

Nuyorican toads? ^[1]

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Calificación:



Source [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) ^[2] The strings of sticky eggs laid at the Central Park Zoo were bound for great things, and sun-splashed places. As part of a program to revitalize the endangered Puerto Rican crested toad, animal husbandry experts from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) reared more than 450 healthy tadpoles in New York and released them in a manmade pond in the island's Guanica State Forest. It is hoped that the tadpoles will someday return to these same wetlands as warty, golden-eyed adult toads to lay eggs of their own. Bruce Foster, Collections Manager for the Central Park Zoo, stowed his precious cargo in plastic bags of water and pure oxygen before he escorted them down to the release site in Puerto Rico. There he met with other participants in the ongoing reintroduction effort, including the Fort Worth Zoo. The Buffalo Zoo and Sedgwick County Zoo also sent down shipments of pollywogs, contributing to a total of 2,700 tadpoles for the release. The group is part of the Puerto Rican Crested Toad Species Survival Plan (SSP), a project founded in 1984 under the auspices of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. In addition to boosting the long struggling toad population itself, the SSP aims to raise awareness of the species' plight through island-wide public education and outreach programs. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Puerto Rican Department of Natural Resources are also supporting this effort. According to Foster, "Participating in SSP initiatives like the Puerto Rican crested toad project is one way that zoos are helping to stop the global loss of amphibian species. To date, more than two hundred species of frogs, toads, and salamanders have disappeared and another thousand species are threatened with extinction." Because only a small percentage of tadpoles reach adulthood, any effort to reintroduce the toads requires

releasing a huge number of the young. Diane Barber, coordinator of the crested toad SSP at the Fort Worth Zoo, was optimistic about the project. “The good news is we’re starting to see evidence of success. Last year we witnessed the largest breeding event in twenty years at another site, and the current wild population estimate is a thousand toads, up from only three hundred a few years ago.” Though the Puerto Rican crested toad was once widespread both in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the species is now restricted to Guanica State Forest. Loss of habitat; predation by introduced species such as mongoose, rats, and dogs; and competition with the non-native giant marine toad have severely reduced its numbers. The U.S. Endangered Species Act lists the crested toad as Threatened, and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) considers it to be Critically Endangered.

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