

What's So **IMPORTANT** About **AMPHIBIANS?**



A Key Link in the Food Chain

All adult amphibians are **predators**, and their diet includes **crop pests and carriers of human disease**. Meanwhile, most tadpoles eat plant matter and debris in ponds and lakes, **extending the life of many wetlands**. As well, **many other animals** (from birds to mammals to reptiles and even other amphibians) **rely on amphibians for their own food**.

Vessels for Nutrients

Tadpoles are like **aquatic cows**. They consume algae and other aquatic vegetation, and then they **take all that biomass onto land** with them when they metamorphose into frogs. **In areas where frogs have gone extinct, ponds become choked with algae**, which can have detrimental consequences for other aquatic creatures.



Walking Pharmacies

Instead of a physical protective barrier like the hair, thick scales, or feathers other animals have, **amphibians use a chemical barrier of secretions** to help them stay moist, warm, clean, healthy and parasite-free. Those chemicals also **provide humans with numerous medicines used to treat a variety of conditions**, from depression to cancer.

Environmental Indicators

With their thin, permeable skin, **amphibians are exquisitely sensitive indicators of harmful chemicals and shifting weather patterns in the environment**. Their disappearance is a sign that something is amiss in a given area. **With roughly a third of amphibian species in danger of extinction, something is obviously amiss in many places**.



What is Philadelphia Zoo doing to help?

Recognizing the potential to have a **species-saving impact**, Philadelphia Zoo's amphibian conservation program is dedicated to **saving endangered frogs from the Andes and the Caribbean, which are home to a particularly high number of unique and at-risk frog species**. Our main focus is on the **captive breeding of frogs from Haiti**, both here at the Zoo and out in the field. We also focus on **research, local capacity-building and the establishment of additional captive breeding programs**.

For more information on how Philadelphia Zoo is working to save amphibians on site and in the field, visit philadelphiazoo.org/AmphibianConservation.



Is there anything I can do?

Always! If we all commit to simple changes to reduce human impact on climate change, we can help save the planet's wildlife. Some amphibian-specific things you can do include:

Cleaning up local wetlands, or creating a new wetland in your backyard. Even a small pond can help!

Rescuing eggs and tadpoles from local swimming pools and using them to seed new populations.

Managing your yard without using pesticides, fertilizers and weed killers, which are poisonous to amphibians.

Climate change caused by carbon dioxide emissions from energy use is threatening the livelihood of many already endangered species, including amphibians, but our everyday choices around saving electricity, conserving water and recycling can help wildlife and the environment.