

Group says 3 more birds close to extinction

May 14 2009, By BRADLEY S. KLAPPER , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- An Ethiopian lark, a Galapagos finch and a spectacularly colored hummingbird only recently discovered in Colombia have been added to the list of the world's most threatened species, an environmental group said Thursday. The International Union for Conservation of Nature - the producer each year of a Red List of endangered species - said the Sidamo lark could soon become Africa's first known bird extinction as the Ethiopian savanna becomes overgrown by bush, farmland and overgrazing.

"This is a species that is absolutely on the edge," said Martin Fowlie, spokesman for the Britain-based BirdLife International, whose monitoring determines which birds are included on the list.

The Sidamo lark is joined as a "critically endangered" species by the medium tree-finch in Ecuador's [Galapagos Islands](#) and the gorgeted puffleg - a Colombian mountain bird with an appearance as flamboyant as its name.

The black bird with a puffy white underbelly and a blue-and-green throat was only discovered in 2005, but is surviving on just 1,200 hectares (3,000 acres) of habitat left in the cloud forests of the Pinche mountain range, which are being lost to coca growing.

"Cocaine production is the main threat," Fowlie told The Associated Press, adding that only about 25 of the pufflegs have been seen. The total puffleg population, he said, "is likely to be incredibly small."

The situation for some species has improved, however.

New Zealand's Chatham petrel, whose dark gray stripes give its wings an "M" appearance, has been moved to endangered from critically endangered, thanks to [conservation](#) work from authorities, the conservation body said.

It said the Mauritius fody also has recovered from the brink of extinction after a community was moved to an offshore island free of predators, while Brazil's Lear's macaw, a massive blue parrot, has increased fourfold in recent years as a result of joint efforts between government authorities, environmentalists and local landowners.

"In global terms, things continue to get worse," said Leon Bennun, science and policy chief at BirdLife. "But there are some real conservation success stories this year to give us hope and point the way forward."

In total 1,227 species were classified as globally threatened with extinction. That accounts for 12 percent of all birds.

While some rare birds are becoming rarer, the conservation body also noted the decline of more common species such as North America's chimney swift. There are still believed to be millions of the long-range migrants in the skies, but the population fell nearly 30 percent in the last decade. It is now being qualified as a "near threatened" [species](#).

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Group says 3 more birds close to extinction (2009, May 14) retrieved 25 April 2024

from <https://phys.org/news/2009-05-group-birds-extinction.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.