



BIG STORIES FROM SMALL MESSENGERS



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Imprint

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Björn Encke,
managing director
Frogs & Friends and
Citizen Conservation

As expected, 2023 was another extremely busy year, with some nerve-racking elements. It started with Citizen Conservation's first Advisory Board meeting in its new (gGmbH) guise and the inclusion of reptiles, along with their own Advisory Board, as the third animal pillar after amphibians and fish. Our protégés seem to have enjoyed the change to their own legal form, and they thanked us with a rapid increase in numbers, so that by the end of the year the first CC programmes had almost reached their formal targets, in some cases within less than four years of the species being included. However, success also means work, and so the management of around 4,000 animals in over 150 facilities is starting to become a real challenge.

This work was made even more difficult by the parallel delays in the completion of the wildlife database "Wild at Home". Although the formal objectives of the IGP funding programme from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Protection, which expired in August, were achieved and a beta version of the platform was published, it is clear that there is still a lot missing for the database to function to our requirements. As a result, the planned migration of the CC data to "Wild at Home" has not yet begun.

Our second major project, the construction of the "Amphibium" at Hanover Adventure Zoo, also experienced further delays, in this case more in the area of "the darned last five per cent". A pipe that was delivered or installed incorrectly here, a radiator in the wrong colour there, or the odd minor accident caused the opening date to gradually slip back and sometimes gave everyone involved additional grey hair. But all will

be well in the end, at least everyone agrees on that, and so we can look forward to a beautiful opening in spring 2024.

You need a thick skin and a stoic disposition here and there if you want to bring projects close to your heart to a successful conclusion. This is especially true for us in the case of the Nimba Toad. The urgency of building up a reserve population in human care for this unique viviparous frog increases from year to year, as our curator Johannes Penner was able to see for himself in the summer. Preparations have been underway for six years, but we are staying on the ball.

Things are a little easier when it comes to Fire Salamanders, where preparations for the creation of a national consortium are in full swing in order to establish the most effective possible protection system against the rampant *Bsal* amphibian disease for this native species. There will definitely be a lot to report on this in the coming year, so we are all the more looking forward to another exciting year.

However, I would also like to use this foreword to address you directly with a request for support.

Everything you can read on the 48 pages of this annual report is the result of the work of the last ten years and the courage and trust of a handful of people who have made this possible.

It all started with Frogs & Friends and the idea of giving amphibians a voice and looking for new ways to raise awareness of the silent decline of this class of animal. We do this to the best of our ability, be it

through our digital content or by realising exhibition projects such as the Amphibium at Hanover Adventure Zoo.

We soon realised that simply limiting ourselves to education did not seem sufficient in the face of a steadily worsening situation that seemed increasingly paradoxical to us. On the one hand, we are living in a time in which the consequences of climate change and the collapse of biodiversity are radically reducing our own chances for the future, while at the same time the majority of social discourse on the issue of keeping wild animals in human care is threatening to tilt in a direction that, in our view, further reduces the chances of a rational response to the challenges of the present. The founding of Citizen Conservation was therefore a logical step. Together with the Association of Zoological Gardens (VdZ) and the German Society for Herpetology and Terrarium Science (DGHT), we set up the funding for a pilot phase of CC. The aim: to test whether and how it is possible to set up coordinated conservation breeding programmes with the involvement of civil society. The result: the spin-off of the Citizen Conservation Foundation gGmbH in 2022. It is possible. And it is necessary. And it is a long-term responsibility, because we are not talking about a few years, but several decades, over which we want to ensure the survival of species. Translated into financial terms, CC is actually in line with the foundation's concept.

CC needs a reliable financial basis in order to keep its promise to the species. What we can say with a clear conscience after six years of CC: It will not fail due to the commitment of participating keepers. The limiting

factor is the financing of the organisation of the whole thing. The more and more stable the support, the more species we can include in CC.

So while CC's aim is to establish permanent ex-situ populations, Frogs & Friends will in future endeavour to forge closer ties with our partners in Africa and develop a constant cooperation in the field of amphibian fauna research and protection.

At the moment, everything we do is largely funded by private donations and institutional grants. And because everything we do feels so right, we would like to do more of it. And would therefore be delighted to have your support.

With best wishes

Donation account Frogs & Friends e.V.

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STAFF: FROGS & CITIZENS UNDER ONE ROOF

The spin-off of CC as a non-profit limited company brought with it some organisational changes. Previously, CC did not have any staff of its own; these were assigned to the project by F&F as part of a personnel contribution. With the establishment of a 65 per cent position for Heiko Werning at CC on 1 January 2023, the situation had to be clarified for legal reasons in order to retain the necessary flexibility to deploy each of the now five permanent employees for both companies in the future.

By means of a so-called management agreement in a joint operation within the meaning of Section 1 (2) BetrVG, CC and F&F therefore agreed that the existing resources and employees can be deployed jointly and mutually by the companies in an organisational unit. Since Björn Encke, as managing director of both companies, is the personnel manager of all employees, this arrangement does not involve any additional processes. By recording the time of all employees, it is possible to track exactly which personnel expenses are attributable to which company.

With the expiry of Vanessa Dubberke's fixed-term contract at F&F, she seamlessly transferred to CC on 1 September 2023 with a 90% position at CC. This means that at the end of 2023, F&F has three permanent employees with a total of 2.8 full-time positions: Björn Encke, Johannes Penner (80 per cent position) and Tina Nagorzanski, while CC has two permanent employees with a total of 1.55 full-time positions: Heiko Werning and Vanessa Dubberke.

MANY PROJECTS FOR A FEW MINDS

The intensive construction phase of the amphibian house in Hanover and the wildlife database "Wild at Home" were the most time-consuming special projects of the year, which were added to the "day-to-day business" such as the scaling of CC or the editorial bilingual operation of two websites and several social media channels. In this respect, it was certainly a year at the limit, as all of us had to dance at several weddings at the same time and cut as good a figure as possible. None of this would have been possible without our permanent team of freelancers. First and foremost, Bea Seggering continued her leading role at "Wild at Home", Ulrike Sterblich strengthened the editorial team as usual and Ines Bärwald (layout) and Jonas Lieberknecht (illustration/animation) are now also part of the permanent team. The latter also complemented our tried-and-tested exhibition team, consisting of Adriaan Klein (architect), Susann Knakowske (curatorial didactics and video), Camillo Kuschel (design) and Bernd Schultheis (media design and programming), with whom we are realising the Hanover project.

Meeting at Magdeburg main railway station. The "Wild at Home" dream team Johannes Penner, Vanessa Dubberke and Bea Seggering on their way to an appointment with marmalade, who are responsible for programming the wildlife database.



Ulrike Sterblich at the launch of her new novel "Drifter", for which she was subsequently nominated for the German Book Prize. Yes, we are proud – and delighted.



ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS

The number of association members at F&F remained constant at 14 in the 2023 reporting year. The Annual General Meeting took place on 19 December 2023 in Berlin. A new election of the Executive Board, consisting of Mark-Oliver Rödel (Chair), Saskia Kress (Deputy Chair) and Fabian Leendertz (Deputy Chair), was not necessary at this point.

The 10th annual general meeting of Frogs & Friends – we can still fit around a table ...



The master and his work: Architect Adriaan Klein preserves the critical and precise eye for every detail



The master and her work. Curator Susann Knakowske is responsible for the didactics of the exhibition. And she suspects that the last ten per cent will be quite a ride ...



The digital installations are Bernd Schultheis' job. Here, too, the signs are pointing towards completion at the end of the year.



This is how it looked at the beginning of February 2023. The shelves for the breeding room are already in place in the background. But before things can get started, all the water pipes, ventilation and electrics have to be installed on the ceiling.

YEAR OF ALMOST COMPLETION

We wanted to finalise and put two things into operation in 2023: The wildlife database “Wild at Home” and the Amphibium at Hanover Adventure Zoo. Neither worked out. That’s not a big deal in itself; delays in major projects are obviously part and parcel of these times, but the problem is that these two projects are now keeping us busy for the third year in a row, which in turn means that we don’t have the capacity to get other projects on track or drive them forward to the desired extent. In this respect, it is a year with a lot of near-completion and day-to-day business and rather few completely new impulses.

Johannes Penner travelled to Guinea in the summer to further our efforts for the Nimba Toad and there is also a lot to report on the Fire Salamander – and at CC, the new structure as a gGmbH was practised and a lot of day-to-day business was managed, which will be a constantly growing challenge until the database goes live.

STRUCTURAL REFORM AT THE ASA

Björn Encke has been a member of the Global Council (the supervisory board) of the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) since 2020. The ASA was originally conceived as a kind of global umbrella organisation for all amphibian initiatives worldwide in order to network and strengthen them. After several personnel changes, the question arose as to how the ASA could and should continue strategically. As part of the Strategic Planning Commission, Björn Encke had worked on the new plan in previous years, which is now to be implemented under the leadership of the ASA’s new Managing Director, Gina Della Togna. At a meeting of the Global Council in July, Björn Encke had the opportunity to meet both Gina and Supervisory Board Chairman Vivek Menon from India in person for the first time after years of working with Zoom.



Evenings together in 3D, even with non-specialist topics over a cold drink, are simply irreplaceable. Björn Encke with Gina Della Togna and Louis Marin from the ASA after work.

FROG, THE BUILDER

FROM CABLES TO PLANTS – IN 2023, ALL PARTS OF THE AMPHIBIUM WILL MOVE IN – EXCEPT THE ANIMALS THEMSELVES

After two years of preparation, things really got underway on the construction site of the Amphibium at Hanover Adventure Zoo in early 2023. However, before the actual systems could be set up, all the technology had to be pre-installed – in concrete terms, this means that all the supply lines with fresh and osmosis water, electricity, media lines and ventilation had to be routed under the ceiling to the later transfer points in the individual modules of the exhibition. Only then could the ceiling be suspended and the Schirm joinery move in to install the body of the exhibition in the room.

The time had come at the end of March 2023. In the centre of the 250 m² room, the octopus shape was first lifted to the ceiling and installed there. Subsequently each of the eight “arms”, in which the individual exhibition modules are located, was connected to the ceiling structure.

As the arms in the room are grouped precisely around the load-bearing ceiling supports and require exact connections to the central octopus shape, even a minimal shift would have caused the entire structure to tilt.



Master craftsmanship: Schirm installs the ceiling construction of the “Kraken” at the end of March



Each individual module had previously been completely assembled and disassembled in the joinery to check the accuracy of fit. Each of the visible panelling panels is glazed several times and then printed by the print shop in a multi-stage process.



End of March: the pressurised water pipes for osmosis water and mixed water pipes to the individual modules as well as the ventilation ducts are laid, the ceiling can be partially sealed.

A particular challenge with such complex construction projects is the interlocking of the trades. For example, parts of the terrariums and aquariums as well as the technology had to be installed by the joinery during construction.



You need a calm mind – zoo site manager Marco Hustedt has the wonderful task of orchestrating all the trades on the construction site.

A MONSTER TANK FOR GIANT FROGS

The voluminous aquarium for the Titicaca Water Frogs is a speciality. Due to the water column of almost two metres, we opted for a 7 cm thick acrylic glass pane in this case because of the enormous pressure load and the necessary cooling of the water body. This was manufactured in one piece, i.e. in an L-shape, in South Korea and had to be lifted by crane into the body of the stainless steel frame, which weighed several tonnes.



Exactly two centimetres of space in each direction was enough to push the sledge with the aquarium, which now weighs more than three tonnes, through the door and into the house.



The aquarium needs strong men. In the end, the part was centimetre-perfect in the right place. Only then were the acrylic discs glued in and sealed.



FROGS & FRIENDS | PROJECTS

The aquarium was filled with water for the first time on 17 July – from then on, it took several months with numerous water changes until the water chemistry had levelled out to Titicaca Water Frog-suitable values. It will probably be several years before the future inhabitants honour their name “giant frog”. Titicaca frogs seem to grow very slowly and become very old. The aquarium should not be a problem, it is built to last ...

FROM THE IDEA TO THE MODEL TO THE ORIGINAL – THE ARTIFICIAL ROCK EXAMPLE

The big problem with ideas, as we all know, is that although they can take shape very concretely in the mind's eye, they first have to be put down on paper before they can be realised and, in the case of plant design, translated into true-to-scale 3D models so that everyone working on them has the same picture in front of (their real) eyes.

