

Amorous slug, orange snake among finds on Borneo

April 22 2010, By VIJAY JOSHI , Associated Press Writer



This undated photo released by the World Wildlife Fund shows a *Dendrelaphis kopsteini*, one of the new discoveries in Borneo, a snake that has a bright orange, almost flame-like, neck coloration that gradually fuses into an extraordinary iridescent and vivid blue, green and brown pattern. When threatened it flares its nape, revealing bright orange colors. A lung-less frog, a frog that flies and a slug that shoots love darts are among 123 new species discovered in Borneo since 2007, the result of a three-nation project backed by the WWF to conserve one of the oldest rainforests in the world. (AP Photo/World Wildlife Fund, Gernot Vogel, HO)

A lungless frog, a frog that flies and a slug that shoots love darts are among 123 new species found in Borneo since 2007 in a project to conserve one of the oldest rain forests in the world.

A report by the global conservation group WWF on the discoveries also

calls for protecting the threatened [species](#) and equatorial [rain forest](#) on Borneo, the South China Sea island that is the world's third-largest and is shared by Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei.

"The challenge is to ensure that these precious landscapes are still intact for future generations," said the report released Thursday.

The search for the new species was part of the Heart of Borneo project that started in February 2007 and is backed by the WWF and the three countries that share the island.

The aim is to conserve 85,000 square miles (220,000 square kilometers) of rain forest that was described by [Charles Darwin](#) as "one great luxuriant hothouse made by nature for herself."

Explorers have been visiting Borneo for centuries, but vast tracts of its interior are yet to be biologically explored, said Adam Tomasek, leader of WWF's Heart of Borneo project.

"If this stretch of irreplaceable rain forest can be conserved for our children, the promise of more discoveries must be a tantalizing one for the next generation of researchers to contemplate," he said.

The scientists' discoveries include the world's longest known stick insect at 56.7 centimeters, a flame-colored snake and a frog that flies and changes its skin and eye color. In total, 67 plants, 29 invertebrates, 17 fish, five frogs, three snakes and two lizards and a brand new species of bird were discovered, said the report.

Borneo has long been known as a hub for monster insects, including giant [cockroaches](#) about 4 inches (10 centimeters) long.

Notable among the species discovered are:

- a snake that has a bright orange, almost flame-like, neck coloration that gradually fuses into an extraordinary iridescent and vivid blue, green and brown pattern. When threatened it flares its nape, revealing bright orange colors.
- A frog that breathes through its skin because it has no lungs, which makes it appear flat. This aerodynamic shape allows the [frogs](#) to move swiftly in fast flowing streams. Although the species was discovered in 1978, it was only now that scientists found the frog has no lungs.
- A high-altitude slug found on Mount Kinabalu that has a tail three times the length of its head. They shoot calcium carbonate "love darts" during courtship to inject a hormone into a mate. While resting, the slug wraps its long tail around its body.

The Heart of [Borneo](#), the core island area the conservation effort targets, is home to ten species of primate, more than 350 birds, 150 reptiles and amphibians and a staggering 10,000 plants that are found nowhere else in the world, the report says.

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