



# The Hum...

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. Newsletter

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## Señor Tim's Tales

by Tim Krynak, President

There are never enough ways to say thank you to everyone that has supported the mission of LGF. We try, but it never can truly say how much each and every donation is appreciated. From the small donations, to larger amounts of money, it all adds up and has allowed us to protect some beautiful forest with many awaiting discoveries. Books, beads, and binoculars for the local children have enhanced our educational messages of the importance of the forest to all that live their including themselves. Equipment that is allowing continued and future research projects to be conducted and will become even more important as we are initiating the construction of our research station and welcome center. It is satisfying to know that there are numerous individuals all supporting us in their own way, when there are so many great organizations they could be contributing to. As we continue to grow as an organization, we will be initializing a membership drive this year. This will allow a continuing flow of funds to ensure and further develop conservation programs. One way we would like to show our appreciation to these members is to offer the opportunity to see first hand why this is such an important mission. Starting in June of 2010 we will begin offering membership trips to the reserve. This will allow us to show off all the work that we have been doing, as well as the vast biodiversity that is being protected while supporting the local community. We will be limited to the number of participants, so if this opportunity may be of interest to you, please let me know. You can email me at [tkrynak@aol.com](mailto:tkrynak@aol.com) for more information.

## Calendar of Events

- April 19  
EarthFest  
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- April 25-26  
North Coast Nature Festival  
Rocky River Nature Center  
Cleveland Metroparks
- May 9  
International Migratory Bird Day  
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo



# Frogs as Fragile as Glass

By Katherine Krynak

Every time the RLG Amphibian Survey is conducted, Tim and I are filled with anticipation: What species will reveal themselves this time? Will we find the punkrocker? Who's been calling lately? How will we be able to get to the frogs high in the canopy? Which area do we sample first? Is it breeding season for dink frogs or glassfrogs? Will I finally see a caecilian? But the heaviest question lurking in the back of our minds is: Are they still there?.....

As we have stated in many other issues of The Hum..., amphibians are facing a global extinction crisis. Habitat destruction, pollution, invasive species, collection, and disease are some of the challenges facing these cold and



slimy "canaries in the coal mine", and we are only beginning to understand the consequences of rapidly losing this class of animals. The loss of amphibians is creating a ripple effect across the world, and will directly affect all of us whether we are a fan of these creatures or not. With each population that meets its end we lose the predators which count on the frogs or their eggs for food, we lose control over insect populations which were food to the frogs (some insects of which carry diseases like malaria and dengue fever which take thousands of human lives every year), we lose part of our culture and traditions (what would become of the story of the frog prince, if there are no more frogs to kiss?), and we lose all of the secrets that species would likely reveal to us, if we would just listen, secrets that could cure cancer and stop the AIDS virus.

RLG has been recently called "The Last Frog Heaven" by world renowned amphibian conservationist Luis Coloma, and on this year's survey we would have a special guest to visit our heaven. Diego Almeida-Reinoso, curator of Balsa de los Sapos (Life Raft of the Frogs), an amphibian rescue and breeding center located at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Ecuador in Quito. At the center Diego curates the care and breeding programs for some of the rarest amphibians of Ecuador. He comes to RLG in search of a particular rare species of glassfrog called "Buckley's Glassfrog", *Centrolene buckleyi*. Tim and I had found a glassfrog on RLG last year, and the scientists of the university had determined, from the photos, that we had found a population of these frogs. Buckley's glass frog used to be very common throughout Ecuador and Columbia, but for reasons not completely understood, the populations have disappeared one by one, and now it is considered vulnerable to extinction by the IUCN Red List.





Upon Diego's arrival to RLG we set out to find this rare glassfrog. The timing was perfect. Heavy rains had deepened the streams and now only a fine mist holds steady in the air. This IS frog weather. It wasn't long before we found our first target calling from above the stream on Canyon's



trail. Diego had a puzzled look on his face. "That is not the call buckleyi makes in the lab", Diego stated in a worried tone. The frog is also smaller than the other male buckleyi specimens at Balsa de los Sapos. As it turns out, this is not *Centrolene buckleyi*, though they may still be out there. This frog is called *Centrolene ballux*, a species listed as "Critically Endangered" by the 2008 Red List. Because of the extreme rarity of this species, we collected several pairs for Balsa de los

Sapos. The females are very difficult to find, since they do not reveal their location with song, but on my birthday, I did find one little girl. That was a perfect birthday present.



