



AMPHIBIAN CRISIS FACT SHEET

<p>Amphibian Crisis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-third to one-half of the world's approximately 6,000 known amphibian species could go extinct in our lifetime. • This would be the largest mass extinction since the disappearance of the dinosaurs. • Amphibians are considered canaries in the coal mine: they are among the first species to be affected by environmental stressors, so when they show declines in the wild, it is a warning to other species, including humans. • Their population declines and extinctions signal that changes are occurring in the environment that will also negatively impact humans.
<p>Causes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss • Climate change • Pollution and pesticides • Introduced species • Over-collection for food and pets • Most immediate cause...a parasitic fungus called amphibian chytrid
<p>What is Amphibian Chytrid?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amphibian chytrid is a disease that infects the skin of amphibians, a vital organ through which many drink and breathe. • It was discovered a decade ago; dozens of frog species have already vanished because of it. In environments where it thrives, the fungus can kill 80 percent of the native amphibians within months. • Currently, it is unstoppable and untreatable in the wild, even in 'protected' areas. • Amphibian chytrid is believed to have originated in Africa. The export of African clawed frogs (likely resistant carriers of the fungus) around the world for human pregnancy testing and lab studies spread this disease worldwide. Recently, the food and pet trades may have contributed to the problem as well. • The chytrid's spread and effects may be exacerbated by climate change – warmer temperatures dry the moist areas where amphibians live, causing stress that may lead to greater susceptibility to the disease.