

## WAZA Resolution on the Amphibian Extinction Crisis



### Recognizing:

- That amphibians face an extinction crisis in several parts of the world;
- That the complex factors behind the extinctions are not well understood;
- That the spread of one of the immediate mortality agents, the chytrid fungus, can not be halted in the wild;
- That other areas of amphibian biodiversity are probably at similar risk.

### Therefore WAZA:

- Recognizes the significance of this ongoing extinction spasm;
- Acknowledges the pioneering efforts of various institutions and individuals (IUCN, CI, etc) in assessing amphibian status and the scale of the extinction process;
- Recognizes that accelerating efforts of various bodies, including many members of WAZA, to address the situation both in the wild and in captivity;
- Recognizes that its members have unique skills and abilities to mount a concerted amphibian conservation breeding program to establish captive assurance populations;
- Urges its members - both associations and individual institutions - to collaborate with IUCN and the bodies, including research institutions, set up to respond to this extinction crisis, and to provide all the resources possible to address this unprecedented situation.

There are many ways in which members can contribute their resources (skills, facilities, and financial help), but it is essential that the response is well coordinated and in conformity with principles and Action Plans now urgently being developed.

WAZA commits itself to encourage its members to join together and contribute;  
WAZA itself will work with its Regional Associations to ensure its coordinating role is effective;

**WAZA will liaise with CBSG, which is facilitating the first phase of WAZA's involvement; and WAZA will collaborate with the bodies established by IUCN and its partners to confront the ongoing extinction of amphibians.**

*Adopted at the WAZA Administrative Session of 6 October 2005 – 60th Annual Meeting, held at New York City, USA, 2005*



### A CBSG/WAZA Amphibian Initiative Update:

Scientists recently rediscovered two IUCN Critically Endangered frogs – the Santa Marta harlequin frog (*Atelopus laetissimus*) and the San Lorenzo harlequin frog (*A. nahumae*) in the El Dorado Nature Reserve on the northwest slope of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta massif, on the Caribbean coast of Colombia. These species had not been seen in 14 years and were believed extinct. The reserve is an important home for numerous threatened species, and its protection was a top priority of the Alliance for Zero Extinction a 62 member group of conservation organizations battling global extinctions. In March, alliance members Conservation International (CI) and American Bird Conservancy (ABC) helped Fundación ProAves of Colombia purchase the 1,600 acre site to protect it as a nature reserve. Preserving their habitat is only one of the measures required to protect these frogs. Although neither of the rediscovered frog species has the deadly fungal disease chytridiomycosis that is causing amphibian extinctions around the world, the fungus has been detected as close as 40 kilometers (25 miles) away on the other side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. If the fungus moves at the same rate it has in Central America, it should reach the reserve within 18 months. *Ex situ* assurance populations of these species should be established now to hedge against extinction in the wild and buy time until the fungus can be controlled in the wild. To that end, CBSG and WAZA are working with the Cali Zoo and Javeriana University in Colombia to plan a training workshop for Colombian biologists, hopefully within the next few months, to help with amphibian *ex situ* conservation programs for these and other species.