



news release

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CANADIAN ASSISTANCE TO GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

The Right Honorable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Honorable Suzanne Blais-Grenier, Minister of Environment Canada, announced today that Canada has offered to provide an ecologist to assist in determining the environmental consequences of the raging fire on one of the Galapagos Islands. This technical assistance is additional to the two water bombers and crews which have been provided by the Government of Quebec.

The fire on Isabela, the largest of the Galapagos Islands World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve, which belong to Ecuador, started in early March and threatened the survival of unique fauna, including giant land turtles.

As part of an international response to appeals for assistance by the United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation and by a direct request from the Government of Ecuador, the Government of Quebec despatched three experts to the islands to determine the nature of the problem and followed this up with the provision of two CANSO water bombers. The expert, to be provided by Environment Canada is Mr M. Jackson, an ecologist experienced with the natural environment of the Galapagos. He will be leaving in late May to help with assessing ecological damage as a result of the fire.

The assistance being provided from Canada and other countries reflects widespread Canadian and international concern for the survival of the wildlife on Isabela, where Charles Darwin spent five weeks in 1935 doing research which eventually contributed to his theory of evolution.