

Using Conservation Needs Assessments to develop conservation action plans for Brazilian amphibians

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In 2020, the IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG Brazil) and Amphibian Ark organized a Conservation Needs Assessment (CNA) workshop with Brazilian experts to assess the conservation needs of amphibian species in Brazil (see AArk Newsletter 52, 2020, www.amphibianark.org/Newsletters/AArk-newsletter-52.pdf). The assessment workshop took place between August and November 2020, however the review and approval process of the assessments wasn't completed until April 2021, when they became publicly available on the CNA website www.conservation-needs.org.

As Brazil is a megadiverse country, which currently has 1,188 known amphibian species, and to make the CNA process more focused on species which most need action, we chose to assess only those species which were listed in one of the threatened categories. We used the last national Red List provided by the RAN/ICMBio (Brazilian government agency) as a reference for this, and although the evaluations took place in 2018, the results are yet to be published.

Sixty-seven species were evaluated, of which thirteen were listed as high priority for *ex situ* rescue conservation actions. Of the species which were evaluated, twenty-five were also recommended for *in situ* conservation actions, sixty-six for further *in situ* research, five for husbandry research, thirteen were recommended for biobanking, fifteen for applied *ex situ* research and forty-eight species were recommended as ideal for conservation education purposes. Of the thirteen high priority rescue species, one is from the southern region of Brazil, nine occur in the southeast, one in the mid-west, one in the north and one in the northeast.

In order to disseminate the results of the CNA to the wider con-

Pithecopus rusticus is a high priority species which is found only on privately-owned land and the primary threat to this species is the alteration of the wetlands in the area. Photo: Elaine Lucas.

servation community, ASG Brazil organized the 3rd ANFoCO (Amphibians in Focus) – Brazilian Symposium on Amphibian Conservation (<https://asgbrasil.wixsite.com/asg-brasil>), which took place from November 30 to December 2, 2021, as a virtual symposium. The idea behind ANFoCO is

to provide a platform that generates contacts, connects different actors, promotes debate and which results in taking action that effectively contributes to the conservation of amphibians in Brazil.

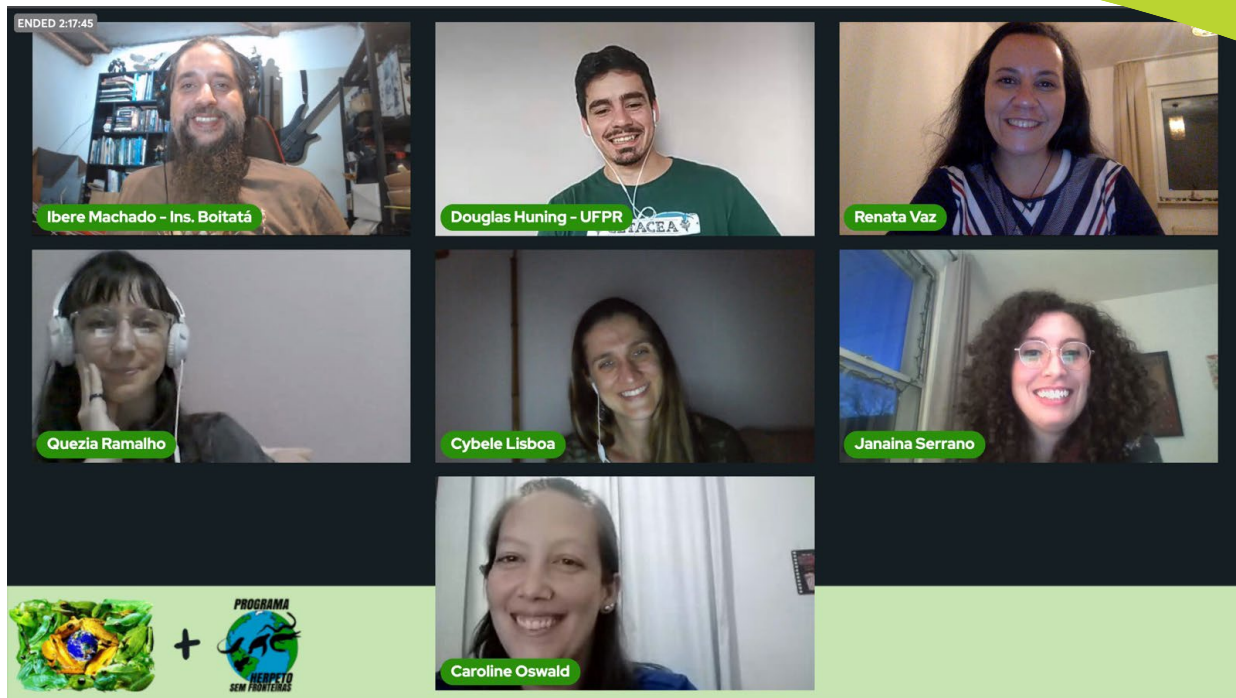
The central theme of the 3rd ANFoCO was the reality of Brazilian endangered species, with emphasis on the thirteen species that are high priority for *ex situ* conservation. Our objective was to discuss the current situation of these species and what paths we should take to conserve them. Therefore, we adopted a slogan for the event: "Where are we, why are we here and where do we want to go?"

