

indeed be confirmed as a new species for science once genetic analyses are completed.”

Identidad Madidi is a multi-institutional effort to describe still unknown species and to showcase the wonders of Bolivia’s extraordinary natural heritage at home and abroad. The expedition officially began on 5 June 2015 and will eventually visit 14 sites over 18 months as a team of Bolivian scientists works to expand existing knowledge on Madidi’s birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish along an altitudinal pathway descending more than 5,000 meters (more than 16,000 feet) from the mountains of the high Andes into the tropical Amazonian forests and grasslands of northern Bolivia.

Participating institutions include the Ministry of the Environment and Water, the Bolivian National Park Service, the Vice Ministry of Science and Technology, Madidi National Park, the Bolivian Biodiversity Network, WCS, the Institute of Ecology, Bolivian National Herbarium, Bolivian Faunal Collection and Armonia with funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation and WCS.

Teresa Pérez, director of the Bolivian Biodiversity and Protected Areas Directorate expressed her satisfaction with the scientific results of the Identidad Madidi expedition. “The description of a new species of robber frog for science is important news for the country as it confirms the extraordinary biodiversity of Madidi National Park and demonstrates the importance of scientific research in protected areas,” she said.

Across the first two study sites in June and July, the Identidad Madidi team registered 208 and 254 species of vertebrates respectively, including an impressive 60 species of vertebrates that are new records for the official park list: 15 fish, 5 amphibians, 11 reptiles, 4 birds and 25 mammals. Five of these additions – three catfish, a lizard and another frog – are candidate new species for science, and the team continues efforts to determine their identity. Notable new records for the park include the incredible tube-lipped nectar bat (*Anoura fistulata*) with a record breaking tongue and only a fourth continental distribution record since its discovery in 2005; the

beautiful but deadly annellated coral snake (*Micrurus annellatus*); the bizarre Hagedorn’s tube-snouted ghost knifefish (*Sternarchorhynchus hagedornae*); and the long-tailed rice rat (*Nephelomys keaysi*).

Dr. Robert Wallace of WCS stated, “This is just the beginning. We are incredibly proud of the team’s efforts across the first two study sites and while we are expecting more new species for science, as important is the astounding number of additional species confirmed for Madidi further establishing it as the world’s most biologically diverse park.”

The next leg of the expedition began on 20 August and will explore three study sites in the High Andes of Madidi, specifically within the Puina valley between 3,750 meters (12,303 feet) and 5,250 meters (17,224 feet) above sea level in Yungas paramo grasslands, Polylepis forests and high mountain puna vegetation.

Wallace added, “The success of the communication and social media campaign is also especially pleasing for the scientific team.” You can follow the adventure online at www.identidadmadidi.org, www.facebook.com/IdentidadMadidi, #IDMadidi.

By the Numbers

AZA and Rhinoceros Conservation

\$4.2 million

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited facilities spent more than **\$4.2 million** to protect and conserve rhinos between **2010** and **2014**, with more than half a million in additional funds spent on rhino research.



\$1.5 million

While all **five** extant species of rhinoceros benefitted from member efforts, the critically endangered black rhinoceros and Sumatran rhinoceros were each aided by more than **\$1.5 million** spent on field conservation and research efforts.

One commonly supported field conservation initiative was AZA Conservation Partner American Association of Zoo Keepers’ (AAZK)

“Bowling for Rhinos,”

which raises funds for rhino conservation in east Africa and Indonesia.



Over the past **five** years, **78** AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, along with **three** AZA Certified Related Facilities, reported supporting rhino conservation and research.

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