

Indianapolis Zoo awards \$1million to save critically endangered Blue-Throated Hillstar



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Newly discovered hummingbird on brink of extinction

The Indianapolis Zoo has awarded a \$1 million grant to the Ecuadorian conservation group Fundación Jocotoco to save a newly-discovered hummingbird from the brink of extinction.

The Indianapolis Zoo created the \$1 million Saving Species Challenge with the specific goal of saving a single species from extinction. The plan to save the Blue-Throated Hillstar was chosen by a jury of international animal conservation experts. In total, 52 applications were received from 46 countries.

*"We are witnessing a global decline in biodiversity, and the Indianapolis Zoo is determined to make a positive difference. We are honoured to support the work of Fundación Jocotoco, and I am confident the Blue-Throated Hillstar can be saved," said **Dr. Robert Shumaker, Indianapolis Zoo President & CEO.***

The Blue-Throated Hillstar, a new hummingbird species, was discovered in 2017. The Hillstar is found within only 24 square miles of a cold, high-elevation area of the isolated Chillan Mountain range in Southwestern Ecuador. Habitat loss due to mining and frequent burning is responsible for the bird's classification as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Today, fewer than 110 adult birds remain.

Soon after the Blue-Throated Hillstar was discovered, Fundación Jocotoco created the Cerro de Arcos Reserve to protect its habitat. The group will use the \$1 million grant to work closely with local communities to expand protected land to ensure the bird's survival.

*"We know we can succeed because we've done it before—like saving the critically endangered Pale-Headed Brushfinch. Once reduced to just 50 individuals, Jocotoco protected the brushfinch's last habitat, and the population quickly increased fivefold," said **Dr Martin Schaefer**, CEO of Jocotoco.*

The Saving Species Challenge was developed with the intent to reverse the decline of a single species that is currently designated as threatened on the IUCN Red List. Fundación Jocotoco will have five years to implement their plan and improve the Red List status of the Blue-Throated Hillstar.

About the Indianapolis Zoo

The Indianapolis Zoo protects nature and inspires people to care for our world. For decades, the Zoo has invested significant resources toward conservation, including the Indianapolis Prize – the world's leading award for animal conservation – the Global Centre for Species Survival and the Zoo's field conservation grants program. The Zoo is the largest zoo in the US that does not receive direct tax support. Located in White River State Park in downtown, the Indianapolis Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the American Alliance of Museums as a zoo, aquarium and botanical garden.

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