As our search for Buckley's glass frog continued we found many other glassfrogs which we had never seen before on previous surveys. These new frogs for RLG also turned out to be listed as Critically Endangered by the Red List. One of these species, *C*



*heloderma*, has not been documented since 1979 and *C. lynchi* had not been seen since the 1980s! We can only hope that there are other populations of these frogs waiting to be rediscovered, but with each year that passes, more habitat is destroyed, disease takes it's toll, our chances dwindle. RLG is truly is our frog heaven, and we need your help to protect it. Please make a donation to protecting the biodiversity of this delicate ecosystem. You can even direct your contribution to a particular cause. "Biological Research", "Land Acquisition", and local "Environmental Education" programs are just some of the ways your dollars will directly help our conservation efforts. If you have other ideas of programs to help the cause, or if you would like to volunteer for LGF please email Kathy Krynak at [glassfrog04@hotmail.com](mailto:glassfrog04@hotmail.com)



My first caecilian 5, March,2009

# Foundation Update

## by Katherine Krynak

I hope that everyone is having fun this beautiful spring season. Here in Cleveland the wood frogs, peepers, and salamanders have been busy making more wood frogs, peepers and salamanders, and the American Toads are now making their move to the pools, a sure sign of warmer temperatures coming soon. In a few short weeks we will be seeing some of the beautiful birds, like the Blackburnian Warbler, making their way back north after spending the winter at Reserva Las Gralarias. Tim and I just visited the reserve a few weeks ago, and had the opportunity to see a sneak peak of what will be flying through Cleveland shortly, like this Swainson's Thrush.



It has been a busy year at RLG and for LGF. Tim, Don Gerardo and I installed the newly purchased HOBO/Onset



weather station on parrot Hill Loop and is collecting data as you read this! This station will record temperature, relative humidity, light intensity, rainfall, leaf wetness, and soil wetness every 10 minutes for over a year without downloading the data. The battery is recharged using a solar panel. This equipment is essential to study long-term changes in climate in the cloud forest. Many in this region have been commenting that the rainy seasons have been getting rainier and the dry seasons drier, and now we can put data together with these observations. Climate change is a hot topic for conservationists and in the high altitude regions, like the Andes, the effects are becoming apparent. Many studies are currently underway looking at large shifts in

migratory patterns in birds, increased mortality by disease in amphibians, changes in population dynamics of insects and so on. RLG is now logging data which will help us understand the changes we observe in the coming years.

In addition to installing the weather system, we also had the opportunity to try out some new equipment donated to LGF by Mike and Sue Clark from Cleveland Ohio. This couple donated several items from the foundation's Wish List (see updated list on page 4), the most productive of which was a 12 foot tropical insect net! It worked great as we continued the RLG Amphibian Survey. Without it, we wouldn't have found some of the incredible species you can learn about on Page 6 in the article "Frogs as Fragile as Glass".





Finally, we would like to introduce everyone to our next big project to aid in the conservation efforts at RLG. The summer of 2010 will mark the opening for the RLG Research Center located on the newly purchased Santa Rosa River Valley property. The research station is to be built on a plot of formerly pastured land overlooking the forest all of you helped to protect! The structure is currently in the design stage, but will have dormitories for students as well as accommodations for professors and volunteers, a central research area (with backup generator power), a kitchen and bath house. This will allow classes from all over the world to have a unique opportunity to study this

biologically rich cloud forest habitat. We are currently seeking Universities and Colleges with which to collaborate. If you are a professor, or know of someone who may be interested in taking advantage of this wonderful opportunity, please contact Katherine Krynak at [glassfrog04@hotmail.com](mailto:glassfrog04@hotmail.com) or Jane Lyons at [jlyons@pi.pro.ec](mailto:jlyons@pi.pro.ec). To make this station a reality, we need your help. On page 3 of this newsletter you will find a donation form. If you are interested in continuing your commitment to conservation in this region by donating to the biological research station, please check the box "Support the RLG Research Station". We have a goal of raising \$45,000 this year so that construction can begin early in 2010.

For those of you who have helped LGF reach it's goal of purchasing the Santa Rosa River Valley and for those interested in helping create the RLG Research Station, 2010 will offer a special tour to RLG and the surrounding region by our very own Tim Krynak, President of LGF. You will be able to see first hand what you have helped us to do for conserving this fragile habitat.



