



Sierra Caral **A natural refuge for Endemic Amphibians** **Declared protected area**

As part of the third call for projects in 2012, the Tropical Forest Conservation Fund of Guatemala (FCA), a result of the debt for nature swap between Guatemala and the United States of America, approved the project “Completion of the legal declaration, core zone consolidation and initiation of participatory management processes of the Sierra Caral water and forest reserve”. Fortunately, this area was declared protected in May 2014 by the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala.

Sierra Caral is comprised of 19,013 hectares and is 286 km away from Guatemala city, in the Honduran frontier. The heart of this reserve is formed by three areas: Finca la Firmeza, Peñitas San Joaquin and Negro Norte.

Biodiversity of this area had been threatened in the past by deforestation and invasions in the surrounding areas. The NGO FUNDAECO, in charge of Sierra Caral, indicates that from 2001 to 2010 4,230 forest hectares were lost. However, since its legal declaration, it is expected that Sierra Caral will have more control patrols and regulations to change this situation. Due to biological monitoring, 30 species of amphibian have been identified, on which 6 frogs and salamanders are exclusive from Sierra Caral: *Duellmanohyla soralia*, *Craugastor nefrens*, *Craugastor xucanebi*, *Bolitoglossa nympha*, *Nototriton brodiei* and *Cryptotriton wakei*. Besides, this area is also an important refuge for 14 endemic species of coleopterous.

The subscription of Sierra Caral was a long and complicated process of six years due to land legalization and private lands in possession of illegal people. The FCA Fund is currently supporting different activities as the publication of press articles about the area, performing control patrols with the National Army, DIPRONA and people from the communities. Also, the project is financing Amphibian monitoring and the maintenance of footpaths and roads in the area.



Sierra Caral Forest



Duellmanohyla soralia

Photos: FUNDAECO.