

Tanzanian survey reveals new species

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Field surveys of Tanzania's Rubeho Mountains have discovered more than 160 animal species -- including a new species of frog and 11 endemic species.

The Switzerland-based World Wildlife Fund says the findings elevate the importance of protecting the biologically rich wilderness area and the broader Eastern Arc Mountain from activities such as clear-cutting for agriculture, logging and poaching.

"The wealth of life that's supported by the Rubehos is typical of Tanzania's Eastern Arc Mountain range," said Neil Burgess, WWF African conservation scientist. "We've documented some destruction already underway, so protecting this mountain range (is) an urgent priority, not just for its unique wildlife, but also for the people and economy of Tanzania.

"The Eastern Arc catches and gathers water for Tanzanians -- generating about 50 percent of the nation's total electricity through its hydropower," said Burgess.

The surveys were conducted during a two-year period by an international team of scientists from the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group, Britain's Oxford Brookes University and the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen.

The study appears in the African Journal of Ecology.

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