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GREEN HOLIDAY GIFTING: HELP PUT A FROG ON THE AMPHIBIAN ARK, SAVE A SPECIES; LARGEST CONSERVATION PROGRAM IN HISTORY SETS SAIL

360 Million Years Later, It's Not Easy Being Green; Amphibian Species in Danger of Largest Mass Extinction Since Dinosaurs

ST. LOUIS (October 4, 2007) – While the international community talks about “going green,” perhaps one of the best things people can do this holiday season is simply listen to the frogs – nature’s “canaries in the coal mine,” which are becoming eerily silent.

Frogs and their amphibian brethren around the globe are, tragically, croaking – many, victims of a newly discovered threat: amphibian chytrid fungus. For frogs and other amphibians, it’s not easy being green: one-third to one-half of the world’s 6,000 known amphibian species are in danger of going extinct, signaling what would be the largest mass extinction on the planet since the disappearance of the dinosaurs.

Amphibian Ark is accepting donations and challenging gift givers worldwide – corporations and individuals – to join in one of the greatest species conservation programs in the history of humanity. Amphibian Ark must raise \$50-\$60 million to save 500 of the most endangered species. While a \$100,000 corporate or philanthropic gift allows a donor to “adopt” a frog species (or a toad, newt, salamander, or caecilian) and have the option to join scientists on a rescue mission, Amphibian Ark is asking for donations of any size to ultimately help the Ark set sail and bring amphibians to safe harbor.

Holiday gift givers – who spent \$456 billion in 2006 – can make a difference. Gifts in the name of kids or loved ones to Amphibian Ark can help avert the crisis. Donations to this global effort to save frogs and other amphibians can be made in the name of friends, family members, and/or employees at <http://www.amphibianark.org/donations.htm>. Gifts are tax deductible as the Amphibian Ark is part of the Global Conservation Network, a 501(c)3 organization.

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Amphibian Ark is a partnership between the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, and IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group.

www.amphibianark.org

Amphibian Ark Holiday Gifting Add One

Amphibian Ark is a unique effort of the world's leading zoos, aquariums, and other conservation partners that will rescue the most threatened species. Those that cannot be saved in the wild will be brought into "protective custody" for safekeeping and breeding and, ultimately, will be released back into the wild when the amphibian chytrid fungus threat has been controlled.

Noted naturalist and conservationist Sir David Attenborough, patron of the 2008 Year of the Frog campaign, said, "The global zoo and aquarium community has taken on this challenge with enthusiasm and is providing appropriate facilities and breeding ground within their institutions. But implementation calls for financial and political support from all parts of the world. Without an immediate and sustained conservation effort to support captive management, these wonderful creatures could become extinct in our own lifetime."

Said Jeffrey P. Bonner, Ph.D., chairman of Amphibian Ark and president and CEO of the St. Louis Zoo, "The time is now. Catastrophic extinctions of amphibian species may unbalance the ecosystem in a way that global warming could only hope to. No donation is too small."

He added, "In addition to their intrinsic value, frogs and amphibians offer many benefits and are a critical part of a healthy world. They play an important role in the food web as both predator and prey, eating insects which benefits agriculture and minimizes disease spread. Their skin also has substances that protect them from some microbes and viruses, offering promising medical cures for a variety of human diseases."

Amphibian Ark's captive management is a vital component of the Amphibian Crisis Action Plan, an integrated conservation effort to mitigate threats for species that otherwise would go extinct.

The most immediate threat to amphibians is a parasitic fungus called amphibian chytrid, a disease that is deadly to hundreds of amphibian species. Currently unstoppable and untreatable in the wild, the fungus can kill 80 percent of native amphibians within months. Additional dangers include habitat loss, pollution, pesticides, and climate change.

In an effort to raise awareness of the crisis as well as the critical funding needed to address the problem, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), and the IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) have joined together to create Amphibian Ark, a joint partnership dedicated to the global survival of amphibians – frogs and toads, salamanders and newts, and caecilians – that focuses on those that cannot be safeguarded in nature.

In 2008, Amphibian Ark will lead zoos, aquariums, and others in a globally coordinated public awareness campaign, "The Year of the Frog." The money raised from this global campaign will help fund initiatives such as training courses, technical guidance, species survival efforts, fostering partnerships, capacity building, and communication activities. All these activities will ensure sustainability of the conservation work that will extend far beyond 2008.

To learn more about Amphibian Ark, visit www.amphibianark.org.