

# Animal Discoveries

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book  
Word Count: 949

LEVELED BOOK • R

# Animal Discoveries

NORTH AMERICA



EUROPE



ASIA



PACIFIC OCEAN

ATLANTIC OCEAN

AFRICA

INDIAN OCEAN



SOUTH AMERICA

AUSTRALIA



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Written by Karen Mockler

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Title page: The psychedelic frogfish, discovered in 2009 in Indonesia, hops rather than swims. It pushes off the seafloor with its fins and pushes water out from its gills.

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Level R Leveled Book  
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## Correlation

### LEVEL R

Fountas & Pinnell	N
Reading Recovery	30
DRA	30



- 1 Democratic Republic of Congo: lesula monkey
- 2 Colombia: Caquetá titi monkey
- 3 Borneo: Matang narrow-mouthed frog
- 4 New Guinea: long-nosed tree frog, blossom bat
- 5 Madagascar: Goodman's mouse lemur
- 6 Brazil: Sazima's tarantula
- 7 Brazil, Amazon Rainforest: troll-haired planthopper
- 8 Atlantic Ocean: Gorgon's head starfish
- 9 Indonesia: walking bamboo shark
- 10 Ecuador and Colombia: olinguito
- 11 Cambodia: Cambodian tailorbird

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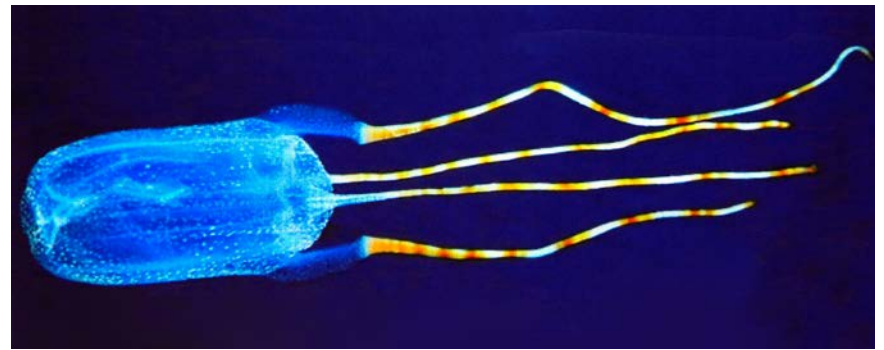
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The Bonaire banded box jellyfish's scientific name is *Tamoya ohboya*. The name was chosen in a contest. The winner said most people would say "Oh boy!" when seeing the jellyfish.

### Introduction

If you wanted to find a new animal **species**, where would you look? You might look in **remote** corners of the globe. You might also look under a microscope to see how one species is different from another.

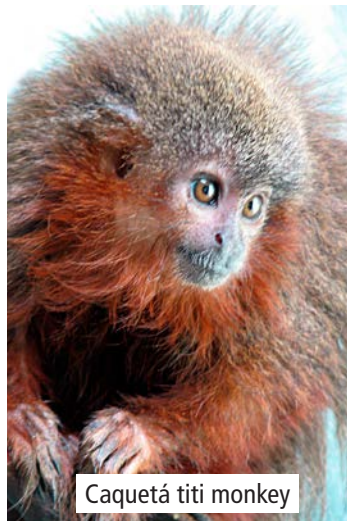
**Scientists** discover more than 15,000 animal species each year. That's 1 percent of the more than 1.5 million species we know about already. At the same time, species are dying out at record rates around the globe. For this reason, when we do stumble on a new species, it is an important discovery.

## Monkey Mania

In 2007, a new species of monkey was found in the forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The lesula has large eyes and is shy and quiet. The first one found by scientists was being kept as a pet.



The Caquetá titi monkey lives in the Amazon jungle with about twenty other species of titi monkey. The Caquetá is known for its bushy red beard. It doesn't have a white bar on its forehead as other titi monkeys do. Its babies purr like cats. Only around 250 Caquetá titi monkeys are alive today, meaning the species is **endangered**.



