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Museum & Aquarium to release 4,843 Endangered Tadpoles

The Wyoming Toad was down to only 10 known individuals in 1989

Dubuque, Iowa- June 9, 2016— The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium continues to see great success in its Wyoming Toad captive breeding program. This year, the Museum & Aquarium hatched 4,843 tadpoles. The rare tadpoles will be sent to Laramie, Wyoming for release into their natural habitat. The 2016 hatch marks the Museum & Aquarium's tenth year in the program and the eighth year breeding toads.

The Museum & Aquarium joined the effort to save the Wyoming Toads (*Anaxyrus baxteri*) from extinction in 2006. Since beginning captive breeding in Dubuque in 2008, the Museum & Aquarium has released 39,365 tadpoles as an institution. The entire program, currently consisting of eight institutions, has hatched approximately 150,000 tadpoles since 2008. Over a quarter of the tadpole production is a result of the work at the Museum & Aquarium.

The Wyoming toad used to inhabit Albany County, Wyoming in large numbers. Due to changes in climate, insecticides, and changes in agricultural practices, the population crashed in the mid-1970s, putting the toads on the endangered species list. These toads formerly inhabited flood plains and ponds in the Laramie Basin, and fed on a diet of ants and beetles.

The Wyoming toad was federally listed as endangered in 1984 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and is considered one of the four most endangered amphibian species in North America. The last ten toads believed to exist in the wild were taken into captivity in 1989 for breeding.

For more information on Wyoming toads, visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services website at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/amphibians/wyomingtoad/>.

The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium is located in the Port of Dubuque, Iowa. For more information, please call 563-557-9545 or visit the Museum & Aquarium's website at www.rivermuseum.com.

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