



# progress report

*Stories from our partners around the world*

FEBRUARY 2017  
AMPHIBIAN SURVIVAL ALLIANCE  
NEWSLETTER



Got a story you want to share?  
Drop Candace an email today!  
cmhansen@amphibiansr.org

## Rainforest Trust, Red Listing and new Protected Areas for amphibians



Rainforest Trust continues to explore options for helping to establish new protected areas for threatened amphibians around the world. An essential tool for guiding this process is the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Building on our commitment made at the IUCN World Conservation Congress last year, we are providing financial resources to the Amphibian Red List Authority to aid in the assessment and reassessment of over 2,000 species. Any threatened species identified during this process that could significantly benefit from the creation of a new protected area will be flagged, and

we will work with local experts to explore opportunities to implement effective, sustainable, conservation action on the ground.

One recent success story is the increased protection of Cerro Chucantí Private Nature Reserve in Panama. The reserve was recently expanded by 260 acres and safeguards critical habitats for newly discovered species, thanks to Asociación Adopta el Bosque Panamá (ADOPTA), Rainforest Trust, the International Conservation Fund of Canada (ICFC) and other supporters.

To learn more about partnership opportunities with Rainforest Trust, ASA partners are encouraged to visit <https://www.rainforesttrust.org/saves-conservation/>.

Application deadlines for 2017 are March 1, June 1 and November 1.



**RAINFOREST  
TRUST®**



Welcome to the second edition of the Froggress Report!

It has been a busy couple of months for the ASA secretariat. We are in the process of developing our new strategic plan in consultation with the IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group, Amphibian Ark, and our Global Council. This will establish key activities over the next five years, and is an important opportunity to take stock of achievements to date and set positive directions for the future.

A central theme of our new strategy will be supporting and developing the ASA partnership globally to implement recommendations from across the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan.

We are very fortunate to be able to introduce four new Partners this month: The Amphibian Foundation, Frogs & Friends, IUCN SSC ASAP—Asian Species Action Partnership (ASAP), and Froglife. We warmly welcome them into the ASA partnership.

We are working to develop a partnership that is representative of the many actions and regions necessary to conserve amphibians globally. Please do get in touch to suggest partners from around the world!

Dr. Helen Meredith  
Executive Director  
Amphibian Survival Alliance

## Flatwoods Salamander *ex situ* conservation



### amphibianfoundation

As new partners with the Amphibian Survival Alliance, we are excited to tell you about some of our recent developments. The Amphibian Foundation, which is a non-profit located in Atlanta, GA USA are also partners on the federal Flatwoods Salamander Recovery Team, and is the only facility permitted by USFWS to hold a captive assurance colony of Frosted Flatwoods Salamanders (*Ambystoma cingulatum*).

We hope to rear up young salamanders, and—together with the recovery team—develop a plan to produce captive offspring which can then be released into protected habitat back in the wild. Flatwoods Salamanders have suffered a 90% loss in population since 2000, placing them at imminent risk of extinction.

In January, we went to Apalachicola National Forest (ANF) and met with our partners at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), who had been conducting extensive egg surveys throughout known breeding sites within the forest. Flatwoods Salamanders migrate to the breeding ponds in early winter and deposit their eggs in dry basins. The eggs develop for weeks until they are inundated with sea-

sonal rains as their shallow pools fill with water. This year, as with other recent years, the rains were not sufficient to fill the ponds and the eggs were beginning to desiccate. FFWCC collected hundreds of eggs (no small feat!), the majority of which will be assisted through metamorphosis in mesocosms at ANF, but we brought close to a hundred of them back to the Amphibian Foundation to be hatched out, reared and included in our captive breeding colony. We were able to successfully hatch 89 larvae from these water-stressed eggs in our salamander lab, and the larvae are eating ravenously!

For more information, please see our website: [amphibianfoundation.org](http://amphibianfoundation.org)



amphibianfoundation

did you know that ?

The Amphibian Foundation Our team is a member of the Conservation Breeding Specialists Group (IUCN) and has bred dozens of amphibian species in captivity from all over the world.

# Building a future for Madagascar's amphibians

Over 45% of Madagascar's amphibians are threatened with extinction and in urgent need of conservation attention. An updated national amphibian action plan, the New Sahonagasy Action Plan 2016–2020 (NSAP), published last year provides a framework for activities to address this need. Of course action plans are only as good as their implementation. A Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund project "Building a future for the amphibians of Madagascar" aims to help ensure effective implementation.

Starting last year, this project—facilitated through the Amphibian Survival Alliance and Global Wildlife Conservation in partnership with IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group

Madagascar and Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust—has allowed the recruitment of two positions to help coordinate and enable the NSAP at the national level: Tsanta Rakotonanahary, Amphibian Programme Lead and Serge Ndriantsoa, Amphibian Programme Officer.

To do this, Tsanta and Serge will work to build collaborative networks of people, organisations and community groups, both in Madagascar and internationally, who can help deliver the NSAP core themes; increase understanding, engagement and support for amphibian conservation throughout Malagasy society and support local groups and organisations working on amphibian conservation.

