

## Project update April, 2017

### Rediscovery of an “extinct” Neotropical frog!

On 18th September 2016 during a nocturnal survey for our ongoing conservation project with *Lithobates vibicarius*, Randall Jiménez and Gilbert Alvarado found one female of *Craugastor escoces* in a small boulder cave of a short stream at the edge of a protected forest in the Juan Castro Blanco National Park (NPJCB), Alajuela, Costa Rica. Federico Bolaños from the University of Costa Rica confirmed the species.



The rediscovery of this species comes after 30 years without being observed and 12 years of being declared extinct by the IUCN. The last sighting of this species preceded the last sighting of the symbolic golden toad (*Incilius periglenes*) in the nearby cloud forest of Monteverde, Costa Rica by only 3 years. The golden toad has become the symbol of amphibian declines and its extinction has been attributed to its restricted range, global warming, chytridiomycosis and airborne pollution.

We are now monitoring the area to locate the population of *C. escoces* in the NPJCB to evaluate its status and threats, in order to develop a clear base conservation strategy through our conservation project “Vibicaria Conservation” in Costa Rica. After careful conversations with experts and evaluating the relevance of this rediscovery we decided not to convert the female into a voucher specimen. Instead, we agreed to keep the animal in captivity under adequate conditions and to locate one mature male to obtain data on natural history, husbandry and reproduction methods, which will be critical for informing conservation actions (we already obtained the necessary permits from the Environmental Ministry of Costa Rica to collect the animals for captivity and for monitoring the population in the NPJCB). The information we will gather from these individuals will help develop adequate protocols for an ex situ strategy, which will be essential if in situ conservation cannot by itself ensure the species survival, and if there is a threat that requires the immediate action of collecting animals for ex situ rescue.

The research paper about the rediscovery was accepted in the Journal Amphibia-Reptilia (accepted on Apr 17, 2017): Jiménez, R.R. & Alvarado, G. (2017). *Craugastor escoces* (Anura: Craugastoridae) reappears after 30 years: rediscovery of an “extinct” Neotropical frog. Amphibia-Reptilia (*in press*). The Rufford Foundation received the proper acknowledgments.