



### A Frog Fit For a Prince:

Naming a new amphibian species in honor of Charles, Prince of Wales

by Kevin Zippel, AArk Director

On 5 July 2012, CBSG Chair Dr. Onnie Byers joined a contingent of Amphibian Ark representatives at Highgrove House, the country home of Prince Charles, near Tetbury, England, to celebrate the conservation contribution of a rainforest hero and raise the profile of a critically imperiled group of vertebrates.

AArk partner Dr. Luis Coloma of Centro Jambatu in Ecuador published the scientific description of a new species of tree frog, *Hyloscirtus princecharlesi*, as a tribute to His Royal Highness Prince Charles' remarkable efforts to protect rainforests around the world. Amphibians are our most imperiled terrestrial



vertebrates, and habitat loss is their greatest threat. Conserving important habitats like rainforests is therefore the most significant action humans can take to protect amphibians. The Prince's Rainforest Project is at the forefront of these efforts, and his role is now honored in perpetuity in the Latin name of this precious species.

The Highgrove event included presenting His Royal Highness with a signed copy of the publication. Dr. Kevin Zippel, AArk Director, presented the Prince with a commemorative gold medallion from the Royal Mint, and a glass replica of the frog generously donated by the Frabel company of Atlanta. Onnie represented the IUCN as one of AArk's founding principal partners with Dr. Gerald Dick on hand to represent WAZA. Also in attendance were representatives of Chester Zoo and Kew Gardens (Dr. Gordon McGregor Reid, Dr. Gerardo Garcia, Barbara Smith, and Madeleine Groves) who were vital in the planning, promotion, and execution of the event.

## About *Hyloscirtus princecharlesi*

Dr. Luis Coloma discovered the new species in 2008 among preserved specimens at the Museo de Zoología, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE). He organized three expeditions with Ecuadorian colleagues seeking additional specimens in the Cotacachi-Cayapas National Park at about 2800 m altitude in the Cordillera Occidental del Ecuador. Although the original locality had already been cleared for agriculture, the team was able to locate four adult specimens and some tadpoles in nearby areas. The frogs were found at night climbing on branches close to waterfalls at about 5-10 meters high. For conservation purposes, they were transported alive to the Centro de Investigación y Conservación de Anfibios (CICA) where DNA analyses confirmed that this is indeed a new species for science; but, sadly, a species that is already Endangered by IUCN Red List criteria. If this species is to persist in the wild, it requires further scientific and conservation action in the field and in the laboratory.

## About Amphibian Ark

The Amphibian Ark is a joint effort of three principal partners: the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the IUCN SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), and the Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG), and serves as the *ex situ* branch of the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA). For more information visit [www.amphibianark.org](http://www.amphibianark.org).



Above: Prince Charles and Luis Coloma greet each other at Highgrove.



Left-Right: Dr. Luis Coloma (Centro Jambatu); Dr. Onnie Byers (CBSG); Dr. Kevin Zippel (AArk), HRH Charles, Prince of Wales; Dr. Gerald Dick (WAZA).

