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Colombia Doubles Size of Its Largest National Park

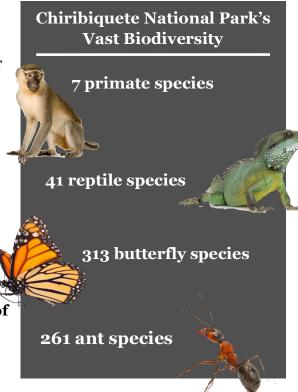
Senator Leahy Calls Expansion of Chiribiquete National Park 'An Historic Leap Forward,' Commends Environmental Conservation Efforts

Colombia is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world, and is home to:

- An estimated **55,000 types of plant species**, accounting for 15 percent of the existing species in the world.
- More than 1,800 species of birds, 600 species of amphibians, 400 species of mammals, 500 species of reptiles and 3,200 species of fish.

Colombia's natural parks are treasure troves of biodiversity, including the **Chiribiquete National Park**, located in the heart of the Amazon rainforest.

Recently, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, as part of a "commitment to life, sustainability and welfare of the citizens and of humanity," announced the **expansion of Chiribiquete** to 6.9 million acres – approximately three times the size of Yellowstone National Park – more than doubling its current size. With the expansion, more than a fifth of the Colombian Amazon will be protected under Colombia's national park system.



U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), commended the expansion, stating:

- "... President Santos took an historic leap forward by doubling the size of Chiribiquete National Park, which is home to a myriad of species including jaguars and is comprised of extraordinary rock formations and dense jungle. Chiribiquete was already Colombia's largest park, and it has now become the size of Belgium.
- "... President Santos' single stroke of the pen has done more for environmental conservation and species protection than what most heads of state do in a lifetime. I commend him for it and congratulate the Colombian people. Colombia has set an example for all of us who care about the environment and recognize that we have a responsibility to protect it for future generations."

Click here for more information on the expansion. Click here for more information on the Park.

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