The collaboration with Oliver Blomeier and Andreas Gehlen from Sculpturescoop, who realised the artificial rock works for us, was a stroke of luck. Based on the 1:10 scale models kneaded by Björn Encke, the final form was kneaded together and textures and colours were defined using examples from nature.

Normally, the two trained artists tend to build larger stone landscapes, so working on the sometimes very small structures in the aquariums and terrariums in the exhibition was new territory for them too. It was important to us that not only the installations themselves were designed in a stimulating way, but also that the interplay between the various structures in the room worked, i.e. each installation has its own texture and colourfulness that is not repeated in any other installation. In this way, the rock construction contributes to making the message of diversity that is intended to emanate from this exhibition intuitively tangible.



Andreas Gehlen shaping the Titicaca underwater rock



The long road to the tadpole pool. From “Mood” (example image) to modelling to object.



Construction site ping-pong. While Sabine Hohmann starts planting the toad enclosure, Oliver Blomeier is still optimising the watercourse.

NATURE AND ART EMBRACE IN THE RAINFOREST

The greatest for the little ones. Of all creatures, the Poison Dart Frogs are given a 24 square metre biotope in which to “settle”. In this case, the term is almost justified, as the carers' control options in such a facility are very limited – basically, they do what they are very reluctant to do in an animal facility: they give up control and limit themselves to creating and optimally maintaining the conditions necessary for successful colonisation.

It is therefore a question of managing a Colombian lowland rainforest suitable for frogs on 24 square metres. Only if the animals are fed and the plants are not damaged can a biotope be created in which the frogs can establish themselves.



Interlocking in the most beautiful sense. The artificial plank root tree “overgrows” the stone formation made of natural lava boulders.



Administrative assistance. We received a truckload of the finest plants from the Wilhelma Zoological-Botanical Garden for the Amphibium.



FROGS & FRIENDS | PROJECTS

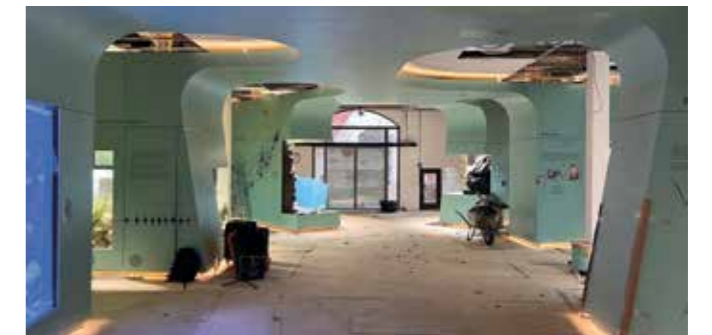
For this reason, we decided to work primarily with natural materials. For the stone wall, we brought a lorry load of hand-picked lava stones from the Eifel region to Hanover.

Only at the transition to the exhibition space did we call on the help of our artificial rock specialists to integrate a suitably durable tree into the design.

The special attraction of this enclosure is that it is open to visitors, meaning that you can enter the realm of the most poisonous frog on earth, in the warm and humid climate of the rainiest forest on earth on the west coast of Colombia. The bright yellow Golden Poison Frog symbolises this group of frogs like no other species, whose skin toxins were traditionally used for hunting.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE WORK

One thing that is always underestimated in complex projects is the incalculable chain reaction that can be triggered by just one missing screw. And why should it be any different here? Our Amphibium has also experienced this. But at the end of a long year, at least everyone could go into the Christmas break with the confidence that it will soon be done. And so we can say: the Amphibium will open in 2024 – and it will be good.



Architect Adriaan Klein

THE FIRE SALAMANDER – A CHARISMATIC FLAGSHIP SPECIES

Fire Salamander Day was declared for the first time on 23 September 2023. Initiated by the Aquazoo Löbbecke Museum in Düsseldorf, the day marks the discovery of the second known chytrid fungus (*Bsal* = *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*), also known as the salamander eater. As the name suggests, *Bsal* particularly affects salamanders, especially the Fire Salamander. This is one of the reasons why this species is one of our focal points. In order to continue to draw attention to the need to protect them, there will now be campaigns on this day every year. At the kick-off event in Düsseldorf, Johannes Penner gave a presentation on CC's ex situ efforts.

We would also like to continue to be proactive in terms of the feasibility study. To this end, a nationwide network for the Fire Salamander is to be founded. Of course, something like this requires some lead time and so a core of supporters began to meet virtually at irregular intervals in 2023 – in April 2024, the network is to be launched at Hanover Adventure Zoo. We are expecting many stimulating discussions and are looking forward to taking the next step.

Of course, work also continued in other areas. For example, Susann Knakowske was able to create a film about the Fire Salamander project at a secondary school in Dillenburg, Hesse. In addition, an application was submitted to the HIT Foundation together with the secondary school am Waldhof in Bielefeld under the direction of Sebastian Gehring in order to be able to actively support the next ark for the Fire Salamander.

Sketch by a pupil from the working group at the secondary school am Waldhof in Bielefeld on the design of a light well to house Fire Salamanders at her school. | Daria Preissler



Johannes Penner at an information event on the protection of the Fire Salamander at Nuremberg Zoo

A BIG STEP IN THE “NIMBA PROJECT”

Despite numerous efforts in the past, there has unfortunately been no major progress in the realisation of a backup population for the highly endangered Nimba Toad (*Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis*) until recently. On the contrary, the mining consortium, in whose concession area one of the two remaining stable populations is located, has unfortunately had to withdraw its previous support and financial commitments. In order to finally make progress, Johannes Penner travelled to Guinea in June 2023, combining several objectives.

The extensive programme of the trip included meetings and discussions with high-ranking representatives of two ministries and subordinate authorities. These included representatives of the responsible CITES authority as well as representatives of the three research stations working on the Nimba Mountains. It was also possible to meet the German ambassador in Conakry and further promote the Nimba Toad to the local management of the mining consortium in Conakry.

SURVEYS IN THE HABITAT

Another important part of the on-site visit was the continuation of the annual population surveys of the Nimba Toad in its habitat. These have been carried out in a standardised form since 2006 under the direction of Mark-Oliver Rödel.

As part of the survey, areas measuring five metres by five metres are marked out and painstakingly searched by hand for a defined period of time. This involves literally turning over all the stones to discover the tiny, amazingly nimble and well-camouflaged toads. They are weighed and measured. Thanks to the financial support of the ZGAP (Zoological Society for Species and Population Conservation), the 2023 population survey was able to be carried out at 50 of the 70 established study sites. In addition, a swab was taken from selected individuals to see whether the chytrid fungus (*Bd* = *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*) is already present in the Nimba Mountains. These were analysed in cooperation with the CC Advisory Board Tobias Eisenberg and the Hessian State Laboratory.

The first piece of good news is that *Bd* has still not been detected in West Africa (west of the Dahomey Gap, i.e. in Benin and all countries west of it).

However, as *Bd* has already been detected in Nigeria and Central and North Africa for some time, it is probably only a matter of time before the fungus makes its way here. The second piece of good news is that Nimba Toads of both sexes and all age classes are still being found. However, the numbers found are low, with the third-lowest average ever recorded in 2023. The reasons for this are unclear. One speculation is that the composition of the grassland above the natural tree line, where the Nimba Toad is found exclusively, has changed in recent decades. The complex situation is currently still being analysed by the Rödel working group and will hopefully provide initial answers soon.

A rare sight in the rainy season: the Nimba Mountains with almost no cloud cover or fog



The survey area has been marked out and can now be searched for Nimba Toads. Due to the rainy season, the climate is rather cool and, above all, humid with very poor visibility.

ESTABLISHING GOOD RELATIONS

Overall, a very positive conclusion can be drawn from the discussions in Guinea. All participants agreed that it is sensible and important to establish an ex situ population of the Nimba Toad. This should go hand in hand with conservation measures on the ground, but also in the long term with the expansion of expertise and capacities for research and conservation in Guinea.

The next step is to formalise the joint goals of the partners from Guinea and Germany. The great support provided by Joseph Doumbia deserves special mention. As a herpetologist in Guinea and former doctoral student of Mark-Oliver Rödel, he not only has a wealth of knowledge about the region and the Nimba Toad, but also an excellent political network. Without him, many things would not be possible on the ground. However, there is still a long way to go, which will certainly not be easy due to numerous political sensitivities. But we are convinced that it will be worth it, to hopefully save the unique Nimba Toad from extinction.

Pregnant female Nimba Toad. The young are supplied with nutrients in the mother's body via a uterus – unique among frogs.



Nine-month-old juvenile toad



Nimba Toads of all sizes are amazingly agile climbers.



Digital meeting for the "Fish" focus group test in April 2023.

WILD AT HOME

In 2023, work continued on the wildlife database "Wild at Home" continued in 2023, with the aim of releasing a beta version of the platform in August 2023. There were several sprints with marmalade in the spring, covering topics such as filter functions, the creation of a standardised taxonomy and the option for CC keepers to submit animal transfer requests to their species manager. Particularly extensive was the work on the so-called "generic form", which we had already started in 2022. The "generic form" is intended to facilitate scaling to include additional animal classes on the one hand and to enable the management of individuals and groups of indistinguishable animals on the other – one form for all, so to speak, that can be customised by species managers and keepers for each animal group and management form.

FOCUS GROUP TEST WITH AQUARISTS AND SPECIES MANAGERS

The "generic form" was then immediately tested in a focus group test with fish keepers in April 2023, where the main focus was on the function of creating and managing NUIs. NUI stands for "nicht unterscheidbare Individuen" ("indistinguishable individuals"), i.e. the management of the above-mentioned groups of indistinguishable animals. We were also able to carry out an initial focus group test on the functions for species managers in this context. Up to this point, we had only tested these with our in-house species managers, Heiko Werning and Tina Nagorzanski.

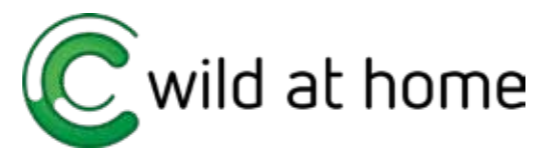
The focus group tests are very helpful for us to determine whether we are on the right track with the platform's functionalities and which adjustments we need to make. Especially as we would like to use "Wild at Home" as a first step to address other breeding communities – to attract experts to the platform, who we hope will also serve as multipliers. In this respect, the input of species managers from other breeding programmes was very welcome.

"WILD AT HOME" TEAM GOES MAGDEBURG

In May, the team travelled to Magdeburg for a workshop at marmalade, the IT agency that sets up "Wild at Home". The main topic of the meeting was the planned go-live of the beta version in August 2023 and what still needs to happen before then. This was because, as had already been announced the previous year, we were behind schedule with the work, which is not unusual for such a large project and, in the case of "Wild at Home", is mainly due to the complexity of the platform, which both sides – marmalade and we – had underestimated at the beginning.

This made the on-site dialogue all the more valuable. Even though online meetings have their advantages, as we have all learnt during coronavirus, in-person meetings can be more effective in many cases and help to create a common basis.

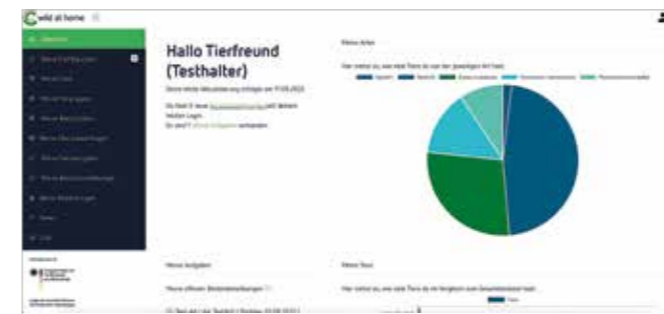
And so we were able to take a look into the future after the live tour together and gather ideas, because our vision of "Wild at Home" doesn't end with the beta version.



