

Mission Statement

We protect nature
and inspire people
to care for our world.

Indianapolis Zoo

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 25, 2024

Indianapolis Zoo Awards \$1 Million to Save Critically Endangered Blue-Throated Hillstar

Newly discovered hummingbird on brink of extinction



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INDIANAPOLIS, IN — 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 from 52 detailed applications 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 honored 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 was discovered as a new hummingbird species by conservation scientists in 2017. The Hillstar is found in 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.

"Populations of the Blue-Throated Hillstar are restricted to only 24 square miles of high Andean páramo in southern Ecuador. Soon after the hummingbird was discovered, Jocotoco created the Cerro de Arcos Reserve to protect its habitat. We will work closely with local communities to ensure its survival and expand the reserve. 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 downlist one species that are currently designated as threatened on the IUCN Red List. Fundación Jocotoco will have five years to implement their plan to reverse the decline of the Blue-Throated Hillstar.

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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 Center for Species Survival and the Zoo's field conservation grants program. The Zoo is the largest zoo in the U.S. 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. Visit IndianapolisZoo.com.