Of course, this is a great challenge and, whilst already supported by the CEPF project partners, success will require the engagement, knowledge and experience of multiple organisations and people. If you are interested in supporting amphibian conservation efforts in Madagascar please contact Tsanta at [trakotonanahary@amphibians.org](mailto:trakotonanahary@amphibians.org)



## Save The Salamanders: 2016 year In review



The IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group, in partnership with the Amphibian Survival Alliance, developed the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP) to provide guidance for implementing amphibian conservation. Several chapters have been established on several topics relevant to global amphibian conservation. I have utilized ACAP for my [Save The Salamanders](#) project, and throughout 2016, I aimed to contribute to several of the topics developed by the ACAP chapters.

Throughout the year I made considerable efforts via outreach education to bring the message of salamander conservation to the public. I spoke to a wide array of

people at my lectures, displays, and presentations. This includes people of varying ages, walks of life, and both rural and urban citizens. Highlights include talks at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Trent University, Mac Johnson Wildlife Area, the St. Lawrence River Institute of Environmental Sciences, KCVI's Vanier School, Neapean High School, and many others! Additionally, from May-September I gave weekly displays on salamander conservation at the Thousand Islands National Park. Aside from presentations and events, I also raised awareness via the media. I appeared on radio, Television, or in newspapers/publications all over Ontario.

During my efforts to raise awareness, I promoted habitat management & stewardship, informed decision making, and behavioral changes as efforts that individuals can make to help mitigate threats to salamanders and

contribute to their conservation. This includes efforts to help protect habitats and reduce the spread of diseases.

Throughout the year, I spent much time out in the field. I completed a study on salamanders of the Thousand Islands eco-system via a research permit from the Parks Canada Agency, which is run by the Minister of the Environment. I did a similar census on these amphibians for the Cataraqui Conservation Authority. Furthermore, I was invited by the Wildlife Research and Monitoring Section of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry (OMNRF) to collect swabs from salamanders to screen for Chytrid fungus. I also collected observational records of salamanders across Ontario, Quebec and encountered some of the rarest species to occur here. Aside from Canada, I spent time in the Southern Appalachian Mountains Regions (one of the most salamander diverse regions in the world), collecting observations.





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## Mark your calendars for May 6th, 2017: It's Salamander Saturday!

The Second annual Salamander Saturday is 6 May 2017! We hope you will join the Foundation for the Conservation of Salamanders (FCSal) in celebrating.

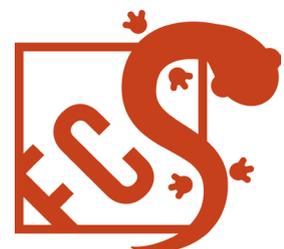
Salamander Saturday is an initiative started by FCSal in 2016 to raise awareness about salamanders, their habitats and their role in the ecosystem. We are encouraging organiza-

tions around the world to hold an event on this day and to share their events with FCSal through social media, thereby promoting global unity in the effort to protect salamanders. Together we can increase awareness about Salamanders!

Your event can be catered to your organizations strengths and schedules. FCSal is here to help! We have downloadable materials available on our website ([www.FCSal.org](http://www.FCSal.org)). Please email us for any questions or to post your event. We look forward to making a huge impact this Salamander Saturday with your help!



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# Frogs & Friends: Big stories from small messengers



In 2016, a new initiative in the fight against the global amphibian crisis appeared on the scene. Three zoo-exhibitions (Vienna, Cologne, Zurich), four video-reportages about amphibian projects and an extensive interactive web-documentary formed the “first serve,” stating what peer group Frogs & Friends is aiming at: it’s the wide public and a nexus of communication.

The concept has been created right from the start as a joint effort by media designers and scientists. “We want people to know how fascinating amphibians really are and what thrilling stories are to be

found behind them—both through exhibitions set up at partnering institutions and online.” Björn Encke, founder and CEO of Frogs & Friends, has spend his entire life walking the line between zoology and general public. Born and raised in a zoo, he stuck to the subject even during his studies of economics and as tv-journalist, before switching sides as marketing director of a german zoo. In 2014 he got Frogs & Friends started as a non-profit NG—among the founders, Mark-Oliver Rödel, curator of herpetology at the Museum of Natural History Berlin and since 2016 president of Frogs & Friends.

By counting on close collaboration of scientists and media professionals Frogs & Friends aims to broaden the reach of amphibian issues, offering



scientific partners a new possibility to spread their findings and messages.

Frogs & Friends feels extremely honored to become part of the ASA network. As a “welcome gift” we’re happy to offer our interactive web-documentation (EN | DE) to any ASA-member for free embedding into their websites. Have a look and drop us a note: <http://www.frogs-friends.org/en/fascinating-frogs/webdoc>



## Species in focus



What happens when diverging sub-populations of more brightly colored members come into contact with less colorful ones?

If preference is driven by either sexual selection, or natural selection, or both, we expect to see the two populations merge. [Segami Marzal et al. \(2017\)](#) tested this hypothesis in a poison frog (*Oophaga pumilio*) where populations of aposematic (bright) and cryptic (dull) morphs come into contact in Bocas del Toro Archipelago, Panama.

Using photos of the frogs, they trained chickens to peck at cryptic frogs for a reward. Their subsequent experiments showed that cryptic frog morphs were more likely to be discovered and pecked when they occurred near a brightly colored, aposematic morph.

Thus, females of a cryptic morph might suffer a higher risk of attack when approaching a brightly colored

male; this could directly select against female preferences for such males and hence reduce interbreeding between morphs, ultimately enhancing the probability of population divergence and speciation.

