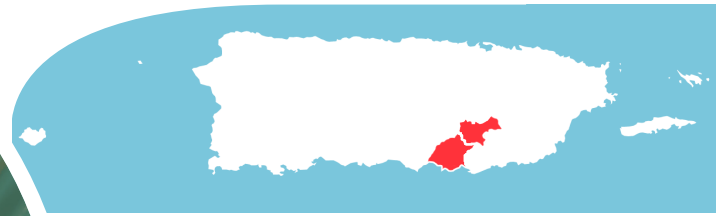


Golden Coquí *Eleutherodactylus jasperii*



Distribution ■

Family: Leptodactylidae

Order: Anura

Description

The golden coquí is one of the seventeen (17) endemic frog species in the *Eleutherodactylus* genus, a word which means “free toes”. This coquí is small: it measures 0.75 inch (19 mm). It has a golden yellow color, as its common name indicates. Its call consists of two (2) to six (6) notes of the same tone, and has been described as a “tweet-tweet-tweet”. The species was found for the first time in 1973, and it was described as a new species to the scientific world in 1976. However, it has not been seen nor heard since 1981.

Biological Information

Reproduction

The golden coquí is the only frog species in the New World which is ovoviviparous. As it occurs with ovoviviparous species, and thus the golden coquí, the females retain the fertilized eggs in their oviducts until

the embryos fully develop and then “give birth” to live offspring. Golden coquí do not have a tadpole stage, but rather hatch as tiny replicas of the adult frogs. In other words, these frogs have no aquatic larval stage. This is known as direct development.

Habitat

All that is known about the golden coquí’s habitat is that it lives in the bromeliads growing on trees, on the ground, and/or on vertical surfaces like cliff sides. The areas in which these frogs were found are considered xerophytic; that is to say, arid.

Diet

This coquí’s feeding habits are unknown. In all probability, it feeds on small insects, similarly to other frog species.

Distribution

The golden coquí was discovered in the mountains in the Sierra de Cayey and the Carite Forest, located in the Sierra, in an area comprised of the Cayey, Caguas, Guayama, San Lorenzo and Patillas municipalities.

Threats

Habitat modification and destruction are the main threats for this species. The areas in which the species was discovered has been deforested, developed, and negatively impacted by fires. In surveys performed in 1986 and 1994, the species was searched for but not found. The specificity of the habitat and the limited distribution makes this species very vulnerable to any changes in the habitat or the climate. It is also believed that chytridiomycosis, an infectious disease that is caused by fungus, could have also contributed to the species’ decline.

THREATENED

Conservation Measures

The golden coquí was included in the federal list of endangered species in 1977. In that same year, the Monte El Gato, Cerro Avispa and a portion of the Sierra de Cayey, all located in Cayey, were designated as critical habitats. Although the species has not been heard or seen in many years, it does not necessarily mean it is extinct. Further surveys and searches are needed in both historic locations and other locations.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits the killing, harassing, trapping, purchasing or selling any species, as well as parts and products derived from the species.

References

Drewry, G.E. and K. L. Jones. 1976. A new ovoviviparous frog (*Eleutherodactylus jasperi*) from Puerto Rico. *J. Herpetol.* 10: 101-105.

Joglar, R. L. 1998. Los coquíes de Puerto Rico: Su historia natural y conservación. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 232 pp.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1984. Golden coquí recovery plan, Atlanta, Georgia. 12pp.

Additional Information

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THREATENED