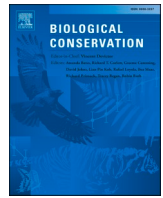




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Perspective



Using the 2020 global pandemic as a springboard to highlight the need for amphibian conservation in eastern Asia

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ABSTRACT

Emerging infectious diseases are on the rise in many different taxa, including, among others, the amphibian batrachochytrids, the snake fungal disease and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus, responsible for Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in mammals. Following the onset of the pandemic linked to COVID-19, eastern Asia has shown strong leadership, taking actions to regulate the trade of potential vector species in several regions. These actions were taken in response to an increase in public awareness, and the need for a quick reaction to mitigate against further pandemics. However, trade restrictions rarely affect amphibians, despite the risk of pathogen transmission, directly, or indirectly through habitat destruction and the loss of vector consumption. Thus, species that help alleviate the risk of zoonoses or provide biological control are not protected. Hence, in view of the global amphibian decline and the risk of zoonoses, we support the current wildlife trade regulations and support measures to safeguard wildlife from overexploitation. The current period of regulation overhaul should be used as a springboard for amphibian conservation. To mitigate risks, we suggest the following stipulations specifically for amphibians. I) Restrictions to amphibian farming in eastern Asia, in relation to pathogen transmission and the establishment of invasive species. II)

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