



FRESHWATER LIFE

Saving the world's most endangered freshwater species

Zempoala Axolotl

Humanity's longest lasting impact will be the loss of species we drive to extinction. Fortunately, most extinctions can be prevented with smart conservation. For us this means focusing on freshwaters - 0.8% of Earth's surface, but 10% of all biodiversity and 27% of all extinctions - and invasive species, responsible for 41% of freshwater extinctions. Freshwater invasive species can often be eradicated after which even species on the edge of extinction can recover. This tool can save an estimated 2-5% of Earth's most Endangered species.

We created Freshwater Life to save the world's most endangered freshwater animals from extinction; like the Zempoala axolotl. This has to be the world's most amazing salamander. They can regenerate their limbs and are culturally significant for the indigenous people of Central Mexico, who used them for food and medicine in the past. The Zempoala axolotl lives in just a few high mountain streams and lakes in the Lagunas de Zempoala National Park, outside Mexico City. Invasive carp and trout have been introduced to axolotl breeding lakes and they prey on axolotl eggs, juveniles, and adults, outcompete them for food, and decrease water quality and native plant cover. The Zempoala axolotl has been classified as Endangered, the second highest category of extinction risk. We need \$180,000 to complete this project which will also save 2 Critically Endangered fish species which share these lakes with the axolotl and are also threatened by invasive fish.



We will implement in collaboration with Topis Contreras MacBeath, (University of Morelos, Mexico, and the Chichinautzin indigenous community who created Zempoala National Park, both highly engaged in management efforts within the Park and surrounding lands, and get drinking water from one of the lakes. We will empower and train members of the Chichinautzin community and local university students to implement the project, thereby developing local and national capacity in freshwater biodiversity conservation. Invasive carp and trout eradication will also significantly protect two very rare endemic fishes (*Aztecula sallaei* and *Girardinichthys multiradiatus*). This project will serve as a pilot invasive fish eradication in Mexico that can be replicated again and again to protect many of Mexico's 80 Endangered and Critically Endangered freshwater species.

