

Help “Spring Forward” for Amphibians during FrogWatch USA’s 20th Anniversary

Silver Spring, Maryland (March 9, 2018) – Take advantage of Daylight Saving Time and “Spring Forward” for amphibians by [becoming a volunteer](#) for [FrogWatch USA™](#), a citizen science program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) that is now in its 20th year! There’s no better way to celebrate the season than by taking action and engaging in conservation in your community.

FrogWatch USA is a nationwide effort dedicated to collecting information about frog and toad populations, raising awareness about amphibians and wetlands, and involving the public in science. For the past two decades, FrogWatch USA volunteers have collected data on the frogs and toads heard calling in their local wetlands during evenings from February 1 through August 31 each year.

Why frogs? Frogs, toads, and other amphibians play an important role in the health of wetland ecosystems, but more than a third of the world's amphibian species are currently facing the largest mass extinction event since the dinosaurs. Even in the United States, previously abundant amphibian populations have experienced dramatic declines.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) initiated FrogWatch USA in 1998 in response to these widespread amphibian declines. AZA has managed the program since 2009, and has established a network of close to [150 chapters across the country](#), many of which are hosted by AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

“What began as a small grassroots program has grown into a national network of hundreds of committed volunteers who have gathered an immense amount of important environmental data,” said Sam Droege, a USGS wildlife biologist who co-founded the program.

In celebration of the program’s twentieth anniversary, FrogWatch USA has challenged current and potential volunteers to increase overall participation in the program by 20%. This means by the end of the season, AZA hopes to have seen 500 volunteers log 13,800 species observations over 8,000 monitoring visits at 1,100 wetland sites. By helping AZA reach these goals, they will be part of a legacy of citizen scientists working to shed light on the threats facing amphibians.

“The data collected by FrogWatch USA volunteers can be used to help understand how amphibian populations are changing over time and can inform conservation and management efforts,” said Shelly Grow, AZA’s Vice President of Conservation and Science. “Furthermore, learning to recognize and identify the frogs and toads calling at night is rewarding in itself and lets you appreciate your community and local wetlands in a whole new way.”

Volunteers participating in FrogWatch USA do not have to be frog or toad experts to make important contributions. Look for [in-person training sessions](#) at your local chapters or [explore AZA's online courses](#), where you will learn how to identify frogs and toads by their unique breeding calls, select a wetland monitoring site, conduct outdoor monitoring observations, and submit the observations to the [online data entry and exploration website](#). Follow FrogWatch USA's [social media pages](#) to connect with the program and fellow volunteers. Have fun – and help make a difference!

About AZA

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. AZA is the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and eight other countries. Look for the AZA accreditation logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in saving species and your link to helping animals all over the world. To learn more, visit www.aza.org.

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