Amphibian chytridiomycosis key achievements

Key achievements

- Research published in 1998, co-authored by IoZ's Professor Andrew Cunningham, was the first description of chytridiomycosis in amphibians and showed that this disease is responsible for mass mortality of amphibians across Australia and the Neotropics. Since then, our scientists and their colleagues have shown how the impact of amphibian chytridiomycosis is context-dependent, reliant on the amphibian species infected, the strain of Bd present and the prevailing environmental conditions.

- IoZ's Prof. Cunningham was one of four international scientists who reviewed available knowledge of amphibian chytridiomycosis for the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This review led to infection with Bd being listed by the OIE which means that 178 OIE member countries are signed up to new surveillance and control measures, as well as trade standards to help assure the sanitary safety of international trade in live amphibians and their products.

- IoZ scientists, in collaboration with Imperial College, established the first tool for mapping cases of Bd infection globally.

- IoZ developed biosecurity measures for use in amphibian conservation programmes, which are now employed in the Caribbean, across Europe, and in China as best practice guidelines for field researchers working with amphibians in the wild. IoZ staff and students have explored several antifungal treatments for Bd for captive animals. The successful treatments are now used by zoos and others across the world.

- A seven-year study led by scientists from the IoZ, the National Museum of Natural History in Spain (MNCN), and Imperial College London showed the first evidence of eradicating Bd affecting amphibians in situ. The study combined antifungal treatment of Mallorcan midwife toad (*Alytes muletensis*) tadpoles with environmental disinfection. By using an antifungal to treat tadpoles and a common laboratory decontaminant to sterilise the environment, researchers were able to clear infection from populations of the toad over the research period. Read more.

- Amphibians have been treated in the wild for the first time against chytridiomycosis as part of a pioneering study led by scientists from ZSL. Read more.

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