

Amphibian Conservation Needs Assessment workshop for the Caribbean

March 22-30, 2011

In March 2011, Amphibian AArk staff facilitated two Amphibian Conservation Needs Assessment workshops in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in the Caribbean. The first workshop, which also included the updating of many Red List Assessments, focussed on species from Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. The second workshop assessed the amphibians of Puerto Rico and Cuba, plus a few species from the Lesser Antilles.

During the nine days, sixteen field experts and observers worked with staff from the AArk, IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group and Conservation International, with various sub-groups being formed as necessary to tackle multiple assessments at the same time.

One hundred and seventy-eight amphibian species were assessed for their conservation needs of which, 54 species occur in Haiti, 44 in the Dominican Republic, 24 in Jamaica, 62 in Cuba, 22 species in Puerto Rico and 6 from the Lesser Antilles. The assessment process resulted in the following recommendations: 25 species in need of *ex situ* Rescue programs; 112 species could still be saved in the wild with *in situ* conservation action; 41 species require further *in situ* research to determine more about the species population status and/or the threats they face; 78 species are currently undergoing, or are proposed for specific *ex situ* research that contributes to the conservation of the species, or a related species; 90 species that are suitable for either *in situ* or *ex situ* conservation education programs; and 26 species recommended for cryopreservation. Only twelve species were not recommended for any conservation action. The breakdown of these species by country is:

Haiti

Rescue	10 species
<i>In situ</i> conservation	41 species
<i>In situ</i> research	17 species
<i>Ex situ</i> research	20 species
Conservation education	20 species
Cryopreservation	10 species
No conservation action required	2 species

Dominican Republic

Rescue	4 species
<i>In situ</i> conservation	29 species
<i>In situ</i> research	8 species
<i>Ex situ</i> research	17 species
Conservation education	20 species
Cryopreservation	4 species
No conservation action required	1 species

Jamaica

Rescue	1 species
<i>In situ</i> conservation	4 species
<i>In situ</i> research	10 species
<i>Ex situ</i> research	6 species
Conservation education	6 species

Cryopreservation	1 species
No conservation action required	8 species

Cuba

Rescue	3 species
<i>In situ</i> conservation	45 species
<i>In situ</i> research	8 species
<i>Ex situ</i> research	41 species
Conservation education	34 species
Cryopreservation	3 species
No conservation action required	1 species

Puerto Rico

Rescue	7 species
<i>In situ</i> conservation	6 species
<i>In situ</i> research	1 species
<i>Ex situ</i> research	8 species
Conservation education	22 species
Cryopreservation	7 species

Lesser Antilles (only 6 species assessed)

Rescue	1 species
<i>In situ</i> conservation	4 species
<i>Ex situ</i> research	2 species
Conservation education	5 species
Cryopreservation	1 species

We are currently identifying additional field experts in the Lesser Antilles and Trinidad & Tobago to help complete the assessments for those islands. Data sheets will be updated as additional assessments are made.

The more detailed conservation action reports can be found on Amphibian Ark's data portal, www.amphibianark.org/assessmentresults.htm

During the workshop we reviewed the results of the species assessments for each country and discussed options for following up with various conservation actions identified during the workshop. Volunteers were identified in each country to be the focal point for continued actions, assessment updates, and to encourage amphibian conservation activities for the countries. These volunteers are: Susan Koenig and Iris Holmes for Jamaica; Rafael Joglear for Puerto Rico; Sixto Inchaustegui for the Dominican Republic; Luis Díaz and Ariel Rodríguez for Cuba and Joel Timyan for Haiti.

We also spent several hours on the last day of the workshop discussing *ex situ* amphibian husbandry issues, with many examples of both simple and sophisticated facilities being shown and discussed. Participants found this particularly helpful, and they gained many good ideas to put into practice at their own facilities.

Workshop participants enjoyed three trips during the workshop: a night walk around Parque Zoológico Nacional (ZooDom); a field trip to a wonderful cloud forest in the 23 km² protected area Reserva Científica de Ebano Verde; and a night trip to the Santo Domingo Botanical Gardens. Several frog, lizard and snake species were found during these trips, as well as a couple of huge tarantulas. We'd like to extend our thanks to Adrell Núñez from ZooDom and Miguel Landestoy for their

hospitality in providing these trips for us, thereby allowing us all to experience a little of the local flora and fauna.

We'd also like to thank the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, which provided the funds to support this workshop.