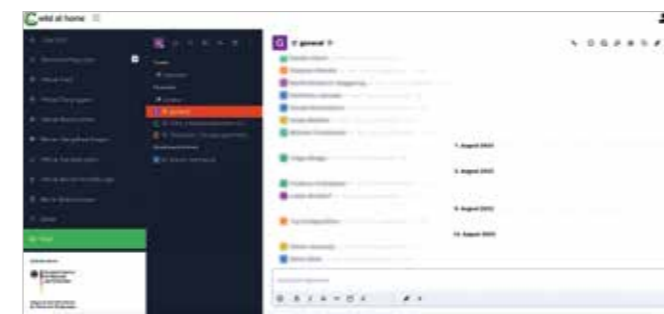
ROCKETCHAT AND GLOW UP

A major goal we are pursuing with "Wild at Home" is to create a platform where wildlife keepers and conservationists can network, exchange ideas and share their experiences. One important step we took in this direction was the integration of a communication tool: RocketChat. The tool works in a very similar way to its sibling apps. There is the option to chat with each other, but channels can also be created on a wide range of topics, e.g. on specific animal species, animal husbandry or breeding issues, exchanging accessories, etc., in which a large number of people can exchange information. RocketChat is also intended to offer CC and other breeding programmes an additional, direct communication channel to get in touch with the respective participants.

In order to go live with the beta version, "Wild at Home" has been given a first glow-up. This is not the final design, but with its own logo, new colours and a new font, the platform is a sight to behold compared to before.



"Wild at Home" in a new look – new logo, new colours, new font.



An insight into the communication tool RocketChat, which is the centrepiece of the community area of the beta version of "Wild at Home".

GOING LIVE WITH THE BETA VERSION AND NEXT STEPS

In August 2023, the time had come: the beta version of "Wild at Home" went live and with that ended the IGP funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and economy and climate protection. The final report was submitted and accepted in November 2023. The go-live was accompanied by a landing page on the Citizen Conservation website, on which the platform and its current status are presented, and a larger-scale focus group test with CC holders, who are to meticulously test the beta version of the platform and feed it with real data for the first time. Various tutorials are available for this purpose on the CC YouTube channel to make it easier to get started.

But after going live is before the next work step. Now it's time to add more functions to "Wild at Home", fix bugs that were found during the focus group test and to set up the platform in such a way that we come closer to the vision in our heads. To this end, planning meetings were held with marmalade in the last quarter of the year, in which the upcoming workload and the amount of money we will need for this were estimated. We are expecting a six-figure sum to be raised from 2024 – a big task, but one that we are happy to take on as we believe in the potential of "Wild at Home".



Our "Wild at Home" landing page also went live to accompany the beta version of the platform.

PRESENTATION & ACQUISITION

2023 was another year with numerous events, conferences and lectures attended by the employees of Frogs & Friends and Citizen Conservation. Unlike in our day-to-day work, it is sometimes difficult to categorise and distinguish between the two companies. When we go to meetings of the VdZ's Species Conservation Working Group, CC takes centre stage, while Frogs & Friends tends to be the focus of the Research Working Group.

We are invited to parliamentary evenings or similar events as a reasonably established voice in the public discourse on species conservation in the broader sense. Björn Encke, for example, was allowed to take a more fundamental stance at the conference of zoo marketing and business people in Cologne. His presentation "Communication and money – on breaking open systemic dilemmas" focussed on the interaction between finance and marketing in zoos since the 1990s, which in his view has played a key role in zoos finding themselves on the defensive in social discourse today. The exciting question of how to get out of these dilemmas was also discussed in detail – at least in the evening over a Kölsch.

With Citizen Conservation, Frogs & Friends sent a very clear and visible signal into this discourse in 2018 – and now the baby is slowly growing up ... In this respect, please refer to the corresponding table on page 35 for a general overview of the F&F/CC team's dates in 2023.



In 2019, Björn Encke and Heiko Werning were crowned Cultural and Creative Pilots of the Federal Republic of Germany for Citizen Conservation, and at the 2023 award ceremony, Federal Minister of Economics Robert Habeck took almost an hour to talk to the new pilots about their business ideas.



Parliamentary evenings serve to promote dialogue between interest groups and politicians, which is a very smart idea. We are happy to take part, as here at the event organised by the Association of Zoological Gardens on 11 May.



"Zoos are chasing a funding gap in the three-digit million range, which has meant that they have been unable to fulfil their tasks in the areas of species conservation and research to the extent necessary for society for decades". Björn Encke at the zoo keepers' conference in Cologne.

NEWSLETTER

Two newsletters were sent out again in 2023, one in German (approx. 120 subscribers) and one in English (approx. 40 subscribers). Normally, 50 – 60% of German subscribers and 40 – 50% of English subscribers open the newsletter. One exception in this regard was newsletter number 18 in June, which only reached a small proportion of subscribers due to technical problems.



WEBSITE & GOOGLE ADS

In 2023, seven news articles were published on the Frogs & Friends website. The news item on the planning of the Amphibium at Hanover Adventure Zoo, which was published in June, had the most views among German-speaking visitors. Among English-speaking visitors, the news item on the launch of the beta version of "Wild at Home" was accessed most frequently. In addition to the 2021/2022 annual report, the feasibility study on the ex situ conservation breeding of the Fire Salamander was also made available for download. For Father's Day, we published an article on the brood care behaviour of male midwife toads. Another article in the "World of Amphibians" section was about female grass frogs playing dead. There was also a new entry under "Project videos" this year with the web report "Salamander in distress".

Due to a technical error, no visit figures were tracked on the Frogs & Friends homepage in March and April 2023. A total of 8,900 visits and 33,900 page views were recorded. In order to be able to make an approximate comparison with the key figures for 2022, the monthly average was added twice to the total number of visits and page views for the ten existing months. This results in a figure of 15,316 visits and 53,677 page views for 2023, i.e. a loss of 46% and 37% respectively compared to the previous year.

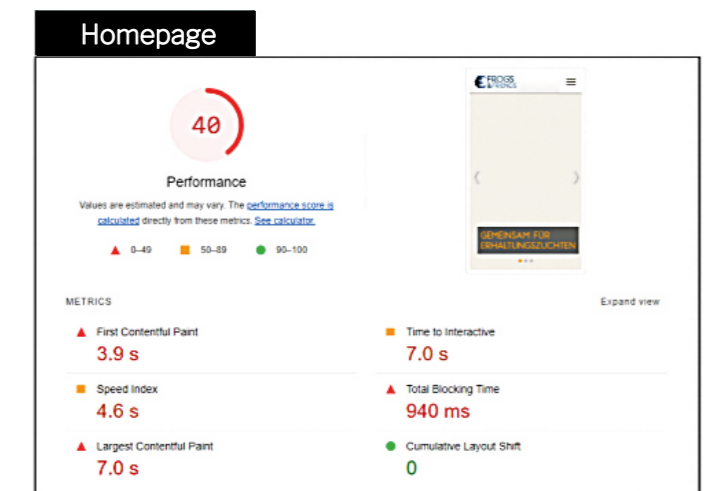
Over 70% of visitors used the English-language version of the site. The English Frogs & Friends page had 22,500 hits. With over 8,700 hits, the Webdoc is by far the most frequently visited English-language page. The German-language website had 9,100 hits. The Webdoc was also the most frequently visited here with over 1,000 hits.

From our free Google Ads budget of 10,000 per month, a total of \$29,468 was spent this year. The ads generated almost 15,800 clicks, which is about half the number of clicks from the previous year. The keyword that generated the most clicks was "frog facts". The most frequently played ad leads directly to the English-language version of Webdoc and cost almost 11,000 \$. The German-language advert with the most clicks cost \$13,000 and leads to the Foot-flagging Frogs project page and the Frogs & Friends exhibition in Vienna. This is also reflected in the page views of the website, as the Vienna exhibition page is the most frequently visited German-language page after the Webdoc with 786 views.

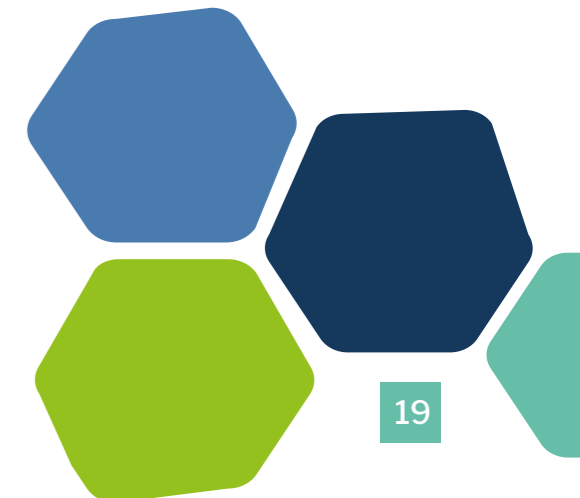
The Google Ads campaigns are managed by Suchmeisterei GmbH, which we commissioned to carry out an SEO analysis of our website due to the falling key figures in 2023. This revealed a number of technical and editorial problems that were affecting the site's performance – including pages not being found by search engines and pages taking too long to load. At the end of the year, we tackled the first construction sites at programming level so that the implementation of the measures recommended in the analysis should be completed at the beginning of the coming year.



Our latest web report "Salamander in distress" will also be part of the exhibition at Hanover Adventure Zoo.



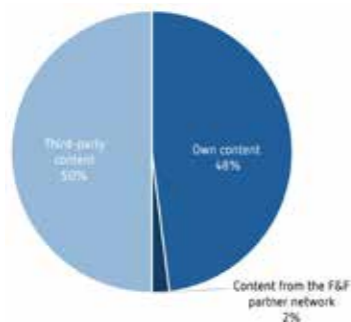
Our website did not perform well in the SEO analysis. We hope to be able to achieve better results again next year after implementing the catalogue of measures at the turn of the year 23/24.



SOCIAL MEDIA

In September 2023, the editorial team sat down to discuss the social media strategy of the Frogs & Friends channels, as stagnating key figures had been noticeable for some time. A look at the development of follower numbers showed that hardly any noticeable followers had been gained since 2020. The analysis of reach even showed a negative trend for the Facebook channel as at August 2023. Up to this point, the idea of a broadcast channel was pursued, for which news from the world of amphibians was collected and shared on the social media channels. The aim was to publish five posts per week and act as a “PR agency for amphibians” to inspire and inform users about this animal class. The thematic analysis of the content published by the end of August revealed that half of all posts dealt with external content that was not directly related to the activities of Frogs & Friends. A quarter of the rest consisted of posts from the “Frog Friday” section, in which a picture of an amphibian with a saying is posted every Friday. Only 25% of all posts featured new or existing content from Frogs & Friends.

Due to the fact that our broadcasting strategy no longer seems to reach the target group satisfactorily and the collection and preparation of external content also involves a great deal of work, it was decided not to pursue this plan any further and to focus more on presenting our own topics in the future, thus placing the activities of the association more in the foreground. The number of posts is also to be reduced to two or three relevant contributions per week. The Amphibium planned by Frogs & Friends, which will open at Hanover Adventure Zoo next year, will provide more new material in the foreseeable future and can be presented in an appealing way for our social media channels.



The analysis of 140 pieces of content published on the social media channels of Frogs & Friends from January to August 2023 revealed that 50% of them were about third-party content. Only around a quarter of all posts were about own content, which should change in the future.

FACEBOOK

In 2023, 211 posts were published on the Frogs & Friends Facebook page. At the end of the year, the channel had 4,636 followers – 0.8% more than in the previous year. The reach fell by 43% to 17,217. The page was viewed 3,189 times, which corresponds to an increase of 34%. Profile views have risen continuously since July 2023 – around the same time that the implementation of the new social media strategy began and fewer posts with third-party content were displayed.



Back in the summer, we tried to share more of our own content on social media channels. This post with a reference to an article on our website was the organic post with the highest reach in 2023, reaching over 1,800 accounts.



The post on the publication of the new WebRep “Salamander in distress” on the 1st International Day of the Fire Salamander achieved the most link clicks, namely 39.

INSTAGRAM

192 posts were published on the Frogs & Friends Instagram profile this year, reaching a total of 10,901 accounts. This corresponds to an increase of 42% compared to the previous year. One post in particular stands out with an organic reach of 1,245. It is a short compilation of foot-flagging frogs that was published at the beginning of May to mark Amphibian Week, which was launched by the ASA (Amphibian Survival Alliance) and PARC (Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation). With 948 profile views, this figure also increased by 32%. In 2023, the FF Instagram channel gained 82 frog friends and stood at 1,552 followers at the end of the year.



Nobody can resist the foot-flagging frog. The reel was shared the most of all posts and achieved 2nd place in the categories “Likes” and “Saved posts”.

TWITTER/X

At the end of 2023, we recorded 1,782 followers on the Frogs & Friends Twitter/X channel, 182 more than in 2022. In the course of Elon Musk’s takeover of the short message service and the renaming to “X”, there were problems with the analysis of the tweet figures, so that, for example, the number of tweets was not correctly reflected. In total, the Frogs & Friends tweets were viewed 172,000 times. However it is possible that there are also errors in this key figure.

