

Unterstützung einer vom Aussterben bedrohten Population der Geburtshelferkröte (*Alytes obstetricans*) durch Naturschutzmaßnahmen und ex-situ-Aufzucht im FFH-Gebiet Waldreservat Kottenforst im Rahmen des LIFE+ Projekts Villewälder, Wald- und Wasserwelten

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Support of an endangered population of the midwife toad (*Alytes obstetricans*) through conservation measures and ex situ breeding within the FFH site Waldreservat Kottenforst as part of the LIFE+ project Ville Forests, Forests-Waterworlds

As part of the LIFE project “Ville Forests, Forest and Water Worlds”, funded by the European Union and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), support was provided for the last remaining population of the midwife toad (*Alytes obstetricans*) on the left bank of the river Rhine in Bonn, which was on the verge of extinction. At the start of the LIFE project, the remaining remnant population was dwindling, with only one to two calling males detected at the breeding site. In December 2018, the remaining breeding pond was dredged and the surrounding woody vegetation was cleared. The entire southern shoreline was structured with deadwood and soil material to provide sufficient land habitat for midwife toads. During the winter season of 2020, additional potential breeding ponds were created to enable recolonisation of formerly inhabited areas of the forest. In addition, in 2019 and 2020, larvae and males carrying egg strings were taken from a neighbouring donor population in the vicinity of the Kottenforst and reared ex situ. In total, 586 larvae and metamorphs were released into six restored and newly created ponds. Between 2020 and 2025, standardized surveys of calling males were conducted at the six project ponds as part of monitoring activities, and reproduction was assessed using water traps. Calling numbers initially increased, and successful reproduction was confirmed at four project ponds. However, up to 2025, calling numbers have remained at an overall low level. At present, there is no evidence of the species spreading to other project ponds.

Key words: *Alytes obstetricans*, midwife toad, Natura 2000 site (FFH), LIFE project, habitat restoration, pond creation and enhancement, terrestrial habitat improvement, ex situ breeding, amphibian conservation, monitoring.

Zusammenfassung

Im Rahmen des von der Europäischen Union und dem Land Nordrhein-Westfalen geförderten LIFE+ Projekts Villewälder – Wald- und Wasserwelten erfolgte die ge-