

Announcements

CBSG Facilitation Training Postponed

The CBSG Facilitation and Communication Skills Training Course, previously scheduled for December 2013, has been postponed until **10-13 March 2014** due to instructor schedule conflicts. The training will still be hosted by the Saint Louis Zoo in Saint Louis, Missouri, USA. Early registration for the new dates will remain open until 15 January 2014. For more information about the training, visit <http://www.cbsg.org/latest-news/cbsg-facilitation-training-2014>.

Recent Activities

2013 CBSG Annual Meeting: “Facilitating a Climate Change Movement”



One hundred and four participants from 23 countries joined us in Orlando, Florida for the 2013 CBSG Annual Meeting. For three days, the participants worked with focus, energy, and good humor. Activities included an interactive mind-mapping session and a “story training,” in which participants practiced narrating their personal reasons for dedicating their lives to conservation. Ten working groups met to discuss some of the key issues facing our community. The reports from these groups will be available soon.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the launch of our climate change initiative, **Zoos and Aquariums for 350**. This effort invites zoos and aquariums to take action on climate change through divestment from fossil fuels, reducing and offsetting carbon emissions, and “Showing the Wild Face of Climate Change” through a photo project. Please read the handbook to learn more: <http://www.cbsg.org/climate-change-handbook>.

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We invite all of you to join the movement and to let us know about your efforts by filling out this simple form: <http://www.cbsg.org/content/join-movement>.

AMACZOOA Amphibian *Ex Situ* Conservation Course and Conservation Strategy Workshop

Twenty-five participants from Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Ecuador, Colombia, the United States, and Costa Rica attended these two events that took place September 19-24 at Simón Bolívar Zoo, San Jose, Costa Rica. Gerardo Chaves, coordinator of the Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) for Costa Rica, welcomed the participants to the Amphibian *Ex Situ* Conservation Course. Several instructors presented throughout the week, including Diego Almeida (Gustavo Orces Herpetological Foundation, Ecuador), Federico Bolaños (Universidad de Costa Rica), John Cossel (Northwest Nazarene University), Andrea Brenes (Universidad de Costa Rica), and Randall Arguedas (FUNDAZOO). These presenters discussed important topics such as amphibian nutrition, veterinary medicine, tools to measure water and other abiotic factors, and reproduction in captivity.



On Saturday the course transferred to Brian Kubicki's Costa Rican Amphibian Research Center at Siquirres, Limón. Brian talked about his experiences with both *ex situ* and *in situ* amphibian conservation. He showed the participants his terrariums and discussed the work he does to facilitate amphibian reproduction *in situ*. Using CBSG workshop methodologies, participants spent the next three days building a conservation strategy for amphibians in Mesoamerica. Four working groups were established: education, research, monitoring and habitat, and fundraising. Overall, the groups' conclusions highlighted the importance of collaboration among interdisciplinary groups. This workshop was financed by WAZA, FUNDAZOO, and Amphibian Ark, with the support of Northwest Nazarene University, Universidad de Costa Rica, and Costa Rican Amphibian Research Center.

Workshop for the Southern Corroboree Frog

The Critically Endangered southern corroboree frog (*Pseudophryne corroboree*) lives only in the sub-alpine zone of Australia's Kosciuszko National Park. The species has been in continual decline for the past 20 years and in 2013, for the first time, no signs of breeding were observed outside captivity. Extinction in the Wild is expected in 2-3 years. The primary threat is chytridiomycosis. The current hope for the species is that sustained exposure to the chytrid fungus will eventually result in the emergence of resistance in wild populations. Recovery team efforts are therefore focused on re-establishing and sustaining a genetically diverse and abundant population of the species within its natural range. CBSG was invited to facilitate the development of a plan for an efficient and well-targeted program of captive breeding and release.

On 24 September, 11 contributors from seven organizations met in Canberra to discuss the goals of the captive program and the current barriers to achieving them, and to evaluate alternative management strategies in this light. Recovery planning for this species to date follows a One Plan approach, involving stakeholders from the field, captive, and academic communities. Over the past decade, hundreds of eggs have been collected from the wild from across the species' former range, providing a solid, genetically representative base from which to build a captive program. Participating zoos have invested considerably in the development of husbandry skills which have produced excellent results.

Building on this potential, workshop participants agreed on a series of ambitious goals for a 50-year program: the production of at least 2000 eggs per year for release; retention of 95% wild source gene diversity in the parent stock; and the continued ability to produce non-inbred offspring for release. The genetic management strategy selected as the best fit for the situation at hand was a Maximal Avoidance of Inbreeding scheme. Participants worked to customize the fundamentals of such a scheme to fit the species' biology and the available infrastructure, resources, and founder base. The potential for the resulting strategy to meet program goals was validated using population models, and the draft plan is currently in review. Once complete, implementation will be coordinated through Taronga Zoo with sub-populations held there, at Melbourne Zoo and Healesville Sanctuary, and at the Amphibian Research Centre. Future extension of the managed population may include *in situ* populations maintained via translocation.



Photo: Kevin Johnson



Upcoming Activities

Conservation Planning for Panama's Golden Frogs



Photo: Ron Gagliardo, Courtesy Atlanta Botanical Garden

For hundreds of years, they've been considered symbols of good luck among native people of Panama. But in the last decade, the country's golden frogs, *Atelopus zeteki* and *A. varius*, may have disappeared from their native rainforests in the mountainous western portion of the country. The primary culprit responsible for their near-extinction in the wild is chytrid fungus, which is decimating amphibian populations in many parts of the world. An effort is currently underway to save the species from extinction through intensive population management in rescue centers in Panama and in zoos and aquariums across North America. If the species is to be saved from extinction and returned to its native forests, close collaboration between *in situ* and *ex situ* efforts will be critical.

To help facilitate this effort, Project Golden Frog and the Panama Amphibian Rescue and Conservation Project have invited CBSG to facilitate a conservation planning workshop in El Valle, Panama in mid-November. The priority actions agreed to at the meeting will provide a framework for *in situ* habitat conservation, education, and potential recovery projects, including the possibility of returning frogs to Panamanian facilities from North American *ex situ* populations.

PHVA for the Greater Sage Grouse in Canada

The greater sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus urophasianus*) is dependent for food and shelter upon sagebrush habitat found in parts of the US and Canadian prairies. This species is at risk due to habitat loss and degradation, extreme weather conditions, industrial disturbance, and other threats. Populations now occupy only 7% of the historical range in Canada (southern Alberta and Saskatchewan) and are estimated to have declined by 98% in the past 25-45 years to about 100 adults total in Canada, calling for immediate attention to prevent further decline and possible extinction.



CBSG has been invited to conduct a Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) workshop for the Canadian population of this threatened species in collaboration with the Calgary Zoo's Centre for Conservation Research, the Reintroduction Specialist Group, and the Galliformes Specialist Group, and with funding by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. This international multi-stakeholder workshop will be held at the Calgary Zoo on 14-17 January 2014. The overall purpose of this workshop is to determine how best to incorporate *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation management techniques into an integrated conservation plan to support the recovery of this species in Canada. The PHVA will build from previous work and existing recovery strategies and will include population modeling tools (*Vortex* and *PMx*) to assist in management action evaluation and decision making. Intensive population management strategies such as translocation, reintroduction, headstarting, and captive breeding will be explored as part of this One Plan approach to conservation planning for this high priority species.