



progress report

Stories from our partners around the world

SEPTEMBER 2017

AMPHIBIAN SURVIVAL ALLIANCE

NEWSLETTER



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cmhansen@amphibians.org

Remembering George B. Rabb (1930-2017)

Dear friends,

Heartbroken. This is how members of the global amphibian conservation community, including the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) and IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG), have been since learning that our dear mentor and supporter George Rabb has died. (Read the [Chicago Tribune's tribute to George](#))

George was a passionate, committed and highly respected global conservationist, having significantly influenced zoos and a wide breadth of conservation issues covering many taxonomic groups. However, when it comes to amphibians, George has left a larger-than-life footprint. It was George's vision that there be an international entity to address amphibian declines, which led to the creation of the Declining Amphibian Population Task Force (DAPTF) during his tenure as IUCN Species Survival Commission Chair. The DAPTF later amalgamated with the Global Amphibian Specialist Group (GASG) to form today's ASG.

An early proponent and architect of the Amphibian Survival Alliance, George has been absolutely instru-

mental in the development of the ASA from its inception to its current form, where he was a key member of the ASA's Global Council. We would not be where we are today in global amphibian conservation had it not been for George.

Characterized not only by his sharpness and brilliance, but also by his modest and unassuming disposition, his generosity, and his complete and utter devotion and concern for the well-being of amphibians, George was an example to all of us.

Although George is no longer among us, he is not lost to us. We will remember George, and his legacy will continue through the efforts of each and every individual whose lives he touched. That theme is evident in the outpouring of responses from those in the conservation community—including in the reflections below from a selection of others in the ASA/ASG community—and be-



yond. It is up to us to ensure that his life's work and his legacy continue beyond our own lifetime, and that when future generations hear about George Rabb, may a sense of awe and gratitude grace their own days and inspire them to continue in his footsteps.

Ariadne Angulo
Interim Executive Director
Amphibian Survival Alliance





Second call for Amphibian Ark Seed Grant applications



In June 2017, two new amphibian conservation programs were awarded Amphibian Ark Seed Grants (www.amphibianark.org/news/2017-seed-grant-winners/), and Amphibian Ark is pleased to announce a call for proposals for a second round of Seed Grants in 2017.

This competitive \$5,000 grant is intended to fund start-up **rescue** projects for species that cannot currently be saved in the wild. Successful proposals will reflect Amphibian Ark (AArk) values; **please pay careful attention to the grant guidelines** (below and also at www.amphibianark.org/aark-seed-grant/)

for details on what types of projects are favored. Past grantees can be seen at the web link listed above.

We would like to acknowledge the generous support of the Andrew Sabin Family Foundation, Ronna Erickson, Woodland Park Zoo (www.zoo.org), the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (www.eaza.net), and the other AArk supporters (www.amphibianark.org/our-funders/) who helped establish this grant.

Inquiries can be directed to Kevin Johnson, Taxon Officer KevinJ@amphibianark.org.

Important dates:

- Grant application deadline: 1 November 2017
- Grant decision/notification date: 15 November 2017
- Winners must provide bank details by: 21 November 2017
- Grant payment date: 1 December 2017
- Final progress report, species action plan and husbandry guidelines due 1 December 2018.

Priority guidelines: please read very carefully! This grant is NOT intended to fund:

- Workshops
- Educational exhibits
- Project overhead or indirect costs

Guidelines for Seed Grant applications can be downloaded from the AArk web site (www.amphibianark.org/pdf/AArk-Seed-Grant-2017.pdf).

AArk staff are available if you need assistance in formulating your proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions. Each year several proposals have been rejected due to issues that could have been prevented!



Partnering toward protecting of two important amphibian areas in South Africa

Rainforest Trust local partner, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, is implementing two projects in South Africa to secure habitat using threatened frog species as flagships – the Critically Endangered Amathole Toad in the highlands of the Eastern Cape Province, and the Endangered Pickersgill's Reed Frog on the coast of KwaZulu-Natal. Aside from a focus on tiny threatened frogs, the two projects could not be more different. One focuses on a toad that occurs in upland grasslands, mostly on privately-owned land, while the other is focused on a reed frog that lives in coastal wetlands scattered through communal lands. For both, we are using Biodiversity Stewardship a tool based on voluntary commitments from landowners, through a range of different agreements that all support conservation and sustainable resource use. The most

committed of these agreements result in formally declared conservation areas in terms of the Protected Areas Act, providing long-term security for sites. However, given the vastly different situations of these projects, the approach to implementation must also differ. As is true for most frog species across the world, and especially threatened ones, these species have very restricted ranges, very little of which is currently under formal protection. It is these types of sites and species that are the priority targets for Rainforest Trust's SAVES Challenge a committed to raise \$50 million as a challenge match that will direct a total of \$100 million to establish new Protected Areas to save the world's most endangered species. Find out more at <https://www.rainforesttrust.org/saves-challenge/>



