibians are a vital part of the food web for many birds, reptiles, and mammals. If amphibians vanish, it will accelerate the crisis for many other animals that depend upon them.

Example: The northern redback salamander is possibly the most abundant vertebrate in eastern U.S. forests, exceeding the biomass of all the bird and mammal species combined. The loss of such an enormous food source would pose a serious threat to many birds, reptiles, and mammals that eat the salamanders.

- Amphibians eat huge numbers of pest insects, benefiting agriculture around the world and reducing the spread of insect-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue fever, encephalitis, and many others.

Example: A single population of 1,000 cricket frogs is estimated to consume almost 5,000,000 insects and other invertebrates a year. Wherever amphibians have declined, invertebrate pests that damage crops and spread disease have increased.

- Study of amphibians has led to many scientific discoveries that benefit humanity. With the many extinctions of amphibian species, we have lost forever information that might have transformed our understanding of health and disease.

Example: The skin of amphibians contains substances that offer possible medical cures for a variety of human diseases, including AIDS.

Good News

The good news is that chytrid fungus is manageable in amphibians in captivity. By rescuing breeding populations of critically endangered amphibians around the world and placing them in zoos or other institutions, species can be preserved until it is safe to release them into the wild again. *Amphibian Ark is working to avert the threatened mass extinction by doing just this.*

Reflecting the urgency of the need and the short timetable for action, Amphibian Ark (AArk) has the full support and participation of the world's scientific leadership. *It is a collaborative partnership of the 1,200-member World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/Species Survival Commission (SSC) Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, the IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group, and many other zoo associations, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, and conservation organizations.*

Amphibian Ark's roles are

- To spearhead and coordinate programs in the U.S. and around the world
- To prioritize species for immediate rescue and coordinate placement of breeding populations in zoos and other institutions
- To help provide resources for maintaining breeding populations until it is possible to reintroduce them into the wild