The 3rd ANFoCO included thirty-two speakers with different areas of expertise. On the first day of the event, institutions which are important for conserving of amphibians were presented, both in the Brazilian and global context, and the results of the CNA workshop were presented. Lectures were also held to discuss the high priority species in each region of Brazil. The second day focused on the most important threats in the context of Brazilian endangered species, and on the third day we began developing conser-



A competition was held to design a logo for the symposium, with a drawing of *Nyctimantis pomba* by Ibrahim Nehemy winning.





vation strategies for amphibians, including strategies to search for missing species, implement *ex situ* conservation actions, disseminate scientific information and protect amphibian habitat.

The 3rd ANFoCO (Amphibians in Focus) symposium organizing committee (ASG Brazil team) and the “Herpeto sem Fronteiras” representative.

Although it has several limitations, the event’s online format, provided the opportunity to reach and engage more people from different locations, with around 430 participants registering. The 3rd ANFoCO was held in partnership with the YouTube channel “Herpeto sem Fronteiras” (www.youtube.com/c/HerpetoSemFronteiras), and the lectures are available on that channel for anyone who could not attend on the days and times that the event took place. As discussion time at online events is limited, we created a channel on the ResearchGate to connect actors and expand discussions on the topics covered in the 3rd ANFoCO (see www.researchgate.net/post/Estrategias_ex-situ-Anfoco_III).

The completion of the CNA and the 3rd ANFoCO were important steps towards directing and publicizing the actions necessary to help conserve endangered Brazilian amphibians. ASG Brazil’s next steps will be focused on the development of specific action plans for the thirteen high priority species, and will engage all the necessary stakeholders from academia, zoos, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Amphibian Ark grants

Amphibian Ark has a range of granting opportunities throughout the year. In March each year, we accept applications for our Conservation Grants (www.amphibianark.org/conservation-grants/), and in August of each year we call for applications for the George and Mary Rabb Fellowship (www.amphibianark.org/george-and-mary-rabb-fellowship/).

Conservation Grants

Four different types of grants are available: Start-up grants, Extension grants, Workshop attendance, and Mentorship grants. Each of these grants are described on the Conservation Grants page on our web site. Our grants are intended to support conservation projects for amphibian species that cannot currently be saved in the wild, with a focus on *ex situ* actions, and in partnership with appropriate field activities. Preference will be given to projects for species which have been assessed as in need of *ex situ* rescue or research work, either as a recommendation from a Conservation Needs Assessment (www.conservationneeds.org) or a similar, national assessment process.

George and Mary Rabb Fellowship

This fellowship supports early or mid-career scientists and conservationists in research-based professional development that furthers amphibian conservation. This fellowship is not intended to help support graduate-student research. Proposals that address species research priorities indicated in the Amphibian Red List and/or the Amphibian Ark Conservation Needs Assessment (CNA), or thematic research priorities indicated in the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP) will be given preference. Applicants must be formally associated with a mentor or lead scientist at a relevant university, NGO, zoo/aquarium, or other established institution. The fellowship carries a \$5,000 stipend and is open to applicants from all countries.