

[Home](#)[News](#)[Animals](#)[Biology](#)[Environment](#)[Health & Medicine](#)[Tech](#)[Travel](#)[Space](#)[Video](#)[TRENDING TOPICS](#) [NASA](#) [ANIMALS](#) [ENVIRONMENT](#) [CLIMATE CHANGE](#) [GLOBAL WARMING](#)

## Volcano Meets Rare Frog; Ecuador Campaigns to Save Frog

By [Samantha Mathewson](#)

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Ecuador's Cotopaxi Volcano has been coughing up steam and ash since August, putting the survival of native Quito rocket frogs at risk. In an attempt to quickly and safely relocate the threatened species, the Amphibian Survival Alliance has launched an adopt-a-tadpole campaign, through which they hope to raise \$14,500.



"Even before the eruption, the rocket frog was among the most endangered frogs on Earth," Santiago R. Ron, curator of amphibians at the Museum of Zoology in Ecuador - one of the groups partnered with the Amphibian Survival Alliance, explained in a [news release](#). "Here we have a unique opportunity to take action before disaster strikes. By adopting a tadpole with a small donation, conservation-minded individuals can play a direct role in helping us save this species."

The Quito rocket frog (*Hyloxalus jacobuspetersi*), a relatively small frog that measures less than one inch in length is native to the Ecuadorian Andes, where it was once widely distributed. However, the frogs took a one-two punch from disease and climate change in the 80s and 90s that caused drastic population declines. Before 2008 – when a new population was discovered along the banks of the Pita River – these frogs hadn't been spotted since 1989. Now, the species may be on the brink of extinction again.

If the [Cotopaxi volcano erupts](#), the glaciers that supply Pita River with freshwater will melt and be replaced with large flows of lava, rock and mud, destroying the frog's natural habitat and wiping out the species all together.

Following increased volcanic activity in October, a state of emergency was declared by President Rafael Correa. In order to save what researchers say is the population of these iconic amphibians, scientists from the Museum of Zoology, Balsa de los Sapos and Catholic University in Ecuador are prepared to rescue as many frogs and tadpoles as possible and relocate them to a captive facility. In addition to keeping the frogs safe while waiting out the eruption, scientists plan to breed new individuals before returning them to the wild. This, they hope, will create a viable population that can once again roam their historic range.

"If we let these frogs go extinct, it won't be the result of natural causes," Don Church, executive director of the Amphibian Survival Alliance, added in the release. "The reality is that human-driven changes in the environment forced this species to hang out on the edge of a volcano."

The alliance has raised \$1,055 since the campaign was launched two days ago. Adopt-a-Tadpole will run for 16 more days and donations can be made [online](#). A goal of \$14,500 was set to help researchers purchase various materials for locating and rescuing frogs from the volcano's path and a water cooling system needed to maintain and breed the frogs at the facility. Additionally, the funds raised will be used to pay a keeper to look after these frogs for one year once they have been safely relocated.