For those of you who would like to have a more direct connection with conservation initiatives of LGF and RLG, this year we will be offering memberships to LGF. Maybe your business would like to get involved, for that we will have the "Oso" (spectacled bear) corporate membership, for conservation professionals the "buho" (owl), for individuals the "tigre" (little spotted cat), and for families the "coatí" (coati). Look for the membership registration on line at [www.lasgralariasfoundaiton.org](http://www.lasgralariasfoundaiton.org) coming soon. And for now, join our cause on Facebook! We have 72 facebook members as of today and this list keeps growing!

# Wisps from the Cloud Forest

By Jane Lyons



Often people ask me what does the name “Reserva Las Galarias” mean?

“Reserva” is the Spanish term for a reserve or park - in our case an ecological reserve. The Spanish term “Las Galarias” refers to a genus of secretive antbirds whose scientific name is written *Grallaria*. In Spanish the double “l” is pronounced as a “y” so that the scientific name becomes unpronounceable in Spanish, hence the single “l” in the Spanish translation of the generic name.

In Ecuador there are 15 species of *Grallaria* antbirds, commonly known as antpittas.

Reserva Las Galarias was named after this genus because there are at least four species known to occur on the reserve, with several others reported but not confirmed. These are beautiful, secretive, poorly-known species with haunting calls that inhabit the dense undergrowth of the cloud forest. Within the genus there are species that occur at higher and at lower elevations, but they reach their maximum diversity in the mid-elevation cloud forests.

The four known species found on the Reserva are: Giant Antpitta, Moustached Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, and Yellow-breasted Antpitta. There are also reports of Scaled Antpitta and Plain-backed Antpitta, but neither has yet been confirmed. Giant Antpitta is the largest of the genus and has possibly the most haunting of all songs heard in the cloud forest. It is rarely seen, although in recent years a local man named Angel Paz has helped folks observe a few individuals of this and other species by feeding them at his property about 6 kilometers from Las Galarias. His main “protégé” is María, an amazingly tame antpitta that will take worms from his hand. Birders from around the world come to see this spectacle as the birds are extremely hard to see otherwise.



“María”, the world-famous Giant Antpitta

Photo by Charley Hesse

At Las Galarias we have at least 5 known territories of Giant Antpitta and occasionally are treated to the beautiful dawn song of the species. We also hear numerous Moustached Antpitta, especially during the rainier season. This species is somewhat smaller than the Giant and is famous because it was only known from one specimen in Colombia until the late 1990s when individuals were found in both eastern Ecuador and in the Mindo area. It is one of the hardest of the antpittas to actually see, although its song is regularly heard in the cloud forest in the rainy season. On our Christmas Counts at Las Galarias we usually hear at least 7-8 individuals calling from all areas of the Reserve. Chestnut-crowned Antpitta is found in the higher elevations of the reserve, above 2100m/6300ft. It is not uncommon at our new 200-hectare/500 acre field research site although is occasionally heard from the lower sites as well. It is considered one of the most beautiful of the *Grallaria* and is also one of the most widespread.

The fourth species found on the reserve is the Yellow-breasted Antpitta. A very vocal inhabitant of the wettest cloud forests, this species is endemic to the Chocó Biogeographic Region and is found in Ecuador only in a very narrow band between about 4500-7000 feet elevation on the pacific slope of the western Andes. This is the most range-restricted of our antpittas but is fairly common at Las Galarias. It is also our Las Galarias Foundation logo-bird.

One of the most exciting discoveries was made in January 2009 at Reserva Las Galarias. Our Reserve caretaker Segundo Imba discovered the first-ever nest of the Yellow-breasted Antpitta! In early February biologists Harold Greeney and Mery Juiña came to the Reserve to study and document the nest and its two nestlings. They are currently writing up the description of this first nest and nestlings for future publication.



Yellow-breasted Antpitta

Photo by Dave Lewis

Reserva Las Galarias was established to protect the biodiversity of this area and we are happy to know that we are succeeding! The Reserve continues to harbor these rare and endemic species of birds, and our efforts are paying off with exciting research projects as well as enhanced populations of other native flora and fauna.