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From lost frog to formal protection: Creating a lasting home for the Amathole Toad

The Amathole Mountains are an important Strategic Water Source Area in South Africa (defined as those areas that supply a disproportionate amount of mean annual runoff to a geographical region of interest, and which make up 8% of the land area across South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland but provide 50% of the water in these countries). These water-supplying landscapes are the very lifeblood of our country and yet many are threatened by land degradation linked to mining, agriculture, poorly managed forestry and invasive alien plants. Given the ongoing drought situation and deterioration of water resources in South Africa at large, management and protection of this small fraction of land that contributes so vitally to our water security is a priority. Together with the local conservation authority, Eastern Cape Parks & Tourism Agency (ECPTA), we have identified several properties within this priority area that also are known to host, or are predicted to host, the Amathole Toad. So far, three private landowners have indicated interest in taking part in the Biodiversity Stewardship Programme. In total, their properties cover 19,600 acres of important grassland and water-source habitat. So far, one farmer has already signed up for the Biodiversity Stewardship process and in August, we will conduct a habitat assessment of the property. We have also compiled conservation plans for two of the five threatened species that occur in the region and this

project will see the implementation of these as part of management plans for habitat protection.

Find out more about this project and how you can support these vital conservation efforts at <https://www.rainforesttrust.org/project/protecting-eastern-cape-highlands-south-africa-rediscovered-amphibian/>



Critical habitat, endangered frogs and communities working to protect them

Through this project, we aim to protect approximately 400 hectares of coastal wetland at sites that occur in largely urban and semi-urban settings. We are working within the Traditional Authorities for the Adams Mission area – an extensive and relatively intact system of wetland and swamp forest (habitat that is itself classified as Critically Endangered) that hosts the Endangered Pickersgill's Reed Frog and Kloof Frog. The Adams Mission site is the only area in which these two frog species are known to co-occur within such close proximity. The main challenge at this site is the unregulated development of housing, which impacts directly on wetland habitat. We are working with the community leaders to find jointly beneficial solutions to this problem, and so far have found them to be very willing to engage on this. There is also exciting potential at this site for developing alternative livelihoods including ecotourism. Since April, we have had the privilege of training four young local people as Nature Site Guides in Adams Mission in an effort to increase ecotourism potential to the area as part of the long-term aim of establishing conservation agreements to support a Protected Area through community stewardship. Their training includes learning about the natural environment and the biodiversity that can be found in the area, but also includes some training featured on the cultural aspects of the area.

We are proud to be playing an instrumental role in protecting this rich and significant part of South African history through ecotourism initiatives of this nature. This rich cultural heritage together with the significant biological importance of Adams Mission will make it a truly remarkable tourism experience as part of the long-term vision of proclaiming priority habitats within this area. Find out more about this project and how you can support it at: <https://www.rainforesttrust.org/project/creating-safe-haven-endangered-pickersgills-reed-frog/>



Seeking conservation heroes

Do you know of an inspiring wildlife conservationist who is making a lasting difference in their home country? If so, we'd love to hear from them! **The Whitley Awards 2018 is now open for applications!** We are looking for dynamic grassroots conservation leaders from middle to low income countries working with project teams to deliver game-changing conservation for wildlife and people.

Since 2001, WFN's Patron, HRH The Princess Royal has presented our internationally recognised Awards—often referred to as the 'Green Oscars'—at an annual Ceremony in London attended by 500 guests and our Trustee, Sir David Attenborough, kindly narrates winner films.

The Charity has supported four Award winners conserving amphibians and would be keen to find more, particularly those that are

working on the **Amphibian Conservation Action Plan** (ACAP) priorities in their home countries. In 2016, Gilbert Adum from Ghana promoted the giant squeaker frog as a means of conserving the Sui Forest Reserve, whilst the 2015 Gold Award winner Dino Martin's work on pollinators and pesticides benefits amphibians in his home country of Kenya and more broadly through his work with The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). In another region, Carlos Vasquez Almazan, following his 2012 Award, now has further funding to extend his amphibian conservation work in Guatemala. Focusing on a different threat, in 2007 Mirza Kusri from Indonesia tackled the frog leg trade and increased awareness about amphibians more generally in her country. If you are a successful amphibian conservationist looking to scale-up or replicate action to

safeguard an important ecosystem with help from the local community in a resource-poor country, we'd love to hear from you!

Why apply for a Whitley Award?

- Prize worth **£40,000** in project funding
- An international stage to showcase your work
- Professional communications and media training
- Tailor-made films, PR assistance and publicity materials
- Join a **190 strong alumni network** with opportunities for **further funding**

Closing date for applications: 31st October 2017.

WFN WHITLEY
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