LINKEDIN

In October 2023, a company page for Frogs & Friends was created on LinkedIn to connect with other companies in a professional context. No posts have been published yet. The page will be updated next year with content relating to the Frogs & Friends exhibition at the Hanover Adventure Zoo and other own content.

YOUTUBE

This year, the Frogs & Friends YouTube channel was viewed 14,000 times, an increase of 33%. The playback time fell by 28% to 185 hours in 2023. 42 subscribers were added. This number totalled 362 at the end of the year. One video in particular was viewed remarkably often compared to the other content. The video “Foot-flagging frogs in Vienna | Living the high life” published in 2017 was viewed 4,900 times between 2 and 4 March. 99.8% of the views of this video in March can be attributed to Google searches. There is no known reason to which these views can be attributed. With 5,200 views, around a third of all views on the F&F channel can be attributed to this video. From November 2023, 14 videos were added, which were also published on YouTube in two languages (German and English) as a supplement to the web report “Fire Salamanders in distress” from the F&F website. In line with the new social media strategy, the publication of all videos was also announced on Facebook, Instagram and X.



An unknown event led to a remarkable increase in views of a six-year-old video showing the Wallace’s flying frog building its foam nest.



citizen conservation www.citizen-conservation.org

Haltung rettet Arten

Als Netzwerk aus institutionellen und privaten Tierhaltenden bündelt Citizen Conservation Fachkompetenz, Know-how und Kapazitäten, um koordinierte Erhaltungszuchtprogramme für bedrohte Arten aufzubauen. Eine Bewegung gegen den Verlust von Biodiversität und für die Vielfalt. Die Botschaft: Alle können mitmachen! Unterstützen Sie unsere Arbeit gegen das Artensterben mit einer Jahrespatenschaft. Als Dankeschön erhalten Sie eine Urkunde und einen hochwertigen Druck oder Fotoabzug, jeweils mit Passepartout und nummeriert in limitierter Auflage. Jetzt Motiv auswählen und Patenschaft abschließen unter www.citizen-conservation.org

Citizen Conservation Foundation gGmbH
Spendenkonto GLS Bank
IBAN: DE38 4306 0967 1271 7068



This is how we advertise our sponsorships in the specialist press.

PRESS REVIEW FROGS & FRIENDS 2023

The focus of Frogs & Friends' work in 2023 was beyond the public eye, more or less hidden like most amphibians ...

Our work for Citizen Conservation was directly and indirectly reflected in the lively media response to CC, see page 40 f. The extensive coverage of CC in the specialised press also referred to the authorship and current shareholder activities of Frogs & Friends.

Following approval by the LBV, which commissioned our feasibility study on ex situ conservation breeding of the native Fire Salamander, it was finally published at the beginning of 2023. This was accompanied by a press release; the threatening situation of the Fire Salamander and our concept of conservation breeding then received widespread media coverage, not least because the German press agency dpa made a report out of it, which was then picked up by other media.

Our work in Guinea was recognised by the media in a rather surprising way. The internet news site Guineenews.org reported on our contact with the responsible authorities, which then probably found its way to other subordinate institutes. They were of the opinion that a conservation breeding project could only take place in Guinea and not in Germany: "We must not let the viviparous toads into Germany. Otherwise Germany will benefit, not Guinea". In direct talks in Guinea, however, our curator Johannes Penner was able to convince all the official bodies he spoke to that the establishment of a breeding station in Guinea is definitely a desirable long-term goal, but that it still makes sense to save the Nimba Toad from extinction in the short term with a conservation breeding programme in Germany and also to create capacity and gather knowledge, both of which can then also benefit Guinea. However, the example shows how sensitively we need to move on issues such as national natural heritage, genetic resources and not least the discourse on neo-colonialism and decolonisation if we want to protect species with and for the Global South. And it also illustrates why it can be so difficult and time-consuming to achieve success here.



Twelve media articles focussed on Frogs & Friends in 2023. They were evenly distributed between audio, online and the specialist and general press.



20
At the annual general meeting of Frogs & Friends, Bea Seggering makes friends with the Nimba Toad – unfortunately in Germany only as a model.

19
They must have their glasses on. Volker Homes and Anne Zimmermann from the VdZ office disappeared into the Myriad worlds of our partners during the visit to our office – „where we connect“ ...

18
Classical round off. For the Christmas party we visited a Kreuzberg classic, the Yorckschlösschen, drank classic beer and listened to the young classical musicians from the Hanns Eisler Academy of Music. Classy.

15
Home visit to our protégés: Vanessa Dubberke personally documents the well-being of our offspring of *Ambystoma andersoni* at Frankfurt Zoo.

14
Very special exhibits: Tina Nagorzanski and Johannes Penner in the large show paludarium in the Exotarium at Frankfurt Zoo.

13
Night-time table football tournament at the company outing at Moxy Frankfurt.

17
A view at the push of a button: architect Adriaan Klein presents the film for the peep window into the cave of the Midwife Toads.

16
Which Heiko Werning is the right one? Tell the truth! – before the recording of the quiz show in Baden-Baden at SWR.

12
Company outing to Frankfurt. Together with our partners from Filmtank and IMF, we used the exhibition premiere of the Myriad project at the Kunstverein Frankfurt for an interdisciplinary excursion.

19
Pupils at a primary school in Vienna put together the Frogs & Friends toad game.

17
A big arrival at the airport: Johannes Penner and Lukas Reese from Karlsruhe Zoo collect the CC Ecuador import from the customs office in Frankfurt. | Timo Deible

16
Autostation Braunschweig-Ost: Stopover for countless joint filming trips for ZDF – and now for the Hanover shoots: Susann Knakowske, Björn Encke and cameraman Leendert de Jong.

1
Tina Nagorzanski was honoured by her colleagues with the prestigious Frog Order for special services to animals.

3
Money is rolling in for Fire Salamanders in Schwerin: donation fountain for a salamander breeding station as part of the CC project.

5
On the fringes of the VdZ conference at Karlsruhe Zoo, a look at the latest CC achievement in quarantine: *Atelopus balios*, the Rio Pescado stump-footed toad, imported by Wikiri from Ecuador.

6
Autostation Braunschweig-Ost: Stopover for countless joint filming trips for ZDF – and now for the Hanover shoots: Susann Knakowske, Björn Encke and cameraman Leendert de Jong.

2
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6
Autostation Braunschweig-Ost: Stopover for countless joint filming trips for ZDF – and now for the Hanover shoots: Susann Knakowske, Björn Encke and cameraman Leendert de Jong.

11
Artist Markus Willeke at the artspring PopUpStore in the Schönhauser Allee Arkaden in Berlin paints live CC artworks as watercolours ...

9
Sound studio: the first films are set to sound in late summer. After years of collaboration, Mathias Wendt from Waveline is already half an amphibian expert himself.

7
CC supervisory board members at the end of the day: zoo directors Tim Schikora and Stephan Hering-Hagenbeck at the VdZ conference in Karlsruhe.

10
Meeting of partners in Helsinki. Thomas Ziegler from Cologne Zoo with project partner Truong Quang Nguyen from Vietnam and CC Managing Director Björn Encke.

8
There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing: Björn Encke in a stylish rain poncho at the day of action to protect amphibians.

ON ITS OWN TWO FEET

For five years, Citizen Conservation was a project conceived by Frogs & Friends and implemented with the three project sponsors Frogs & Friends, the Association of Zoological Gardens (VdZ) and the German Society for Herpetology and Terrarium Science (DGHT). Using the example of amphibians, we have shown that our idea of a network for the conservation breeding of endangered species from institutional and private animal keepers in coordinated cooperation really works. This led to the spin-off of the Citizen Conservation Foundation gGmbH as a separate organisation in 2022, which not only hired its first permanent employee, Heiko Werning, on 1 January 2023, but is also jointly managed by Björn Encke as part of a management agreement with Frogs & Friends.

The Operational Advisory Board that had guided CC through this phase of our early childhood was replaced by new organisational structures. 2023 was therefore the first year that we operated completely independently on our own two feet and with our new committees. Our shareholders are identical to the three former project organisers. They have extended their commitment to the basic funding of CC for the coming years and form our highest body, the shareholders' meeting.

The shareholders' meeting has delegated the operational control and steering functions to the Supervisory Board. In addition to two representatives from each of the three shareholders, this body also includes other content partners who make CC possible with substantial financial contributions. Gert Emmrich has been a member of the Supervisory Board from the very beginning as President of the Deutsche Tierparkgesellschaft (DTG), which has supported CC financially from the outset. Olivier Pagan, Director of Basel Zoo, who also supports CC via a grant agreement, has been a member since the end of 2023.

The Supervisory Board met three times in 2023: in person on the fringes of the 1st Advisory Board meeting for the 1st Supervisory Board meeting on 22 January 2023, on 12 May and on 6 December 2023 by video conference. The first shareholders' meeting after the constituent meeting in 2022 was also held by video conference on 14 November 2023.

ENABLER FOR SPECIES CONSERVATION

CC was always planned as a professional project, so funding inevitably plays a key role. In the initial phase, CC was largely made possible by content partners who embody the will of the ex situ community to establish such a conservation breeding network. Significant supporters can still be appointed to the Supervisory Board in the future.

A detailed list of the numerous sponsors and the amounts of funding can be found on p. 47.

ACTIVISTS IN THE FIELD OF SPECIES CONSERVATION

The other pillar of support for our network is of course all the private keepers who take in animals of endangered species and look after them on a voluntary basis, as well as the institutions that also participate. As at 31 December 2023, CC animals were cared for in 230 enclosures, a significant increase of 43% compared to the previous year with 161 enclosures. 49% of these enclosures are owned by private individuals, with a further 27% in zoos and animal parks. Other institutions such as show aquariums, museums, clubs and rescue centres account for 12%, while schools – and even a daycare centre – account for a further 12%. The comprehensive claim of "Citizen Conservation", already formulated in our name, is thus fulfilled in reality.

As at 31 December 2023, around 3,900 animals belonging to 27 taxa were recorded in CC. These are spread across 17 amphibian, 7 fish and 3 reptile species. A year earlier, there had been 1,372 individuals. This is an increase of 184% – with the caveat that such a count is always subjective in view of the high number of offspring of several hundred specimens, of which often only a certain proportion survive the larval stage.



The Supervisory Board before its first meeting on 22 January 2023 in CC's office. From left to right: Gert Emmrich, Mark-Oliver Rödel, Marco Schulz, Tim Schikora, Markus Monzel

Heiko Werning is CC's first employee – shown here giving a presentation at the Hamburg district school Stadtteilschule im Hafen in May.



MEMBERS OF THE SUPERVISORY BOARD

Dr Tim Schikora (Chairman)

Director Schwerin Zoo, Treasurer VdZ



Dr Stephan Hering-Hagenbeck

Director of Schönbrunn Zoo



Saskia Kress (Deputy Chairwoman)

Managing Director Filmtank GmbH, MD IMF



PD Dr Mark-Oliver Rödel

Chairman Frogs & Friends



Dr Markus Monzel

President DGHT



Gert Emmrich

President DTG



Marco Schulz

Treasurer DGHT



Dr Olivier Pagan

Director of Basel Zoological Garden



Members of the Scientific Advisory Board

Volker Ennenbach

Owner of Tropenparadies Oberhausen



Alexander Kühnen

CEO Bahlsen GmbH & Co KG



Dr Arne Schulze

Managing Director ZGAP



Dr Tobias Kohl

Managing Director Species Protection Foundation



Matt Goetz

Kurator Durrel Wildlife Conservation Trust/Jersey



Advisory Board #Amphibians

Prof Dr Thomas Ziegler

(Advisory Board Spokesman) Curator Aquarium & Coordinator Nature Conservation Projects Cologne Zoo



Prof Dr Tobias Eisenberg

Specialist veterinarian for microbiology, Head of Veterinary Medicine Department, Hessian State Laboratory, Giessen



Dr Karl-Heinz Jungfer

Private owner



Dr Axel Kwet

Managing Director DGHT



Dr Joachim Nerz

Private owner



Advisory Board #Fish

Anton Weissenbacher

(Advisory Board Spokesman) Curator Schönbrunn Zoo



Stefan Inselmann

Project Manager Sander Aqua Design



Ariel Jacken

Senior Curator Leipzig Zoo



David Kasih

Curator 1000 Species Project



Dr Holger Kraus

Curator Exotarium Zoo Zurich



Benjamin Wilden

Project Manager Parosphenus Project



Advisory Board #Reptiles

Dr Philipp Wagner

(Advisory Board Spokesman) Species Conservation Curator Allwetterzoo Münster



Markus Auer

Collection Manager/Technician, Senckenberg Natural History Collections Dresden



Gregor Geisler

Private owner and vet



Felix Hulbert

Private owner & employee Frankfurt Zoo



Christian Langner

Head of the International Centre for Turtle Conservation, Allwetterzoo Münster



Thomas Lindner

Private owner & independent herpetological expert



Anna Rauhaus

Keeper Terrarium Cologne Zoo



CITIZEN CONSERVATION

ALWAYS WELL ADVISED

As a science-based project, CC endeavours to bring high-calibre expertise on board for its content – we are pleased and grateful that we can rely on broad support.

