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## [A New Finch Species Discovered in the Cloud Forests of Eastern Colombia](#)

*The discovery welcomes the creation of a National Park in the same area*

Ornithologists have found a colorful new bird in a previously unexplored cloud forest of the eastern Andes mountain range known as the Serranía de los Yariguíes. The Yariguíes brush-finch was named for the indigenous tribe that once inhabited the mountainous area where it was discovered. The discovery backs the decision of the Colombian government, which only a few months before the new species was confirmed, had designated much of the bird's habitat as the Serranía de los Yariguíes National Park, a 193,698-acre (78,387-hectare) surface of protected grasslands and mountain forests. "The bird was discovered in what is the last remnants of cloud forest in that region," said Camila Gomez, of the Colombia conservation group ProAves. "The new protected area should assist in conserving [the Yariguíes brush finch] and other threatened species." "There are still lots of undiscovered flora and fauna species that live in the area." The new species differs itself from its closest relative, the yellow-breasted brush finch (*Atlapetes latinuchus*) by its solid black back and the lack of white marks on its wings. "There are about two to three new birds found in the world every year," told Thomas Donegan, English ornithologist from Natural History Museum and University College London, who discovered the bird together with Blanca Huertas (Fundacion ProAves) in January 2004. The ornithologists accessed the bird's isolated habitat, situated at over 3,000 m by hiking through nearly impenetrable jungle. "We first went to Yariguíes about three years ago," Donegan said. "It's a huge patch of isolated forest that no one knew about, not even in Colombia." The new species is considered by its discoverers to be near threatened because of its limited range. One of the two birds caught by the team was released unharmed after they took pictures and DNA samples, while the other died in captivity. Donegan said "this was one of the first time researchers were able to confirm a new bird without having to kill it". The photos, calls and DNA analysis confirmed the finch's status as a new species. The previously new species of bird discovered in Colombia was a Tapaculos species (*Rhinocryptidae* family) in the south in 2005. With a bird fauna of 1,865 species, Colombia is one of the countries with highest biodiversity on the planet. Photo credit: Blanca Huertas/AP