



Research to **protect, treat & cure** animals.
100% of donations fund animal health.

A giant leap for amphibian populations

Without conservation efforts, many species of amphibians may someday cease to exist. These animals are critical to the health of the entire ecosystem. Unfortunately, nearly one-third of the world's amphibian species are threatened with extinction, and the number is rising every day. Experts estimate that around 168 amphibian species may have become extinct in the past several decades because of disease, habitat destruction, pollution, overuse of herbicides and pesticides, and global warming.

At the Memphis Zoo, Drs. Andy Kouba and Robert Browne are using Morris Animal Foundation funding to create the first endangered-amphibian genetic resource bank in the United States, which stores frozen sperm, eggs and tissues. Utilizing this cryopreserved sperm, Dr. Kouba and his team have developed several breeding techniques for animals that are difficult to breed in captivity. Recently his team successfully used sperm from the resource bank to produce the first artificially fertilized Fowler toad tadpoles. The investigators honored this success and Foundation funding by keeping several tadpoles and naming one of them Morris. What's more, the team has gone on to release more than 2,000 endangered Wyoming toad tadpoles that were produced by artificial fertilization.

"Our tadpole Morris is a shining example of what can be achieved for wildlife through Morris Animal Foundation's funding," Dr. Kouba says. "We consider the study a great success. The results will lead to a brighter outlook for all amphibians." Unfortunately, Morris did not survive through metamorphosis, but his legacy gives Dr. Kouba hope for the future of amphibians.

From AnimalNews 5.2