The new organisational structure of the gGmbH has led to our newly established Scientific Advisory Board. Its task is to advise the CC office on all important technical issues, such as the inclusion of new species in the programme, the assessment of management plans and other questions of animal husbandry, biology and strategy.

On 20 and 21 January 2023, the first meeting of the new Scientific Advisory Board took place at CC's premises in Berlin, attended by 35 experts.

TO NEW SHORES WITH FISH AND REPTILES

Fish had already been included in the CC network during the pilot phase as an opportunity that had “swum past”, but now their management has been institutionalised with the establishment of a CC #Fish advisory board. The existing CC regulations, which are primarily orientated towards amphibians, had to be reviewed and adapted for their suitability for fish, for example with regard to veterinary examinations or population management. The inclusion of further species in the programme was also discussed. Another new Advisory Board, #Reptiles, was tasked with preparing the inclusion of the first reptile species and also adapting the existing regulations for this animal group.

The programme also included questions on the fundamental idea and strategic direction, which were presented and discussed together in the plenary session, not least so that all new members of the CC family are on the same page and can carry our mission out into the world.



Reflecting on breeding goals in the new Reptile Advisory Board: CC species manager Johannes Penner



CC Supervisory Board member and Chairman of Frogs & Friends: Mark-Oliver Rödel at the meeting of the Amphibian Advisory Board



Anna Rauhaus from Cologne Zoo and Tobias Kohl from the Species Protection Foundation at the Advisory Board consultations.



Fittingly in one of the “aquariums” in CC's offices: the Fish Advisory Board at work.

The participants of the Advisory Board meeting in January



EVERY SPECIES COUNTS

The basic aim of CC is to establish a secure, coordinated ex situ population for as many species as possible, which will exist over a longer period of time, initially 40 years, while minimising the loss of genetic diversity within this population. This requires the coordination of keepers and animals as well as the collection of knowledge about our species – the core business of CC, in addition to communicating our concerns to the general public. CC aims to make a tangible contribution to combating the loss of biodiversity – in other words, to save as many species as possible from extinction.

The number of species depends first and foremost on our financial resources. Experience from the pilot phase has shown that we initially have to reckon with a sum of 5,000 euros per year and species to cover the coordination and administrative costs. The species are proposed by the CC Advisory Board according to scientific criteria such as threat status and evolutionary significance, but also according to social criteria such as the topics they can be used to address. There are also practical aspects, such as whether there are already coordinated conservation breeding programmes or the availability of founder animals.

The advisory boards discussed these complex issues at the CC meeting in January 2023 and decided to include further species. In addition, there are species whose inclusion had already been decided in previous years but could not yet be realised.

FISH

The CC #Fish Advisory Board has decided to include four new species, three of which could be transferred to CC facilities with the first specimens in the course of 2023. These include the Charco Palma Pupfish (*Cyprinodon veronicae*), a species of Poeciliidae from Mexico that is already extinct in the wild. With the Tiger Limia (*Limia isla*) from the Caribbean crisis state of Haiti and the Bintan Gourami (*Parosphromenus bintan*) from Sumatra, two other endangered microendemics in CC have been given the chance to survive in human care. It was also decided to include the African cichlid species *Limbochromis robertsi*, which was prepared in 2023 and will hopefully be realised in 2024.

REPTILES

At its meeting on 21 January 2023, the Advisory Council's reptile expert group recommended a list of seven species for inclusion in CC. Four of these were subsequently selected for the start in 2023: Vietnamese Three-striped Box Turtle (*Cuora cyclornata*), San Francisco Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*), Nguru Pygmy Chameleon (*Rhampholeon acuminatus*) and Huu Lien Tiger Gecko (*Goniurosaurus huuliensis*). The Advisory Board was commissioned to draw up corresponding husbandry recommendations. The Huu Lien Tiger Geckos, which will also be the focus of a wider public as part of the "Zoo Animal of the Year" campaign in 2024, hatched at Cologne Zoo at the end of 2023 and will soon be ready for inclusion in CC.

Finally, the Mauritius Lowland Forest Day Gecko (*Phelsuma guimbeau*) was added as the fifth species, made possible by a grant agreement from Wilhelma Stuttgart. The other two species recommended for inclusion, which may be realised at a later date, are *Thamnophis scaliger* (Short-tail Alpine Garter Snake) and *Terrapene coahuila* (Coahuilan Box Turtle).

AMPHIBIANS

Since the coronavirus year 2020, we have been endeavouring to include highly endangered stubfoot toads and marsupial frogs from Ecuador in CC. The animals are bred at the Centro Jambatu there, which is also dedicated to the ex situ breeding of endangered amphibians as well as in situ research. The purchase will support the work of the centre. Unfortunately, direct cargo air traffic between Ecuador and Europe collapsed during the pandemic, meaning that our import attempts failed year after year. In May 2023, after long preparations and logistically challenging detours via the USA, the time had finally come: twelve highly endangered Loja Marsupial Frogs (*Gastrotheca lojana*) and 30 Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toads (*Atelopus balios*) were imported. Karlsruhe Zoo had agreed to quarantine the animals and provide them with veterinary care. They were then distributed to selected CC participants over the course of the year. The good condition of the animals is evidenced by the breeding successes, which were achieved in three facilities in the same year. As a result, it has been possible to build up a fairly solid population of this species, which is listed in the highest threat category "critically endangered" according to the IUCN and has been declared extinct and one of the 100 most endangered species on the planet by the London Zoological Society in the past, within a short space of time.

Three other amphibian species that had been approved for inclusion by the old CC Operational Advisory Board were also able to move into the terrariums of participants in 2023: the Phantasmal Poison Frog (*Epipedobates tricolor*), the Lesser Rock Skipper (*Stauroids parvus*) and the San Martín Fringe-Limbed Tree Frog (*Ecnomiohyla valancifer*).

As part of his Africa activities (see page 14 f.), Johannes Penner has continued to take care of the inclusion of the Nimba Toad (*Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis*) and Goliath Frog (*Conraua goliath*) in CC, which has been planned for many years. We are making progress with these projects toad-hopper by toad-hopper – and maybe one day we will succeed in adding a set of Goliath Frogs.



CITIZEN CONSERVATION

SECOND MILESTONE FOR FIRST SPECIES

The first milestone in the conservation breeding of a species is the procurement of so-called founders. Ideally, this should be a large number of individuals that are not directly related to each other. In reality, the situation is often different and you have to start with a small number of founder animals, which are sometimes closely related. But even then a start has been made and the stock can be supplemented later. Even starting with just a few founders can be challenging. For logistical, financial or legal reasons, availability is often severely limited. In this respect, it is always a success when the first individuals of a species are included in CC.

The second milestone is reached when the ex situ population has been built up to the point where our target numbers are reached through our own breeding programme, the admission of further external specimens and the acquisition of keepers. We calculate these on a species-specific basis based on the science-based recommendations for establishing ex situ populations using the zoological population management programme PMx or the Amphibian Ark ex situ calculator. We set the target numbers for each species at the beginning, evaluate them on an ongoing basis and display them transparently on the respective species page of the website, as well as the degree of target achievement, which we determine and indicate for each species when publishing each population overview.

In 2023, we came so close to the 100 percent mark for three species for the first time that it was foreseeable year-end that we would soon reach this milestone. These were the Vietnamese Crocodile Newt (*Tylotriton vietnamensis*), the Mangarahara Cichlid (*Ptychochromis insolitus*) and the Mallorca Midwife Toad (*Alytes muletensis*).

At the same time, a studbook with an initial management plan was prepared in order to actually keep the ex situ populations healthy over a long-term period (we are initially expecting 40 years, i.e. two human generations) while minimising the loss of their genetic diversity. The second half of the year was accordingly characterised by preparations for the creation of the first studbooks and management plans.



MY MANAGER DOES IT FOR ME

Population management is an important aspect of conservation breeding. The population must have a well-balanced demographic distribution in the long term, e.g. it must not become over-aged. Keepers must be in a position to actually breed their animals. This requires exercise and practice. The animals themselves must “prove” time and again that they are capable of reproducing and are also happy to do so under the conditions in which they are kept. In view of the high numbers of offspring in most of our species, complex population management is therefore essential. There are three basic options for this: 1) migration, 2) mortality, 3) fertility. They can be implemented through various measures, for example by releasing animals to the outside world or accepting new animals into the programme (migration), discarding, feeding or killing eggs, larvae or adult animals (mortality) or preventing reproduction by keeping the sexes separate or using contraception (fertility).

Some of these measures are easy for CC to implement (e.g. discarding eggs), others are difficult for animal welfare reasons (e.g. killing). From our point of view, the most practicable solutions for CC include feeding to appropriate prey flocks and the marketing of “surplus” animals, i.e. animals that are not required for the continuation of the breeding programme. Such marketing was planned in CC from the outset. In 2023, we marketed surplus animals of two species (*Tylotriton vietnamensis* and *Alytes muletensis*) for the first time. The income generated in this way will benefit the further expansion of CC or enable us to support other projects relating to our species, e.g. in the countries of origin.

INVENTORY REPORTS

One of the core elements of CC is the half-yearly inventory report of all participants, which is currently carried out on 1 March and 1 September and involves a great deal of administrative work in the CC office.

CC publishes the results of the inventory reports on its website at the end of May and the end of November. For technical reasons (see p. 37), the publication at the end of November was initially only made in the CC newsletter.

