

Tiny red-eyed tree frogs find safe haven in Nicaragua

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A red-eyed green frog (*Agalychnis callidryas*) photographed at the Montibelli private wildlife reserve, in the municipality of Ticuantepe, 15km south of Managua, on September 9, 2016

Thousands of tiny frogs with bright green skin and big red eyes have found a safe haven from climate change in a Nicaraguan nature reserve.

The red-eyed tree frogs (*Agalychnis callidryas*) are native to the tropical

forests of Mexico, Central America and Colombia, but are threatened by drought, deforestation and the use of contaminating pesticides.

A [severe drought](#) in Central America's Pacific coastal region over the past two years is especially dangerous for the tiny species, which depends on water to reproduce and find food—crickets, flies and grubs.

Water abounds at the Montibelli nature reserve, in the hills to the south of the Nicaraguan capital Managua.

"We put pools of water (amid the vegetation) so they can reproduce" and survive through dry spells, said Carlos Belli, the manager of the reserve.

The [frogs](#) are known for their bright red eyes, which scientists believe serve to scare away predators.

They measure just eight centimeters (three inches).

The Montibelli reserve, which was set up 16 years ago, gets about 3,000 visitors a year, plus researchers.



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The 160-hectare (400-acre) reserve is part of the Sierras de Managua corridor, which harbors 142 species including boa constrictors and golden-mantled howling monkeys—which are also threatened by [climate change](#) and deforestation.

Nicaragua loses an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 hectares of forest per year because of excessive and sometimes illegal logging.

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