

Harlequin frog rediscovered in remote region of Colombia

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After 14 years without having been seen, several young scientists supported by the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP), have rediscovered the Carrikeri Harlequin Frog (*Atelopus carrikeri*) in a remote mountainous region in Colombia.

The critically endangered Carrikeri Harlequin frog was recently rediscovered by the Project Atelopus team in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Mountains in Colombia's Magdalena department. Colombia is one of the world's richest countries in amphibian diversity with more than 583 species. Unfortunately, in the past several years, there has been a decline in amphibian populations especially in higher elevations in Colombia.

“By discovering that the endangered frog still exists, we hope it will show how important conservation is,” said Luis Alberto Rueda, scientist for the Project Atelopus team who led the expedition. “And we plan to continue with our research so that we can better assist in helping to ensure that this frog will not become extinct.”

In addition to Rueda, who is part of the GECOH (Grupo de Ecofisiología, Comportamiento y Herpetología) of the University of the Andes, the individuals who are part of the Atelopus team of scientist include: Oswaldo Cortes, Giovanni Chaves, Erika Salazar, Jose Gil, Sergio Pulido, Astrid Nossa, Fabian Tavera, Jenny Gallo, Ximena Villagrán and Nidia Rodriguez members of the Ecodiversidad Colombia Foundation.

The Carrikeri Harlequin frog is native to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Mountains in Colombia's Magdalena province. The frog lives in the páramo habitat at an attitude of 4,000 meters and is approximately five centimeters in size. This population is unique since it possesses orange markings, which are unusual for this species. Páramo is a neotropical grassland ecosystem located in high elevations between the upper forest line (about 3,100 meters in altitude) and the permanent snow line (about 5,000 meters). Nearly 57 percent of this ecosystem worldwide is found in Colombia.

Source: Conservation International

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