ANIMAL BALANCE SHEET FROM 01.11.2022 TO 31.12.2023

Scientific name	English name	Animals total (m/f/u)	Keepers total	Deaths 11/22 – 12/23 (m/f/u)	External outflows 11/22 – 12/23	New offspring 11/22 – 12/23	External arrivals 11/22 – 12/23	Goals (animals, keepers)	Status*
Amphibia									
<i>Agalychnis lemur</i>	Lemur Leaf Frog	51 (13,10,28)	8	17 (1,1,15)	0	16	0	225, 40	21%
<i>Alytes muletensis</i>	Mallorca Midwife Toad	785 (12,13,760)	37	38 (0,0,38)	84	530	0	425, 53	85%
<i>Ambystoma andersoni</i>	Anderson's Salamander	69 (20,21,28)	8	15 (5,6,11)	0	8	3	225, 40	25%
<i>Ambystoma dumerilii</i>	Lake Patzcuaro Salamander	206 (60,46,100)	27	68 (0,4,64)	11	142	0	225, 40	80%
<i>Atelopus balios</i>	Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toad	29 (9,9,11)	4	1 (0,1,0)	0	0	30	NN	NN
<i>Bombina orientalis</i>	Oriental Fire-bellied Toad	243 (37,22,184)	21	39 (14,2,23)	0	53	29	225, 60	68%
<i>Ecnomiohyala valancifer</i>	San Martín Fringe-limbed Tree Frog	22 (0,0,22)	1	0	0	0	22	NN	NN
<i>Epipedobates tricolor</i>	Phantasmal Poison Frog	45 (0,0,45)	4	0	0	0	45	NN	NN
<i>Gastrotheca lojana</i>	Loja Marsupial Frog	12 (0,0,12)	1	0	0	0	12	NN	NN
<i>Ingerophrynus galeatus</i>	Bony-headed Toad	40 (12,11,17)	6	39 (9,4,26)	0	0	5	225, 40	16%
<i>Minyobates steyermarki</i>	Demonic Poison Frog	26 (5,4,17)	5	0	0	0	26	110, 20	24%
<i>Phyllobates terribilis</i>	Golden Poison frog	33 (9,5,19)	4	11 (2,7,2)	0	13	15	225, 70	10%
<i>Salamandra sal. almanzoris</i>	Almanzor Fire Salamander	24 (17,7,0)	7	2 (1,1,0)	0	0	0	185, 30	18%
<i>Salamandra salamandra (D)</i>	Central European Fire Salamander	152 (19,12,121)	16	6 (0,2,4)	3	0	71	**	NN
<i>Telmatobius culeus</i>	Titicaca Water Frog	41 (12,14,15)	7	0	0	0	5	225, 45	17%
<i>Tylotriton vietnamensis</i>	Vietnamese Crocodile Newt	225 (39,33,163)	28	50 (7,9,34)	25	68	52	185, 30	97%
<i>Tylotriton zieglerei</i>	Ziegler's Crocodile Newt	24 (7,3,14)	6	7 (4,1,2)	0	0	6	185, 30	16%
Fish									
<i>Bedotia madagascariensis</i>	Madagascar Rainbowfish	144 (24,20,100)	10	55 (10,7,38)	0	56	78	192, 16	69%
<i>Cyprinodon veronicae</i>	Charco Palma Pupfish	16 (6,10,0)	2	0	0	0	16	NN	NN
<i>Limia islai</i>	Tiger Limia	49 (5,5,39)	3	0	0	0	49	NN	NN
<i>Parosphromenus bintan</i>	Bintan Gourami	8 (4,4,0)	1	0	0	0	8	NN	NN
<i>Ptychochromis insolitus</i>	Mangarahara Cichlid	452 (15,18,419)	12	54 (15,15,24)	10	277	100	192, 16	88%
<i>Ptychochromis loisellei</i>	Loiselle's Ptycho	216 (18,18,180)	7	47 (7,1,39)	0	185	19	192, 16	72%
<i>Ptychochromis oligacanthus</i>	Nosy Be Cichlid	1096 (8,9,1079)	4	10 (3,2,5)	0	1050	12	192, 16	63%
Reptiles									
<i>Cuora cyclornata</i>	Vietnamese Three-striped Box Turtle	1 (1,0,0)	1	0	0	0	1	NN	NN
<i>Rhampholeon acuminatus</i>	Nguru Pygmy Chameleon	6 (3,3,0)	1	0	0	0	6	NN	NN
<i>Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia</i>	San Francisco Garter Snake	11 (8,3,0)	4	0	0	0	11	NN	NN

m: male, w: female, u: undetermined sex NN: not yet determined * Status = mean value of the percentage of the targeted number of animals already achieved and the target number of animals

AFTER THE SCHNILCH

CC has set out to communicate the need for ex situ species conservation to the general public. After the great success in this regard in 2022 with the book publication “Von Okapi, Scharnierschildkröte und Schnilch – ein prekäres Bestiarium” (in engl.: “Okapi, Box Turtle and Schnilch – a precarious Bestiary”), which also generated further income for CC through author fees and an additional donation per book sold by the publisher Galiani Berlin, 2023 was a quieter year in terms of communication. The time resources of CC employees were fully taken up by the development and support of the existing conservation breeding programme. As a result, no new projects could be launched alongside the day-to-day communication work.

However, part of the Bestiary wave still spilled over into the reporting year. In January, we published the last two episodes of the fourth season of the creature podcast: “Titanic” editor-in-chief Julia Mateus read the story of the Sacred Scarab, and CC author Heiko Werning explained the whole concept of ex situ conservation breeding and CC using the example of the extinct Tasmanian Wolf in a detailed special at the end of the series. There were also a few other bestiary readings. For example, our CC star author Ulrike Sterblich (whose novel “Drifter” was shortlisted for the German Book Prize 2023) and Björn Encke presented the book at the Berlin Book Festival 2023 on Bebelplatz in Berlin, and our Bestiary authors Werning/Sterblich read from it at the Literaturhaus Dresden on 24 January, while Heiko Werning also read from it at numerous appearances on his reading stages “Brauseboys” and “Reformbühne Heim & Welt” as well as at his CC lectures.

Duisburg Zoo paid a particularly nice tribute to Schnilch: just in time for 1 April, it announced the arrival of the first Schnilch breeding group at the zoo in a very nice press release including a lovingly made video. Another video the following day clarified the joke and explained the background to CC.

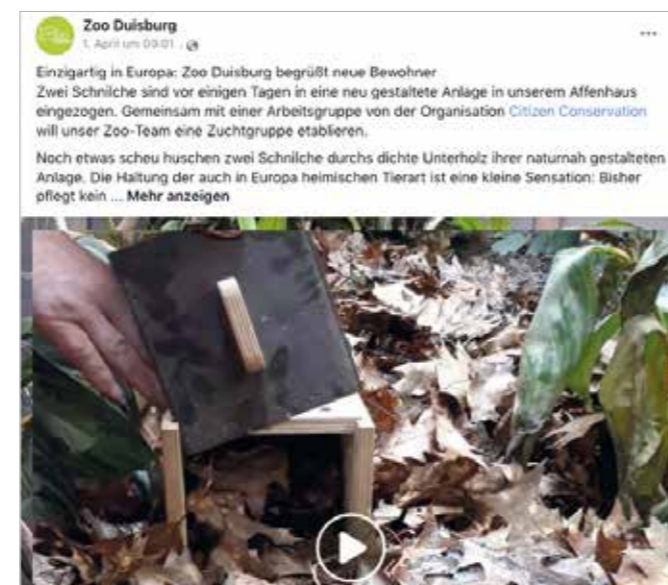
And finally, the Schnilch cast its shadow on television: Heiko Werning was invited to take part in the SWR quiz show “Sag die Wahrheit” (“Tell the truth”), where his work as a CC species conservationist was to be guessed. The recording took place in Baden-Baden in November and the programme was scheduled for broadcast in February 2024.



Schnilch duet: Björn Encke and Ulrike Sterblich with the Precarious Bestiary at the Berlin Book Festival.



Here, the author is still reading himself: the final episode of the Creature Podcast, in which CC is also introduced in more detail, was read by Heiko Werning.



The first European Schnilch enclosure at Duisburg Zoo was presented to the astonished public on 1 April.

Dates in 2023 | Events & conferences

- 24 January** | Heiko Werning and Ulrike Sterblich at the Literaturhaus Dresden for a bestiary reading
- 11 – 12 March** | Heiko Werning at the ÖGH Amphibian Days at the Natural History Museum Vienna
- 31 March** | Björn Encke at the Stuttgart Talks
- 26 – 27 April** | Heiko Werning takes part in the DTG conference ...
- 28 April** | ... and represents CC at Bern Zoo
- 4 – 5 May** | Björn Encke and Johannes Penner at the VdZ species conservation working group at Leipzig Zoo
- 11 May** | Björn Encke and Heiko Werning visit the VdZ Parliamentary Evening
- 13 May** | Heiko Werning at the VDA Federal Congress with CC presentation ...
- 24 May** | ... and at the Ring der Vivarienschulen Hamburg
- 24 May** | Tina Nagorzanski beim Gartengespräch im Zoo Leipzig, wo CC-Aufsichtsrat Markus Monzel CC vorstellt
- 7 – 10 June** | Björn Encke takes part in the VdZ conference in Karlsruhe ...
- 18 June** | ... and reads from the Bestiary together with Ulrike Sterblich at the Berlin Book Festival 2023
- 23 June** | Heiko Werning with CC lecture at the DGHT Dresden meeting
- 23 June** | Tina Nagorzanski and Björn Encke at the amphibian conservation day at Hanover Adventure Zoo ...
- 8 – 9 July** | ... and at the 3rd conference on species conservation in the aquarium by VDA in Thannhausen
- 18 July** | ASA Global Council Meeting in London, where Björn Encke is on site
- 20 July** | Johannes Penner as CC representative at the Species Conservation Day at Nuremberg Zoo
- 2 September** | Day of the Fire Salamander at Aqua Zoo Düsseldorf, in which Johannes Penner takes part
- 7 September** | Björn Encke takes part in the BfN garden talks at Cologne Zoo
- 13 – 15 September** | Björn Encke represents CC at the EAZA conference in Helsinki ...
- 21 September** | ... and takes part in the WWF Night “60 Years WWF – Daring Change” in Berlin
- 20 – 24 September** | Heiko Werning and Johannes Penner at the DGHT conference in Neustadt

- 26 September** | Parliamentary Evening ZZf – with Björn Encke and Heiko Werning
- 29 September** | Johannes Penner represents CC at the IG Phelsumen ...
- 13 October** | ... at the meeting of the DGHT-AG Urodelen ...
- 4 November** | ... and at the meeting of the DGHT-AG Anurans
- 9 – 10 October** | Tina Nagorzanski and Vanessa Dubberke at the species conservation and research working groups at Nordhorn Zoo
- 23 November** | Björn Encke at the VdZ-AK merchants in Cologne
- 5 December** | Heiko Werning with CC lecture at Magdeburg Zoo

PRESENTATIONS & ACQUISITION, CONFERENCES

CARRYING THE MESSAGE TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The CC team was once again represented at a whole series of events in 2023 to raise awareness of our work both within the scene and among the wider public and to attract new supporters and participants. Our shareholders and financial supporters were primarily concerned with explaining the progress of the project. Björn Encke gave presentations at the annual conference of the VdZ and the annual conference of the VdZ merchants' working group, while Johannes Penner and Heiko Werning gave presentations at the annual conferences of the DGHT and DTG. Various presentations at specialist conferences have focused on using CC to penetrate the core group of livestock farmers. It has regularly been shown that particularly qualified owners can be persuaded to participate through personal dialogue. Specialist conferences and local group meetings are the ideal platform for this. Finally, we supported selected partners in their activities, for example by being present at the species conservation days at the Nuremberg Zoo or the Hanover Adventure Zoo. We also attended specialist conferences to expand our own network, such as the EAZA conference in Helsinki, which Björn Encke attended on our behalf.

WHO NEEDS SNAKES?

The importance of the “campaign pro ex situ” aspect was demonstrated at the end of January 2023, when Federal Minister of Agriculture Cem Özdemir advocated positive lists for private wild animal husbandry in an interview, which would de facto mean the end of the idea of CC. A positive list would define the species that are still permitted for private keeping. Predictably, of course, these are not highly endangered, little-known species to which CC is dedicated. And even if there were exceptions for a species conservation programme such as CC, the impact of a positive list on the animal keeping scene could mean that there would no longer be enough committed animal keepers available in the long term.

What was pleasing about this unpleasant story was that CC is now recognised by the media as a point of contact in these matters.

For example, Björn Encke was able to represent our point of view in the “Tagesgespräch” programme on Bayerischer Rundfunk BR 2. We were also represented at the parliamentary evenings organised by the VdZ, ZZF and Loro Parque to hold background discussions with representatives of various stakeholders; Heiko Werning was invited to take part in a panel discussion at the Loro Parque event and was able to present our positions. Our co-signing of the open letter initiated by the BNA to the EU Commission on exemptions for certain light sources, which are urgently needed for animal welfare and ex-situ species protection, also belongs to the area of policy advice. We also donated € 2,000 to the German Pet Trade and Industry Association (ZZF) to commission an expert opinion from renowned law professor Tade Spranger from the University of Bonn on the legal admissibility of a positive list.



Björn Encke at the meeting of the Global Council of the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) in London



Johannes Penner at the conference of the DGHT-AG Anuren | Claas Böhmke



Heiko Werning presented the Fire Salamander project of CC and Frogs & Friends at the ÖGH Amphibian Days in Vienna.



Well catered for at the meeting of the Friends of Livebearing Aquarium Fish



Tina Nagorzanski at the VDA's species conservation conference in Thannhausen | Kathrin Glaw



Slightly underdressed: Heiko Werning in conversation at the VdZ Parliamentary Evening

NEWSLETTER

In 2023, 335 subscribers were again informed twice by newsletter about news from Citizen Conservation. That is around 30 newsletter recipients more than in the previous year.



One of the newsletters sent out in 2023 to people who want to be kept up to date about CC.

The “Breeder” page, which provides information about participating in Citizen Conservation, was accessed 1,900 times. Around 83% of all visitors use the German-language version of the website. 77% of users access the website from a mobile device. This will also be taken into account during the redesign.



Three new species were added to the CC website this year – Loisel's Ptycho, the Central European Fire Salamander and the Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toad.

