

NEWS

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New Species of Rainfrog Discovered in Panama and Named in Honor of Global Environmental Activist Greta Thunberg

WARRENTON, Va., Jan 12, 2022—In 2018, [Rainforest Trust](#) celebrated its 30th anniversary by hosting an auction offering naming rights for some new-to science species. The funds raised at the auction benefited the conservation of the newly recognized species. It is estimated that 100 new species are described each year.

The [scientific article](#) officially describing and naming the new species, *Pristimantis gretathunbergae*, will be published in the [Pensoft scientific journal, ZooKeys](#) today.

The international team that discovered the new rainfrog was led by [Abel Batista, Ph.D.](#) (Panama) and [Konrad Mebert, Ph.D.](#) (Switzerland). Batista and Mebert have collaborated for more than 10 years in Panama and have from published eight scientific articles together and described 12 new species.

The team found the frog on Cerro Chucantí, a sky island surrounded by lowland tropical rainforest in eastern Panama. Reaching its habitat in the cloud forest required access via horseback through muddy trails, hiking up steep slopes, by-passing two helicopters that crashed decades ago, and camping above the 1000 m elevation. The Cerro Chucantí reserve was established by Panamanian conservation organization, AdoptaBosque, with significant support from Rainforest Trust. These private initiatives complement the growing network of protected areas that comprise more than a third of the national territory championed by the Panamanian Government.

The Greta Thunberg Rainfrog has distinctive black eyes—unique for Central American rainfrogs. Its closest relatives inhabit northwestern Colombia. Unfortunately, the frog's remaining habitat is severely fragmented and highly threatened by rapid deforestation for plantations and cattle pasture.

The Rainforest Trust auction winner wanted to name the frog in honor of Greta Thunberg and her work in highlighting the urgency in preventing climate change. Her "School Strike for Climate Action" outside the Swedish parliament has inspired students worldwide to carry out similar strikes called Fridays for the Future. She has impressed global leaders and her work is drawing others to action for the climate.

“Rainforest Trust is deeply honored to sponsor the naming of this exquisite and threatened Panamanian frog species for Greta Thunberg. Greta more than anyone reminds us that the future of every species on Earth depends on what we do right now to end climate change,” said Rainforest Trust CEO James Deutsch, Ph.D.

The plight of the Greta Thunberg Rainfrog is closely linked to climate change, as rising temperatures destroy the small mountain habitat. The Cerro Chucantí region already has lost more than 30% of its forest cover over the past 10 years. Deadly chitrid fungus pose additional threats for its amphibians. Conservation of the remaining habitat is critical to ensure the survival of the frog. The important work in Panama by AdoptaBosque and Rainforest Trust globally to protect rainforests is critical to the survival of this frog and many other endangered species.

The scientific article can be found here: Mebert K, González-Pinzón M, Miranda M, Griffith E, Vesely M, Schmid PL, Batista A (2022) A new rainfrog of the genus *Pristimantis* (Anura, Brachycephaloidea) from central and eastern Panama. ZooKeys 1081: 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.1081.63009>

To learn more about Rainforest Trust, visit www.rainforesttrust.org.

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About Rainforest Trust

Since 1988, Rainforest Trust has been safeguarding imperiled tropical habitats and saving endangered species by establishing protected areas in partnership with local organizations and communities. With its partners, Rainforest Trust has safeguarded more than 37 million acres of vital habitat across Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Rainforest Trust is a nonprofit organization that relies upon the generous support of the public to successfully implement its important conservation action. The organization is proud of earning a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Learn more about the work of Rainforest Trust by visiting www.rainforesttrust.org, [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#) or [Facebook](#).

About ADOPTA

Asociación ADOPTA el Bosque Panamá (Adopt a Panama Rainforest Association) is a Panamanian non-profit organization, whose mission is to promote the conservation of natural resources and their sustainable use for the benefit of both People and Wildlife. Their flagship project is the preservation of Cerro Chucanti, an isolated cloudforest in Panama's Darien province which has turned out to be an endemism hotspot with wildlife found nowhere else on Earth, but that lacks any formal legal protection. Their commitment has resulted in the creation of the Chucanti Private Nature Reserve, among the largest in the region.