

PRESS RELEASE

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Help prevent the extinction of the Floreana mockingbird in Galapagos

Galapagos Conservation Trust has launched a new appeal to save the critically endangered Floreana mockingbird. Only found on two tiny islets in the Galapagos Islands, this charismatic bird inspired Darwin's theory of evolution, but is now on the verge of extinction.

One of the most charming and fascinating species in Galapagos, the Floreana mockingbird is facing extinction with its population now only several hundred individuals. It is only found on two small islets near Floreana island, its original home, where it is thought to have been extinct since the late 1800s. With increasing threats to Galapagos, including more severe climatic events and invasive species, there is an urgent need to restore the mockingbird to the larger island of Floreana, in order to try and prevent its extinction.

By supporting projects in Galapagos, the Galapagos Conservation Trust (GCT) has helped to protect several species, including the critically endangered mangrove finch and the endangered Galapagos giant tortoise. Returning the Floreana mockingbird home, however, is going to be one of the toughest challenges yet, and will form part of an ambitious island restoration project to eradicate invasive species and restore suitable habitat on the inhabited Floreana island.

Jen Jones, Projects manager at GCT, commented, *"With so many changes occurring in Galapagos, both human- and climate-driven, the fight to conserve endemic species is more important than ever. With plans progressing to restore Floreana island to its former glory, now is the time to turn the story of the Floreana mockingbird from one of uncertainty to one of optimism and our Floreana appeal aims to do just that."*

Luis Ortiz-Catedral, project leader on the 2016 Floreana mockingbird project, added, *"Floreana island and all its endemic species must be conserved, not only because they are a unique piece of the magical diversity of the Galapagos Islands, but also because we can. We have at our disposal the technical expertise and human capacity to re-assemble a unique island ecosystem. I invite you to become part of this ambitious enterprise and help us save among other species, the Floreana mockingbird."*

7% of Galapagos vertebrate species are classed as critically endangered, so it is vital that we act now to conserve these unique islands and their wildlife.

To find out more about the Floreana appeal, including how to donate, visit galapagosconservation.org.uk, email gct@gct.org or phone 020 7399 7440.

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Notes to editors:

1. GCT is looking to raise £30,000 through the appeal which will be used to help ensure that Floreana island is restored to a standard that will allow the Floreana mockingbird to re-

establish its original range. With increasing threats including invasive species, habitat degradation and severe climatic events such as El Nino, it is vital to help endangered Galapagos species as soon as possible.

2. The Galapagos Conservation Trust (GCT) is the only UK charity to focus exclusively on the conservation and sustainability of the Galapagos Islands. Established in 1995 at the Royal Society, GCT raises funding and awareness for projects in Galapagos which focus on science, education and culture. To find out more, visit their website: galapagosconservation.org.uk
3. Luis Ortiz-Catedral is a lecturer in the Institute of Natural & Mathematical Sciences at Massey University, New Zealand. He has working to bring the Floreana mockingbird back from the brink of extinction since 2010.

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