

2008 愛蛙年



直到目前為止，世界上大約已知的 6000 種兩棲動物物種有三分之一至二分之一已經滅絕。科學家認為，在我們能夠採取行動之前將有更多的物種滅絕。但現在如果我們迅速行動，還能挽救成百上千的物種。

2006年，“IUCN/SSC 保育繁殖專家小組”(CBSG)、“IUCN/SSC 兩棲動物專家組”(ASG)以及“世界動物園和水族館協會”(WAZA)制定了一項稱為“兩棲動物方舟”(Amphibian Ark)的聯合計劃，旨在制定、推動並指導短期的異地管理工作，以增加那些目前無法在野外受足夠保護的兩棲動物的長期存活的可能性。

“兩棲動物方舟”啟動了一項全球性的活動，即“2008愛蛙年”。

蛙類的重要性：

- 兩棲動物作為捕食者和被捕食者，在食物鏈中扮演著重要的角色，保持著自然界微妙的平衡。在他們消失的地方，釀有有害的影響繼而產生。
- 兩棲動物捕食昆蟲，有助於全球農作物的生長，減少瘧疾等疾病的傳播。
- 兩棲動物的皮膚具有能夠抵禦某些細菌和病毒的物質，為包括愛滋病在內的多種人類疾病提供了可能的治療物質。
- 兩棲動物是最先受到環境壓力因素影響的物種之一，如果牠們在自然界的數量開始減少，則是對其他物種包括人類的警告。
- 兩棲動物的皮膚滲透性極強，牠們可由此攝取水份和呼吸。但不幸的是，污染物也非常容易的進入身體，這使得兩棲動物也成為環境品質的獨特指標。牠們對污染特別敏感，使之成為對人類潛在威脅的重要警示。

滅絕原因：

兩棲動物由於棲息地減少、氣候變化、污染和殺蟲劑、外來物種以及由於過度捕捉用於食用和寵物等而遭到嚴重的影響。雖然棲息地破壞是主要的威脅，但最直接原因就是稱為兩棲動物致命壺菌的寄生真菌，這種真菌對於幾百種兩棲動物是致命的，在過去的 30 - 40 年間迅速由非洲傳播到了世界各地。全球氣候變化也可能加劇了這一問題。

解決方案：

“兩棲動物方舟”計劃將拯救瀕危的物種並將牠們送往各個動物園、水族館以及其他機構中具有專門生態安全措施的設施中進行保護和繁殖，幫助確保兩棲動物的長期生存。這些受拯救的動物將在原有的威脅得到控制時放回原棲息地。

香港兩棲及爬行動物保育基金/香港兩棲及爬蟲協會支援“兩棲動物方舟”和“2008愛蛙年”的宣傳工作，目的在於提高政府、傳媒、學校教育以及大眾對於兩棲動物脆弱性和牠們所面臨滅絕危機的整體意識。

參考資料：

<http://www.amphibianark.org/>

2008 Year of the Frog:

After thriving for over 360 million years, 1/3 to 1/2 of the world's approximately 6,000 known amphibian species could go extinct in our lifetime. Scientists believe many more species may go extinct before we are able to act. But there is one option currently available which can save hundreds or even thousands of species if we act rapidly.

In 2006, CBSG, the IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) set up a collaborative program called the Amphibian Ark (AArk) to develop, promote, and guide short-term * ex-situ management, thus making possible long-term survival of amphibians for which adequate protection in the wild is not currently feasible.

* Ex-situ conservation means literally, "off-site conservation". It is the process of protecting an endangered species of plant or animal by removing part of the population from a threatened habitat and placing it in a new location, which may be a wild area or within the care of humans. Retrieved 1 April, 2008, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ex-situ_conservation

Amphibian Ark is launching this global campaign – 2008 The Year of the Frog.

Frogs Matter:

- Amphibians play an important role in the food web as both predator and prey, maintaining the delicate balance of nature. Where they are disappearing, detrimental effects are already being documented.
- Amphibians eat pest insects, benefiting successful agriculture around the world and minimizing the spread of diseases including malaria.
- The skin of amphibians has substances that protect them from some microbes and viruses, offering possible medical cures for a variety of human diseases, including AIDS.
- Amphibians are among the first species to be affected by environmental stressors; so when they show declines in the wild, it serves as a warning to other species, including humans.
- Amphibians' skin is highly permeable, allowing them to drink and breathe. Unfortunately, contaminants also readily enter the body, making amphibians an exceptional indicator of environmental quality. They are particularly sensitive to pollution, making them important sentinels to potential human threats.

The Reason of Extinction:

Amphibians are severely affected by habitat loss, climate change, pollution and pesticides, introduced species, and over-collection for food and pets. While habitat destruction is the major threat, the most immediate cause is a parasitic fungus called amphibian chytrid, a disease that is deadly to hundreds of amphibian species and has quickly spread from Africa across the planet over the past 30-40 years. Global climate change may have exacerbated the problem.

The Solution:

The AArk program will rescue priority endangered species and place them in “protective custody” in dedicated bio-secured facilities at zoos, aquariums, and other institutions around the world for safekeeping and breeding, helping to ensure the long-term survival of amphibians. The rescued amphibians will be released back into the wild when the original threats have been controlled.

Hong Kong Society of Herpetology Foundation supports the campaign of 2008 The Year of the Frog in order to raise awareness among government, media, school educators, and people generally about the vulnerability of amphibians and the extinction crisis they face.

Retrieved 1 April, 2008, from
<http://www.amphibianark.org/>