The Matang narrow-mouthed frog lays its eggs in pitcher plants. The tadpoles grow in the liquid inside.

## Freaky, Fabulous Frogs

The Matang narrow-mouthed frog is the size of a pea. It was discovered on Borneo, an island in Southeast Asia, in 2010. It turns out that scientists had seen these frogs before but thought they were the young of a different species. Then they heard the frogs calling. Since only adult frogs make calls, they realized that these tiny frogs must be full-grown.

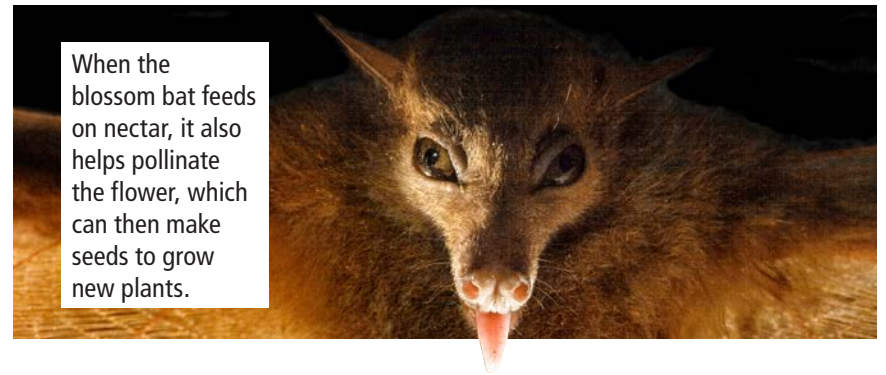


The long-nosed tree frog is also known as the spike-nosed tree frog.

A **herpetologist** discovered the long-nosed tree frog in 2010 while exploring the Foja Mountains of New Guinea. The area is so remote that it has been called the “Lost World.”

This tree frog is known for its long, unique nose. When the male frog calls, its nose points up like a spike. When the frog is done calling, its nose falls. No one knows why.

The frog has another name: the Pinocchio frog. The herpetologist spotted it sitting on a bag of rice in his campsite.



When the blossom bat feeds on nectar, it also helps pollinate the flower, which can then make seeds to grow new plants.

## Furry Finds

Another find during the 2010 Foja Mountains trip was the blossom bat. Although bats are mammals, this one has been called the “hummingbird of the bat world.” It uses its long tongue to drink nectar from the flowers of rainforest trees.

During a 2005 expedition to another island—Madagascar—researchers found Goodman’s mouse lemurs. Not much bigger than mice, these tiny lemurs jump around in the trees at night. In the daytime, they sometimes sleep in empty birds’ nests.



### Do You Know?

Lemurs are only found in Madagascar.

Goodman’s mouse lemurs



Sazima's tarantulas are only found in the tabletop mountains of Brazil. These mountains have a different climate than the surrounding area.

## Interesting Invertebrates

Scientists estimate that vertebrates—animals with backbones—make up only 3 percent of all species. The remaining 97 percent of animal species known to scientists are invertebrates—animals without backbones.

Sazima's tarantula has a special beauty. Its dark blue body almost glows. This fantastic arachnid has an extremely limited **habitat**, only living high in the mountains of Brazil.



Like most insects, planthoppers go through stages of development. This young planthopper is just beginning to develop wings.

The “troll-haired” planthopper was discovered in 2013 in the rainforests of South America. It may not be good-looking, but at least it has good hair. The wild hair isn't hair at all, but instead waxy **secretions** from the insect's belly. When a predator attacks, the “hair” breaks off, and the planthopper can jump to safety. That's what scientists think, anyway, but they aren't sure.



The Gorgon's head starfish is named for the Gorgons from Greek mythology. These creatures had hundreds of snakes on their heads instead of hair.