WEBSITE

In 2023, four news articles, three species pages and a landing page for the beta version of the “Wild at Home” online platform were published on the Citizen Conservation website. In addition, the “Organisation” page was updated as part of the spin-off of the Citizen Conservation Foundation gGmbH. Due to technical difficulties, it was no longer possible to add new articles or amend existing ones from September onwards. From this point onwards, the relaunch of the website was pursued more intensively and is expected to be completed in early 2024.

In 2023, 6,843 users were registered on the CC website and there were almost 33,800 page views. Both figures therefore increased by 13% and 9% respectively compared to the previous year. With 2,374 views, the species portfolios were clicked on most frequently. Visitors were particularly interested in the Central European Fire Salamander, Ziegler's Crocodile Newt and the Vietnamese Crocodile Newt.



More than two thirds of visitors access the website via a mobile device.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Citizen Conservation's social media channels were also due for an inventory after the summer holidays. The objectives and target group were always easier to define here than with Frogs & Friends. The CC channels provide information about the project, the CC network and the topic of ex situ species conservation.

This is also intended to attract new participants and partners. The evaluation of reach and follower numbers in recent years showed which channels work well. We have enjoyed continuous growth on Facebook and Instagram. Around half of the content we posted in 2023 consisted of our own content: CC news, our participation in specialist events or our newly launched section in which we introduce our Advisory and Supervisory Board members and their favourite species. Around 30% of the posts dealt with external content on the topic of ex situ species conservation or about our partner network, and 24% of the posts showed contributions from the CC community – e.g. insights into the animal husbandry of our CC participants. These posts are always well received and generate a lot of interaction.

In 2023 and continuing in 2024, we also want to invest more time in interacting with our community and with accounts that are relevant to us. This will increase our reach and strengthen the CC brand.

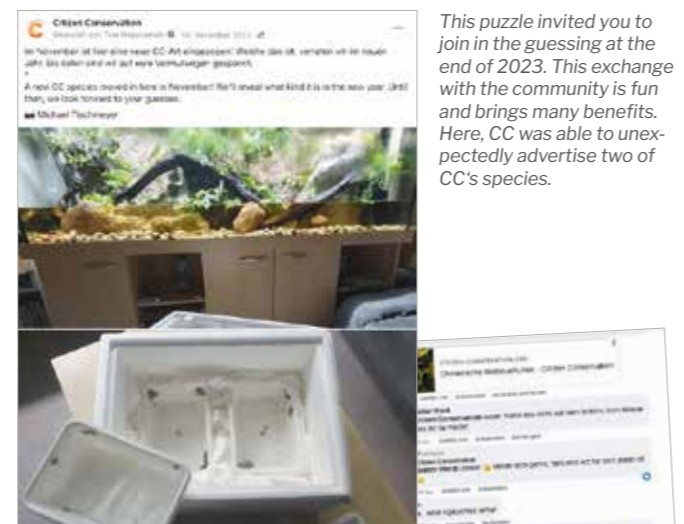


Anyone can write a CV, but we wanted to know our CC Advisory Board and Supervisory Board members' favourite species ... CV with a twist, then.

FACEBOOK

This year, the Facebook community was provided with 226 posts. At the end of 2023, the channel had 1,730 followers, an increase of 13%. With 58,700 accounts reached, the reach was roughly the same as the previous year. The 500% increase in profile views to 17,160 and the growth of around 100% in the area of content interactions were also impressive – CC content was interacted with 7,600 times. The Facebook community is therefore not only growing, but also becoming more active. The organic post with the highest reach reported on Johannes Penner's participation in the guest exhibition "The Fire Salamander in Bavaria – let's preserve their home!" at Nuremberg Zoo and reached 4,800 accounts. The two posts with the most "likes" (98 likes each) were about the offspring of the new CC species Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toads, which the followers were able to follow from spawning to the first little frog.

Two paid adverts were placed during the Advent period, first to promote the Bestiary book and then the sponsorships as Christmas gifts. The first advert reached 896 accounts and the second 8,125.



This puzzle invited you to join in the guessing at the end of 2023. This exchange with the community is fun and brings many benefits. Here, CC was able to unexpectedly advertise two of CC's species.



INSTAGRAM

With 1,268 followers, we were able to generate growth of 40% and thus cracked the 1,000-follower mark in 2023. The number of profile views also developed positively, increasing by 32% to 2,840. The reach has fallen by 10% to 24,400. As on Facebook, there was around 100% more content interaction (3,888). 192 posts were published on Instagram in 2023. The paid advert for sponsorships, which was played on both Facebook and Instagram, reached almost 8,000 users on this channel.

The organic post with the highest reach (1,130) was a short video of a participant filming the arrival of her Mallorca Midwife Toads. 169 followers wanted to express their sympathy by "liking" the death of newts following the destruction of a dam in Ukraine. This was followed by the announcement of the new amphibian species *Atelopus balios* with 167 likes.



With our comment on a Fire Salamander post by TerraX, we were able to draw attention to ourselves and our projects for the endangered species. This led to more reach, profile views and new followers.

TWITTER/X

Due to the low reach and only slightly increasing number of followers on Citizen Conservation's X channel (formerly "Twitter"), it was decided as part of the new social media strategy to no longer use X from September 2023. The analytics data continued to be recorded until the end of the year. At the end of 2023, the CC page had 260 followers, around 30 more than in 2022, and the published content was played 38,750 times. This corresponds to slightly less than half of the previous year's impressions.

X is nothing for CC ... With a final post, interested parties should be redirected to the other communication channels of Citizen Conservation.



LINKEDIN

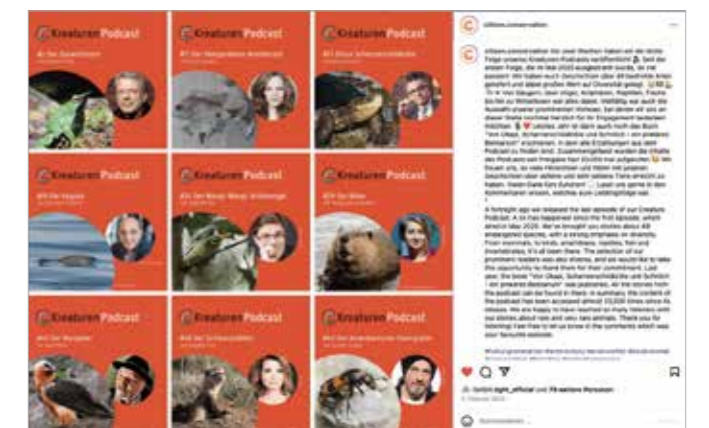
A LinkedIn profile has also been created for Citizen Conservation. Here we would like to draw attention to our successes and appearances of CC employees in the media landscape as well as to events. The first posts on the platform will follow in 2024.

YOUTUBE

The last two episodes of the Creature Podcast were published in January 2023, and there have been no new videos since then. Unsurprisingly, this led to a drop in the key figures. With a value of 7,700, the number of views fell by 40%. At 600 hours, playback time was almost 35% less than in the previous year. Nevertheless, 72 new people subscribed to the channel, meaning we had 589 subscribers at the end of 2023. The most-viewed video is once again "Tatort Wald – das stille Sterben der Feuersalamander" (3,750 views). The two new podcast episodes made it to 3rd place ("Der Beutelwolf mit Heiko Werning" – 354 views) and 10th place ("Der Pillendreher mit Julia Mateus" – 189 views).

PODIGEE

Only the latest episodes of the Creature Podcast were also published on Podigee, namely "Der Beutelwolf mit Heiko Werning" (936 downloads) and "Der Pillendreher mit Julia Mateus" (516 downloads). The lack of new content did not have the same impact as on YouTube. A total of 15,800 downloads and streams were recorded – a loss of just 8% compared to the previous year. The last two episodes were listened to most frequently, followed in 3rd place by episode no. 1: "Der Waldrapp mit Wladimir Kaminer" (508 downloads). Old and new episodes are mixed in the places behind. The podcast continues to be discovered and listened to by users.



We "pinned" a contribution that we published at the end of the Kreaturen podcast on CC's Instagram profile. This means it can always be seen at the top of the feed and should entice new profile visitors to listen in.

PRESS RELEASE

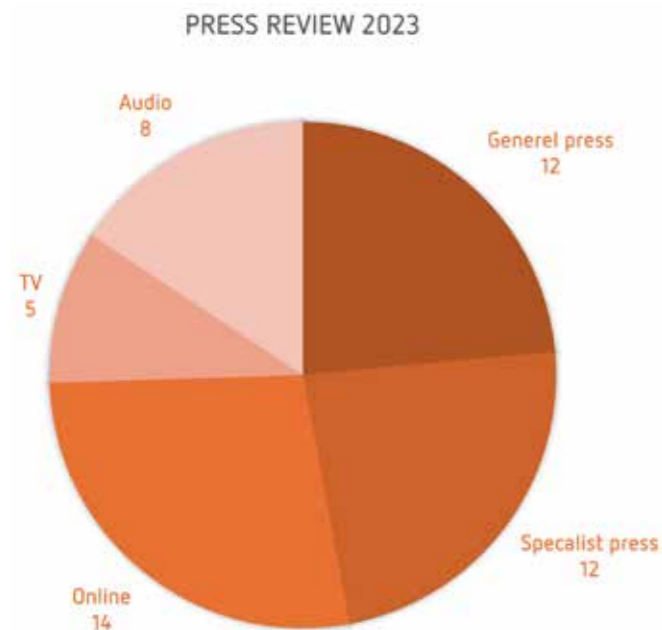
SALAMANDERS IN THE PRESS JUNGLE

Our topics have proven to be relevant for the public media in 2023 as well.

The situation of the Fire Salamander, for which CC wants to set up a national ex situ programme, attracted particular attention. In 2022, we prepared our feasibility study on the conservation breeding of *Salamandra salamandra* using the example of Bavaria, which we officially published in early 2023. The topic was subsequently taken up by the dpa and many regional and national news sites, among others.

Naturally, ex situ Fire Salamander breeding was an important topic in the major web report by Frogs & Friends, which we were able to publish in 2023 (see page 19). It was also prominently featured in the documentary series “Mission Wildnis – Das Arche-Prinzip” (“Mission Wilderness – The Ark Principle”) produced by Filmtank for Arte.

The fact that people who are committed to the protection of species are fundamentally interesting people was also recognised by Deutschlandfunk Kultur, which invited Björn Encke to take part in an hour-long interview programme about himself.

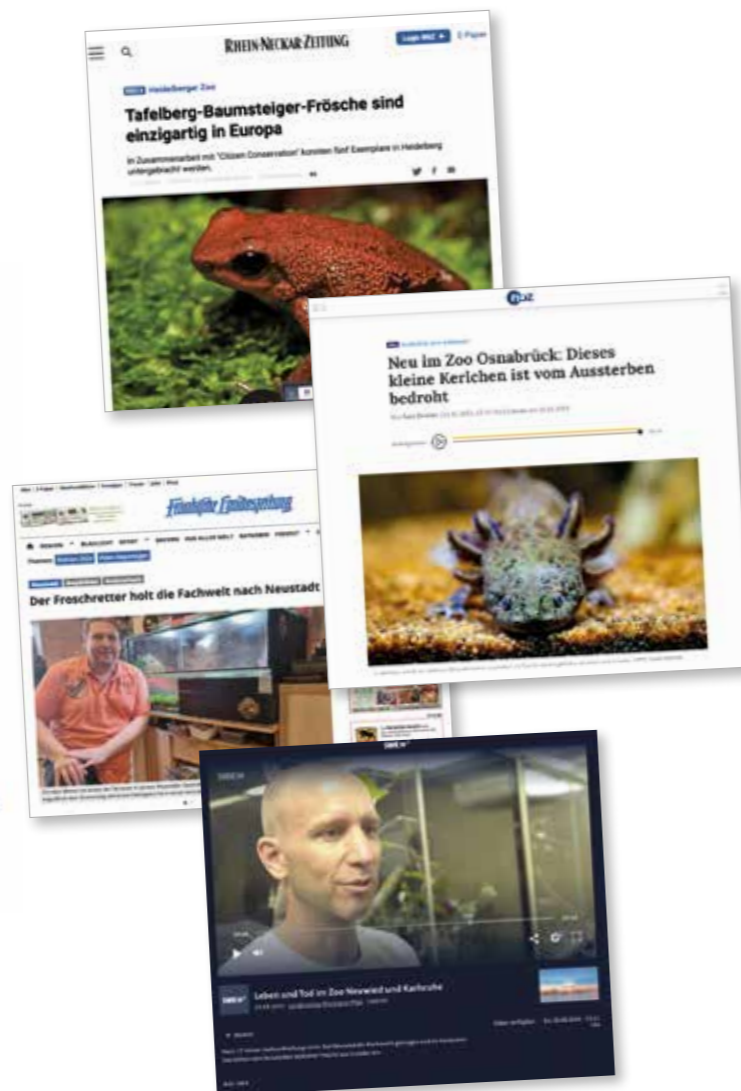


FROM EXPERTS FOR SPECIALISTS

A presence in the specialised press for animal keepers is important for knowledge transfer, but also for the acquisition of new participants. As in previous years, CC has advertised in the vivarium specialist journals “Reptilia” and “DATZ” and in the DGHT association magazine “elaphe”.