# Foundation Wish List

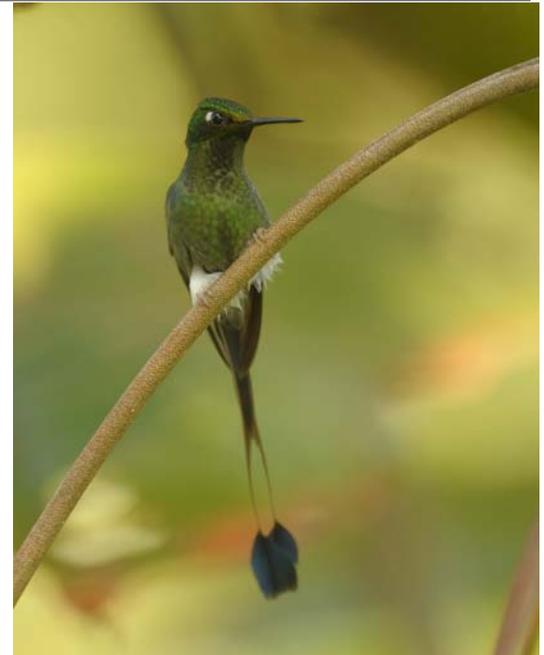


- \* HOBO Weather Station
- \* pH meter
- \* Dissolved Oxygen Meter
- \* Photos from Reserva Las Galarias
- \* Recording-analyzing equipment/software for bird and frog calls
- \* Headlamps and flash lights
- \* Flora/Fauna Field Guides/books of Ecuador (in Spanish and English)
- \* Camping stove
- \* Biology and natural science children's books for Los Exploradores (in Spanish)
- \* Generator for Research Station
- \* Laptop computer
- \* LCD projector
- \* Volunteers to present at programs/festivals on behalf of LGF
- \* Grant writer/Grant Opportunities

For more information contact Katherine Krynak at [glassfrog04@hotmail.com](mailto:glassfrog04@hotmail.com)

## Fundraising/Volunteer Opportunities

- \* We are still looking for potential donors to be added to our electronic mailing list. Please send contact information to Jo Ann Kubicki at [jak1@clevelandmetroparks.com](mailto:jak1@clevelandmetroparks.com)
- \* Matted Prints of photographs from the reserve are needed for donation gifts. Email Tim Krynak at [tkrynak@aol.com](mailto:tkrynak@aol.com) for more information. Black mats to be used for Tim's photos are also always appreciated.
- \* Volunteers needed to present programs within their communities to raise money for LGF and spread the word about our wonderful conservation initiatives.
- \* LGF is looking for a grant writer to help raise funds for the foundation's mission.
- \* If you have anyone interested in being on the distribution list to receive *The Hum...* please contact Katherine Krynak at [glassfrog04@hotmail.com](mailto:glassfrog04@hotmail.com)
- \* If you have questions or would like to contribute to LGF Inc. in another way, please give us a call at 440-777-6353





# You Can Help!

## Support the Reserva Las Gralarias Field Research Station

[www.lasgralariasfoundation.org](http://www.lasgralariasfoundation.org)

LGF Inc. is a 501 (c) (3 )organization

Please send this card and check to:

**Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.**  
**24140 Gessner Road**  
**North Olmsted, Ohio 44070**

Or visit [www.justgive.org](http://www.justgive.org)

**I would like to help the Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. build the RLG Field Research Station by:**

Help build the station!: (\$200 or more) \_\_\_\_\_ (package includes certificate of appreciation, recognition on LGF Inc. Website, and a Spectacled bear plush toy)

Making a single donation to LGF Inc. (\$500) (\$100) (\$50) (other: \_\_\_\_\_)

**Donor information** *(Please print)*

Name:

Address:

**This donation is made:** In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
Name:

**Would you like to specify which LGF program you would like to support?** *(please circle one)*

Land Acquisition

Environmental Education

Biological Research/Research Station Construction

**I would like to receive LGF Newsletter "The Hum..." via email:** Yes No

Email address:

# Muchas Gracias!

## Thank you to our recent donors and volunteers!

*Catherine Shambaugh, Frances Topping, Mary Bartos, Mike and Sue Clark, Cheryl and Fred Dinklebach, James Causar, Jeff and Patti Hart, Sonia Di Fiore, Dave Lewis and Laurie Boylan, Nancy Charbeneau, Ann Wilkins, Mike Brady, Black River Audubon and Lakewood Presbyterian Church.*

*Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.*

*24140 Gessner Rd.*

*North Olmsted, Ohio 44070*



The goal of Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. is to raise funds for projects and programs of Reserva Las Gralarias, located in the parish of Mindo, Ecuador, including the purchase of adjacent and nearby lands that will enhance protection for rare endemic birds, plants and other animals as well as supports reserve management, reforestation efforts, biological research, environmental education projects, scholarships, and appropriate tourism programs.

LAS GRALARIAS  
FOUNDATION INC.

501 (c)(3) organization

[www.lasgralariasfoundation.org](http://www.lasgralariasfoundation.org)



# The Hum...

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc. Newsletter

Las Gralarias Foundation Inc.  
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