## Underwater Wonders

Scientists discovered the Gorgon's head starfish in 2010 in the Atlantic Ocean, about half a mile (800 m) beneath the surface. The Gorgon's head, a species of basket star, has five curly, branching arms that split off from its body. The five arms include as many as five thousand tips. The tips help it find food floating by in the water. It also uses its arms to walk along the ocean floor and to protect itself.



Scientists were able to identify the walking bamboo shark as a new species because its coloring differs from that of other bamboo sharks.

Since Earth's oceans are so huge, large parts have yet to be explored. However, that's not the reason it took until 2013 to discover the walking bamboo shark. Like most sharks, the walking bamboo shark is no threat to humans. It lives off the coast of Indonesia. Scientists discovered it because its coloration differs from that of other bamboo sharks.

This new species is thought to reach about 30 inches (80 cm) in length. It uses its fins to push itself along the ocean floor in search of food. The wiggling movement makes it look as though the shark is walking.

Olinguitos have smaller, rounder faces and shorter tails than olingos, which they were mistaken for.



## Hiding in Plain View

In 2013, researchers discovered that for more than a hundred years, olinguitos (oh-lin-GEE-tohs) had been identified as the wrong species. These mammals, which look like teddy bears, leap through trees at night. The smallest member of the raccoon family, the olinguito can be found in Ecuador and Colombia. It is the first species of this type to be discovered in the Americas in thirty-five years.

### Mistaken Identity

Humans may encounter an unidentified species for years while mistaking it for a familiar species. This often happens because the two species look the same, at least on the outside. These are called *cryptic species*. They are only found to be distinct when scientists study their genetic code. As DNA technology is used more and more, reports of distinct new species are on the rise.



The Cambodian tailorbird is hard to find because it lives in dense brush.

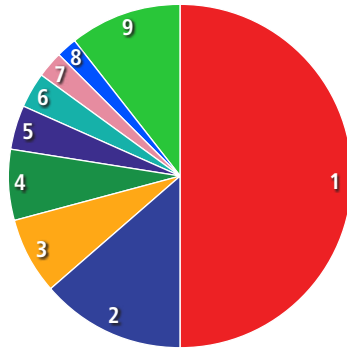
Finding new species of birds is almost as rare as finding new mammals. In 2009, researchers discovered the Cambodian tailorbird near the city of Phnom Penh. Tests showed that this tailorbird was a separate, new species. Besides studying its DNA and feathers, scientists studied its pretty song. While all tailorbirds warble, no two species sound quite the same. Sure enough, the song of the Cambodian tailorbird sets it apart from all the rest.



## Number of Species Discovered by Type 2000–2009

1 Insects 88,598	6 Mollusks 5,949
2 Plants 23,604	7 Bacteria 4,417
3 Arachnids 12,751	8 Fish 3,587
4 Fungi 11,984	9 All other 18,351
5 Crustaceans 7,070	

Source: *Retro SOS 2000–2009: A Decade of Species Recovery in Review*; International Institute for Species Exploration



## What's Next?

Scientists continue to amaze us by finding new species. Experts agree that most have yet to be discovered.

However, those animals we have discovered bring some problems to light. For example, many species have tiny **populations**. Human activity causes many species to face small and shrinking habitats.

Yet each new discovery is also cause for hope. It can bring a renewed effort to save and even restore a habitat. Doing this can save the animals that live there, both those we know about and those we don't know about . . . yet.

## Glossary

<b>DNA</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a code that carries genetic information about a living thing (p. 14)
<b>endangered</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	in danger of dying out completely (p. 5)
<b>habitat</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the natural environment of a plant or animal (p. 9)
<b>herpetologist</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a scientist who studies reptiles and amphibians (p. 7)
<b>populations</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	all the members of different species in particular areas (p. 15)
<b>remote</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	distant or isolated (p. 4)
<b>scientists</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who study one or more fields of science (p. 4)
<b>secretions</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	substances, usually liquids, produced and released by a plant or animal (p. 10)
<b>species</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a group of living things that are physically similar and can reproduce (p. 4)