

## The Plight of Amphibians

Most conservation organizations, scientists, and researchers agree that at least 200 frog species have disappeared from around the world since 1979. If we do the math, in the past 36 years that's one species every 66 days. Frogs naturally go extinct at a rate of 1 every 250 years.

*Today, amphibians are experiencing a 1000+ fold increase over the normal rate of extinction.*

65 million years ago, the Earth witnessed its fifth mass extinction event with the fall of the dinosaurs. Today, we live in the sixth: *the mass extinction of amphibians*. What makes this mass extinction unique is that humans are the reason behind these declines. In the past 3.5 billion years that there has been life on earth, there has never been a case when one species drove thousands to extinction.

The causes of these extinctions and declines are numerous and complicated.

- *Habitat loss* is the most obvious reason for population declines; if forests are cut down and wetlands are filled in, the species depending on those forests and wetlands vanish.
- *Pollution* also plays a leading role in the downfall of our frogs.
- *Climatic change* is yet another culprit.
- *Pet trade* and the *overexploitation of frogs* for consumption is a devastating role humans voluntarily participate in.

*As if these aforementioned threats aren't bad enough...*

- *Disease* - a virulent fungus is attacking amphibians across the globe. *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis (Bd)* causes the infectious disease chytridiomycosis or chytrid in amphibians. While there are multiple causes of amphibian declines, many catastrophic die-offs are attributed to *Bd*.

Frogs, salamanders and caecilians are woven through our cultural fabric the world over. They provide children with beauty and wonder and play an integral role in the function of ecosystems. Because of sensitivity to change, amphibians are believed to be bellwethers of ecosystem health

When a whole group of a particular type of animal starts to disappear then we need to worry. Amphibians play an essential part in the food web of life as top insectivores and prey to many other animals. If you remove this important link then one can only guess about the ramifications, but there is no doubt that they will be serious

*It would be extremely naïve to assume that we humans will not suffer the repercussions of the amphibians' demise.*

The Disappearing Frogs Project is a proud partner of The Amphibian Survival Alliance who is committed to converging a diverse network of global partners with one goal: to protect amphibians and their habitats.