CC was also present in the scene throughout the year via articles or press releases in specialist journals, including a detailed article by Heiko Werning about CC in the June issue of “DATZ”. Björn Encke explained CC in a podcast for the aquarist website “my-fish”, and recordings of presentations by Björn Encke and Tina Nagorzanski were posted online on the website of the Association of German Aquarium and Terrarium Clubs.

In “elaphe”, CC participant Michael Tischmeyer published a detailed report on his successes in breeding the Vietnamese crocodile newt for CC.



ARTENSCHUTZ IN DER VIVARIESTIK

Citizen Conservation – Haltung rettet Arten

Die Biodiversitätskrise spitzt sich dramatisch zu. Der von den Vereinten Nationen eingeleitete Weltbiodiversitätsrat IPBES hat im „Global Assessment Report“ von 2019, der bislang umfangreichsten internationalen Untersuchung zum Artenschutz, geschätzt, dass eine Million Arten in den nächsten Jahrzehnten droht vom Aussterben bedroht zu sein. | TEXT VON HEIKO WERNING

So wahrscheinlich es wäre, sie alle zu retten, also in zoologischen Gärten zu halten, so sehr muss man sich bewusst sein, dass dieser Anspruch in vielen Fällen nicht zu erfüllen ist. Die Schließung der Zuchtstationen führt zu einer Verringerung der genetischen Vielfalt, die artenschutzrechtlichen Anforderungen im Zoo zu entsprechen. So stehen die Überlebenden der Natur unweigerlich drohend vor uns.

Die rechtliche Absicherung der Zuchtstationen ist ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der Arbeit. Die rechtliche Absicherung ist ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der Arbeit. Die rechtliche Absicherung ist ein wesentlicher Bestandteil der Arbeit.

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Stärken zusammenführen

Zoo haben die besten Chancen, die Arten zu erhalten und zu verwalten. Über viel Erfahrung und wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse im Populationsmanagement von Tieren in menschlicher Obhut. Die vielen kleinen, nicht artenschutzrechtlichen Zuchtstationen sind in der Regel nicht in der Lage, die notwendigen Kapazitäten zu schaffen. Zoo sind daher in der Lage, die notwendigen Kapazitäten zu schaffen.

Neben dem Artenschutz ist es wichtig, die Arten zu erhalten und zu verwalten. Über viel Erfahrung und wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse im Populationsmanagement von Tieren in menschlicher Obhut. Die vielen kleinen, nicht artenschutzrechtlichen Zuchtstationen sind in der Regel nicht in der Lage, die notwendigen Kapazitäten zu schaffen.

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FROM THE REGIONS TO THE MINDS

The decentralised organisation of CC enables regional media to report on our topics time and again, e.g. when local actors such as zoos or private households become active for CC.

Striking examples of this are extensive interviews in the third TV programmes of BR and SWR with the former CC Advisory Board member Helmut Mägdefrau and with CC Advisory Board member and DGHT Managing Director Axel Kwet, in which we were the subject.

The introduction of new species into local zoos or the first breeding successes are always good for media coverage. The introduction and initial successes with the Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toad (*Atelopus balios*) in particular brought us several reports on local TV stations and newspapers in Karlsruhe and Basel. Heidelberg Zoo’s participation in the Demonic Poison Frog (*Minyobates steyermarki*) programme also attracted coverage, as did the introduction of Lemur Leaf Frogs (*Agalychnis lemur*) at Chemnitz Zoo and Anderson’s Salamander (*Ambystoma andersoni*) at Osnabrück Zoo.

As we had calculated from the outset, the institutions participating in CC are also ideal multipliers for our movement. For example, the “Precarious Bestiary” exhibition was on display at Schwerin Zoo until June 2023, and there is now a donation fountain for our Fire Salamander project. CC is presented on the information boards in the new species conservation campus at Allwetterzoo Münster. Various institutions have reported on their participation in CC in press releases or on their own websites – not only zoos, but also schools, for example; particularly pleasing in terms of future capacity building.

And finally, individual CC participants are interesting objects of local reporting – what interesting things the neighbours do! For example, our keeper Ralf Henschke became a “newt rescuer” and Christian Bittner a “frog rescuer” in the local press. So rescue is near!

FULFILMENT OF THE STATUTORY OBJECTIVES

In the 2023 reporting period, the amphibian house designed by Frogs & Friends was under construction at Hanover Adventure Zoo. Numerous educational contents were produced over the course of the year and prepared for the exhibition. Online activities (digital services and permanent editorial operations) were continued. These activities are in line with our first statutory objective of promoting EDUCATION AND POPULAR EDUCATION in accordance with Section 52 (2) sentence 1 no. 7 AO.

The donation as a shareholder of the Citizen Conservation Foundation gGmbH is a Frogs & Friends contribution to the promotion of science and research as well as nature conservation and environmental protection as a fundraiser within the meaning of Section 58 No. 2 AO (FÖRDERKÖRPER-SCHAFT). Indirectly, the commitment to Citizen Conservation therefore also fulfils the statutory objectives of promoting ANIMAL BREEDING pursuant to Section 52 (2) sentence 1 no. 23 AO, NATURE and ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION pursuant to Section 52 (2) sentence 1 no. 8 AO and ANIMAL PROTECTION pursuant to Section 52 (2)

sentence 1 no. 14 AO – as well as the objective of promoting civic ENGAGEMENT pursuant to Section 52 (2) sentence 1 no. 25 AO in favour of the aforementioned purposes.

The wildlife database project “Wild at Home”, which is funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action until August 2023, also fulfils the latter objectives to the same extent. This means that four of the association’s five statutory objectives were pursued during the reporting period.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Frogs & Friends will increasingly focus on two areas in the coming years. Firstly, on the exhibition sector, i.e. the design and realisation of digital and physical educational offerings. Secondly, we want to expand our cooperation and partnerships in Central and West Africa and establish sustainable structures in the areas of research and species conservation. The establishment of our own breeding and research facility in Germany would be an important building block in order to be able to fulfil a bridging function between ex situ and in situ species conservation in the long term. On the other hand, it would usefully complement the work on establishing CC over the next few years.



Planting species conservation in people’s minds. With the help of the HIT Environmental Foundation and Frogs & Friends, a secondary school in Hesse has set up outdoor enclosures for Fire Salamanders and is taking responsibility for the population in its local forest.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2023

In the 2023 reporting year, income totalled € 595,169.36 and expenses amounted to € 502,151.25.

The personnel contribution from Frogs & Friends for CC totalled € 98,475.93. This was supplemented by € 25,000 as part of the grant agreement and a special grant of € 9,000, which was attributable to a coronavirus grant from 2020. This resulted in a total grant from F&F to CC of € 132,475.93 in 2023.

Otherwise, the wildlife database “Wild at Home” and the Amphibium Hanover were the projects with the highest financial turnover. The project for a Fire Salamander breeding station at the Wilhelm-von-Oranien-Gymnasium in Dillenburg, which was funded by the HIT Environmental Foundation in 2022 and which we accompanied conceptually and on film, was completed.

INCOME STATEMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 4 PARA. 3 ESTG AS AT 31.12.2023

Operating income	€ 595,169.36
Donations & sponsorships	€ 412,639.00
Turnover	€ 66,350.82
Grants	€ 99,995.07
Other operating income	€ 3,577.81
Value added tax	€ 12,606.66
Operating charges	€ 502,151.25
Staff costs	€ 235,447.75
Project costs	€ 204,592.81
Advertising/travel expenses	€ 16,585.36
Taxes, insurance, contributions KSK	€ 25,175.22
Other operating charges	€ 11,335.03
Input tax	€ 9,389.01
Value added tax	€ -373.93
Result	€ 93,018.11

BALANCE SHEET FOR 2023 (AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023)

ASSETS	EUR	LIABILITIES	EUR
A. Current assets		A. Shareholders' equity	
Debtors and other assets	€ 6.59	Share capital	€ 25,000.00
Cash at bank and in hand, postal giro and central bank balances, cheques	€ 94,947.29	Retained earnings brought forward	€ 35,220.94
		Net income for the year	€ 28,950.45
		B. Creditors	
		Other creditors	€ 5,782.49
Total ASSETS	€ 94,953.88	Total LIABILITIES	€ 94,953.88

The share capital contributions of the three shareholders F&F (€ 9,375 = 37.5%), VdZ (€ 9,375 = 37.5%) and DGHT (€ 6,250 = 25%) totalling € 25,000 are held in CC's call deposit account, as is a reserve of € 9,018.41.

The current account had a balance of € 60,879.98 on December 31, 2023 and the CC PayPal account had a balance of € 48.90. In total, CC's liquidity as at December 31, 2023 therefore amounted to € 94,947.29.

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT (JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023)

	EUR	EUR
Operating income		
Grants & donations		€ 186,181.56
Other operating income		€ 223.21
Total operating income		€ 186,404.77
Operating charges		
Staff costs		€ 63,041.96
Other operating expenses		€ 94,412.36
Advertising and travelling expenses	€ 23,300.52	
Cost sharing database "Wild at Home"	€ 20,000.00	
Animal transfers and veterinary medicine	€ 15,212.08	
Production and editing	€ 16,893.56	
Miscellaneous operating costs	€ 19,006.20	
Total operating charges		€ 157,454.32
Earnings after taxes		€ 28,950.45
Profit for the financial year		€ 28,950.45

In the 2023 reporting year, operating income of € 186,404.77 was offset by charges of € 157,454.32. The net profit for the financial year amounts to € 28,950.45.

The balance sheet and profit and loss account do not include the provision of personnel as part of the management agreement and the grant agreement between Frogs & Friends and CC. The provision of personnel by Frogs & Friends corresponded to staff costs of € 98,475.93 in 2023 as a whole. This means that the real expenses for Citizen Conservation totalled € 255,930.25 in the 2023 reporting year.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

According to § 2.3 of the articles of association, the objectives of the Citizen Conservation Foundation gGmbH are the promotion of science and research, education, public and vocational training, nature conservation and environmental protection, animal welfare and breeding as well as civic engagement in favour of the aforementioned charitable purposes.

According to § 2.4 of the articles of association, these purposes are to be realised in particular through

- a) the establishment of coordinated conservation breeding programmes for species for which the establishment of scientifically managed reserve populations is useful or necessary due to their endangered status or other relevant reasons,
- b) the systematic collection and processing of knowledge about the keeping and breeding of species and making it accessible to the general public,
- c) the targeted provision of participation and further education programmes with a focus on the keeping and breeding of wild animals as well as the design and implementation of research projects in the field of animal and species conservation; the results are published promptly.



In the reporting year, the number of maintenance breeding programmes was increased from 17 to 27. The number of keeping facilities was increased by 43% to 230. The topic of ex situ species conservation was clearly represented on the website and in the social media as well as in the specialised and general press. Preparations for the establishment of a network to protect the native Fire Salamander (spring 2024) were driven forward by CC. In this respect, all of the purposes set out in the articles of association were thematically addressed in the 2023 reporting year.

DONORS 2023

Citizen Conservation is a stakeholder-supported initiative. We would like to thank all our partners and associates who make CC's work possible through their financial (and in the case of F&F, personnel) support.

			
€ 132,476	€ 50,000	€ 25,000	€ 25,000
			
€ 25,000	€ 10,000	€ 5,000	€ 5,000

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

	Stephan Eger	
€ 4,557	€ 1,000	€ 500

SPECIES CONSERVATION IS TEAMWORK

WE THANK OUR PARTNERS

FROGS & FRIENDS E.V.

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Chairman: Dr Mark-Oliver Rödel

Managing Director: Björn Encke

Register Court: Charlottenburg

Local Court

Register number: 33841 B

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