



RAINFOREST TRUST

****MEDIA ALERT****

NATIONAL EXPERT AVAILABLE TO DISCUSS IMPORTANCE OF TROPICAL BIODIVERSITY, THREATS TO TROPICAL ECOSYSTEMS, AND CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS.

Dr. Robert S. Ridgely, President of Rainforest Trust, is a renowned ornithologist, author, and conservationist, available for print and broadcast interviews.

TOPIC: Widely recognized as home to the most biodiverse landscapes in the world, tropical ecosystems face increasing threats as pressure to develop natural areas throughout tropical regions has mounted in recent decades. Among other things, these ecosystems suffer from extensive ranching, logging, agricultural expansion, and mining. Destruction rates are alarmingly high, with some estimates putting the figure at 90 acres of forest lost per minute.

As natural environments vanish, associated animal and plant populations have experienced devastating losses. With the future survival of many species dependent upon the existence of healthy ecosystems, conservationists have made the protection of these areas a priority. The creation and expansion of protected areas provide a range of benefits to natural systems and human economies. Beyond supporting high levels of biodiversity, these areas guard repositories of natural medicines, provide environmental services to local communities, and hold the potential to slow climate change.

SOURCE: As a leading conservationist, author, and scientist with more than 40 years of field experience exploring and protecting tropical ecosystems, Dr. Ridgely can discuss these and other issues:

- Birds of South and Central America, with a special focus on Andean countries.
- Endangerment of bird species in the South and Central American Regions.
- Systematics of birds in the South and Central American Regions.
- Deforestation in the Amazon Basin and elsewhere in the Neotropics.
- Resource extraction (especially of oil and gas) in Ecuador and the Amazon Basin.
- Ecotourism, and especially “avitourism,” in the Neotropics.
- Management of privately owned nature reserves in a tropical context.

BIO: As an ornithologist, Dr. Ridgely has spent his career studying and protecting Neotropical birds. Ridgely worked in the Ornithology Department at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia before serving as Vice-President of the American Bird Conservancy, a position he held until 2006. His awards include: Eugene Eisenmann Medal, Linnaean Society of New York, 2001; Chandler Robbins Award, American Birding Association, 2006; Ralph W. Schreiber Conservation Award, American Ornithologists' Union, 2011; and the Arthur A. Allen Award, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 2013. Ridgely is a founder of Fundación Jocotoco, an Ecuadorian non-profit organization that creates and manages nature reserves for endangered bird species; he continues to serve as an executive committee member of the organization. He has co-authored several books on Neotropical birds, including: *A Field Guide to the Birds of Panama*, *The Birds of Ecuador* (two volumes), and

two volumes of the treatise *The Birds of South America*. His extensive field work has led to the discovery of seven new bird species, including the Jocotoco Antpitta, found in Ecuador in 1997.

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About Rainforest Trust

For 25 years, Rainforest Trust has been steadfast in its mission to save imperiled tropical habitats through land purchase and protected area designations. Rainforest Trust's unique conservation model, based upon community engagement and local partnerships, has been instrumental in the creation of 67 protected areas, in 17 countries, totaling over 7 million acres saved. A key part of Rainforest Trust's mission is to empower indigenous people to become owners and steward of their own lands while offering education, training, and economic assistance.

For more information: www.RainforestTrust.org