



Spawn of a New Era

I remember when I was a little girl my teacher taking the class outside and showing us the frogspawn that dwelled in the school pond's murky waters. Each week we would monitor the spawn; witnessing its transformation, first into wee tadpoles and eventually into fat frogs that hopped around the mossy edges of the pond. With feelings of fond nostalgia for our amphibious friends, I was saddened to hear that our frog communities are now in danger of being wiped out.

Frogs play a vital role in maintaining the delicate balance of our ecosystems, and their fate has now become a critical environmental issue. According to the non-profit organisation Save The Frogs, "frog populations worldwide have been declining at unprecedented rates, and nearly one-third of the world's 6,500 amphibian species are threatened with extinction. Up to 200 species have already completely disappeared." Look out for The Frog Art Contest in early 2010 in which youngsters can win prizes while doing their bit for frog-kind. www.savethefrogs.com



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Wild About Dolphins

In a recent press release, Singapore's SPCA slammed Resorts World Sentosa for importing a group of 18 dolphins reportedly caught in the wild in the Solomon Islands area. "The SPCA believes that the act of taking these animals from the wild (endangered or not) is at odds with the spirit of Singapore's Wild Animals & Birds Act, which prohibits the taking of an animal from the wild." The SPCA has also objected to the inclusion of a whale shark exhibit, which is one of the proposed attractions.

In response to numerous complaints, Resorts World Marine Life Park has issued a letter on its website stating that its goal is "the conservation of the ocean and its inhabitants". It also states that plans for the park "are still being finalised and options are being explored". We'll keep you updated as this story unfolds. **Read the letter at www.rwsentosa.com/en_marinelifepark.html.**



EARTHWATCH

by Deborah Goldman

Starting this month, we will be keeping our ear to the ground to bring you environmental news from Singapore and around the world. We'd also like to hear from you. If you have any comments or news to contribute, send an email to editorial@expatlivingsingapore.com.

Life Imitating Fiction

I recently watched a disaster movie titled *The Day After Tomorrow*, in which the human race faces death by climate change. It was morbidly entertaining, with giant waves swallowing entire cities, hail stones the size of golf balls, tornadoes in Los Angeles and weather systems freezing people in their tracks ... literally. But its message was real, because the devastating storms were a direct result of the melting of the polar icecaps.

According to a recent survey by the Catlin Arctic Survey and WWF, the Arctic Ocean ice is melting so quickly that within 20 years the entire area could be ice-free during its summer months. So what does that mean for us? According to one report from www.sciencedaily.com, Dr Martin Sommerkorn from the WWF International Arctic Programme says that this "could lead to flooding affecting one-quarter of the world's population, substantial increases in greenhouse gas emissions from massive carbon pools, and extreme global weather changes".

But don't panic yet. Our politicians don't appear quite as blasé as those portrayed in the movie. In fact, British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown speaking in advance of this month's UN climate change conference in Copenhagen (COP15) said: "We should never allow ourselves to lose sight of the catastrophe we face if present warming trends continue." Empty rhetoric? We'll have to wait and see if Mr Brown and the leaders of 192 other nations attending the summit can agree on a cunning plan to save the world. **The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) campaign, Hopenhagen, is a countdown to the conference. Visit www.hopenhagen.com, sign the petition, and have your say.**



Design for Life

Singapore has become the first city to partner with the INDEX: Design to Improve Life exhibition, which up until now has been showcased only in Copenhagen. The exhibition, which is on display at VivoCity Sky Park until 9 December, features award-winning designs chosen from a total of 700 entries in five categories, including innovative eco-ideas such as the Recycle Factory; a toy that creates paper models from waste paper. www.indexawards.dk



Soup for the Soul

Last month, The Fairmont Singapore teamed up with ACRES to help reduce the demand for shark's fin soup and to create awareness about the critical role that sharks play in maintaining our oceans' ecological balance. Over a three-day period the hotel served up 600 complimentary "eco-friendly, cruelty-free" bowls of soup to the public. www.fairmont.com

