

# ZOOS VICTORIA'S PRIORITY SPECIES SOUTHERN CORROBOREE FROG

*Pseudophryne corroboree*

*Critically Endangered*

This striking little frog is under serious threat of extinction. There are now thought to be less than 50 Southern Corroboree Frogs in the wild. Zoos Victoria is dedicated to creating a brighter future for this alpine amphibian. Having been involved in the recovery of this species since 2001, Zoos Victoria maintains a captive insurance population with increasing breeding success. We breed animals for release to supplement wild populations, conduct research into the impact of the infectious chytrid fungus disease, reproduction and diet, and are working to raise the public profile of this Critically Endangered species.

# Zoos Victoria is committed to Fighting Extinction

We are focused on working with partners to secure the survival of our priority species before it is too late.

## IMAGES

FRONT: Plains-wanders prefer short and sparse grasslands with little vegetation. Photo: Mark Antos. Plains-wanderer plumage provides perfect camouflage in grassland habitats. Photo: David Morgan. Plains-wanderer plumage provides perfect camouflage in grassland habitats. Photo: David Morgan



Southern Corroboree Frogs are only found in the sub-alpine regions of Mt Kosciuszko National Park. Despite the fact that they are one of Australia's best known amphibians, this species unique life cycle and habitat requirements make it particularly vulnerable to chytrid fungus and climate change. Zoos Victoria along with program partners have been making an important contribution to the survival of the Southern Corroboree Frog since 2001.

## KEY PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- + Maintain a genetically-diverse captive breeding population.
- + Supplement wild populations with captive-bred individuals.
- + Monitor and assess the ongoing status of wild populations and evaluate the success of the egg release program.
- + Monitor breeding habitats to determine the likely influence of climate change.
- + Conduct ongoing research to determine the ecological interactions between the Amphibian Chytrid Fungus and the Southern Corroboree Frog.
- + Increase community awareness and support.
- + Trial raising frogs in outdoor enclosures at Melbourne Zoo.
- + Support research into assisted reproductive techniques and immune response to chytrid fungus.
- + Support and maintain the construction of disease free field enclosures in Mt Kosciuszko National Park.

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

- + Consistent and increasing captive breeding success for supplementation of wild populations.
- + Comprehensive understanding of captive husbandry.
- + Trial re-introductions to determine the most effective technique to maintain this species in the wild.
- + Establishment of genetically managed regional population.
- + During the 2015/16 breeding season Zoos Victoria produced over 2400 eggs for release.
- + In 2016 program partners released over 3200 eggs into Mt Kosciuszko National Park.

## THE SPECIES

Southern Corroboree Frogs are very slow growing and rely on two distinct habitat types for the breeding and non-breeding portions of their life-cycle. The breeding season occurs in January and February when each male will situate himself in a sphagnum moss nest and call for females. Once they select a mate, females can lay between 10-40 eggs for the male to fertilise. The young take 10-11 months to metamorphose into frogs, and become sexually mature at around 4 years of age. Primary threats to Southern Corroboree Frogs are:

- + Chytridiomycosis; a disease caused by infection from Amphibian Chytrid Fungus.
- + Climate events such as drought and fire which can cause breeding pools to disappear or become overgrown with vegetation.

## THE PLAN

Zoos Victoria has outlined seven projects within the Wildlife Conservation Master Plan 2014-2019 to continue developing our captive breeding techniques, improved husbandry and release programs.

- + Secure current Southern Corroboree Frogs annual captive breeding and release efforts. \$98,000 p.a
- + Increase captive production of eggs. \$150,000
- + Construct and maintain two additional large disease-free field enclosures in Mt Kosciuszko National Park. \$250,000
- + Construct and maintain 20 small disease-free field enclosures in Mt Kosciuszko National Park. \$100,000
- + Develop the application of assisted reproductive technologies to enhance reproductive outputs. \$140,000 p.a
- + Conduct research to identify traits associated with a more robust immune response to the Amphibian Chytrid Fungus. \$498,000
- + Appoint field staff to assist with ongoing population monitoring and interventions. \$180,000 p.a
- + Total costs (over 5 years): \$3.69 million.



## IMAGES

FRONT: Southern Corroboree Frogs are well known across Australia, however their existence is at risk. BACK: An adult male calls from his nest where females lay their eggs. Photos by Damian Goodall.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

We are working on developing our captive breeding techniques, improved husbandry and release programs, but we still need all the support we can get. You can support our Wildlife Conservation Master Plan 2014-19 by donating at:

[zoo.org.au/donate](http://zoo.org.au/donate)

## PROGRAM PARTNERS

ACT Transport Canberra and City Services

Amphibian Research Centre  
[frogs.org.au/arc](http://frogs.org.au/arc)

Canberra and City Services  
[tccs.act.gov.au](http://tccs.act.gov.au)

Murray Catchment Management Authority

[murray.cma.nsw.gov.au](http://murray.cma.nsw.gov.au)

Office of Environment and Heritage (NSW)

[environment.nsw.gov.au](http://environment.nsw.gov.au)

Taronga Conservation Society Australia  
[taronga.org.au](http://taronga.org.au)

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve  
[tidbinbilla.act.gov.au](http://tidbinbilla.act.gov.au)

Wollongong University  
[uow.edu.au](http://uow.edu.au)

## FIND OUT MORE

[zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction](http://zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction)



Zoos Victoria is a not-for-profit, zoo based conservation organisation. We are Fighting Extinction through our local and global conservation programs, research projects and community conservation campaigns.

For more information, visit [zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction](http://zoo.org.au/fighting-extinction)

