

Grantee Information

Organization Name: Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Project Leader: Jamie Weyer

Name of Project: Eastern Hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*) Ohio Conservation Plan

Summary of the Project

Hellbender tracking – July 24-29

Hellbender egg collection – September 8-13

With grant money made available through Chopsticks for Salamanders, Sara Plesuk, Dome Reptiles Supervisor, and I had the chance to travel to Ohio and assist in tracking released hellbenders and collecting hellbender eggs. Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium had housed eleven Eastern Hellbenders (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*) that were raised from eggs salvaged from a disturbed nest in West Virginia. Ten of those hellbenders were released back into the wild this past June. Sara and I spent time tracking these hellbenders to monitor their movements and survivorship in the wild. We also spent three days wading in the waters of Eastern Ohio streams in search of hellbender dens. With the help from Greg Lipps, a state herpetologist, and two Toledo Zoo keepers, we were able to collect 750 viable eggs. These eggs were transported to the Toledo Zoo to get a head start on their hatching process. After they hatch, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium will receive up to 500 of them that will be reared in the Amphibian Conservation Area as a part of the Ohio Hellbender Partnership's hellbender conservation project. These hellbenders will be used in the captive head-starting and repatriation program to return hellbenders to areas where they have been extirpated.



