

Frog Thought to be Extinct Rediscovered in Ecuador by School Boy

July 7, 2017

BY JOHN VIRATA



A frog that had been considered extinct for the last 30 years has been rediscovered in Ecuador by a young boy and his family, who rose to a challenge that rewarded anyone who could find living specimens with a \$1000 cash prize.

A small colony of Jambato harlequin frogs were found by the unnamed boy and his family, who were rewarded with money to fund the boy's education.

The 43 frogs that were subsequently found were taken to a lab in an effort to breed them, and after several unsuccessful attempts in a laboratory setting, that didn't produce eggs, the amphibians were moved outdoors where they were able to reproduce successfully.

“For several months, the frogs would mate but never lay eggs,” Luis Coloma of the Jambatu Center for Research and Conservation of Amphibians told the *New Scientist*. “So we decided to move them to an outdoor enclosure. When we finally discovered the eggs, we felt like Thomas Edison must have felt seeing an electric bulb lighting for the first time. It was extraordinary,” Coloma said.



LuisA. Coloma/Centro Jambatu

Jambato harlequin frogs have not been seen in the wild in 30 years..

Experts say that the rediscovery of frogs thought to be extinct are an encouraging trend that has been occurring over the last several years (see [Hula Painted Frog, Declared Extinct In 1996, Rediscovered In Israel's Hula Valley](#)) but so far the

populations have always been small, naturally putting their survival at risk.

The Jambato harlequin frog (*Atelopus ignescens*) was once so widespread in Ecuador that they often found their way into people's homes, and were widely used in traditional medicine, according to a report in the *New Scientist*.