

## The Reptile and Amphibian Team - January 3rd, 2017

The longest running study of the Rainforest project, The Reptile and Amphibian Team is proud to say that this year, we will be focusing our efforts on gathering information about *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (abbreviated Bd), more colloquially known as Chytrid Fungus. This fungus is infecting amphibians across every continent, and for most of the affected animals, it results in death. In recent years, it has decimated some of the largest populations of in the world, and is able to infect a higher percentage of species than almost any other disease in recorded history (<http://www.amphibianark.org/the-crisis/chytrid-fungus/>). In just the past three decades, this epidemic has wiped out entire species and caused an alarming decline in biodiversity, in Costa Rica, Panama, Australia, parts of Europe, South Africa, Japan, and all across the Americas, (<http://amphibiaweb.org/chytrid/chytridiomycosis.html>). In some cases, this extremely parasitic fungus has spread so rapidly it causes massive devastation to entire ecosystems within just a matter of weeks (<http://www.amphibianark.org/the-crisis/chytrid-fungus/>). Only a select few species, such as the American Bullfrog have proven resistant, and scientists are working to constantly to better understand the factors that determine how Chytrid fungus can affect some species so much differently than others. We hope our research will help raise awareness about this devastating threat. We have the exciting opportunity to work with the accomplished field biologist, Dr. Twan Leenders, a published author, and assist in the research. We will also be helping him to survey amphibian and reptile species in the reserve for a data base and his next book on Reptiles of Costa Rica.