

Scientists rediscover Africa's 'terrible hairy fly'

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A handout photo provided by the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Icipe) and taken on on December 4, 2010 shows a specimen of *Mormotomyia Hirsuta*, also known as the "terrible hairy fly." A group of scientists have rediscovered the world's rarest and strangest fly in a cave in Kenya, collecting the first specimen since 1948, a statement said on December 8.

A group of scientists has rediscovered the world's rarest and strangest fly in a cave in Kenya, collecting the first "terrible hairy fly" specimen since 1948, a statement said Wednesday.

Dr Robert Copeland and fellow dipterist Dr Ashley Kirk-Spriggs found the fly, known as *Mormotomyia Hirsuta*, in its only known habitat, a cave-like rock cleft in Ukazi Hill east of Nairobi.

"The re-discovery of the species, which has been collected on only two occasions before, in 1933 and 1948, has caused excitement in insect museums world-wide," said the statement.

The mission was led by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (Icipe), an organisation which aims to reduce poverty and improve health and food security by enhancing tropical African countries' ability to harness their natural resources through the study of [insects](#).

The spider-like fly is described as "strange, due to its relatively large size, the males of which can stretch over one centimetre its long legs and covering of yellow hairs, reduced eyes and its non-functional wings."

"Since *Mormotomyia* cannot fly, there is a strong possibility that it is really restricted to this tiny habitat," Copeland said.

"If that is the case, it would be wonderful if the entire Ukazi Hill, on which it is found, were declared a national heritage area and given suitable conservation protection," he added.

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