New snake species announced

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In this photo taken Wednesday, March 30, 2011 and released by The Wildlife Conservation Society on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012, a Matilda's Horned Viper is photographed in a forest habitat in southwestern Tanzania. The world's newest snake was discovered in a small patch of southwest Tanzania about two years ago and was introduced last month in an issue of Zootaxa as the world's newest known snake species - named after the 7-year-old daughter of Tim Davenport, director of the Wildlife Conservation Society in Tanzania, who was on the three-person team that discovered the viper. (AP Photo/Wildlife Conservation Society, Tim Davenport) EDITORIAL USE ONLY, NO SALES

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) announced the discovery of a spectacularly colored snake from a remote area of Tanzania in East Africa.

The striking black-and-yellow snake is called Matilda's horned viper. It measures 2.1 feet (60 centimeters) and has horn-like scales above its eyes.

The discovery is described in the December issue of *Zootaxa*. Authors of the study include: Michele Menegon of Museo delle Scienze of Trento, Italy; Tim Davenport of the Wildlife Conservation Society; and Kim Howell of the University of Dar es Salaam.

The authors are keeping the exact location of the new species a secret, since the snake could be of interest to the illegal pet collectors. Its habitat, estimated at only a few square miles is already severely degraded from logging and charcoal manufacture. The authors expect the species will be classified as critically endangered and have already established a small captive breeding colony.

The snake is named after the daughter of co-author Tim Davenport, Director of WCS's Tanzania Program.

More information: For more information about the snake, go to: http://www.atherismatildae.org/

Provided by Wildlife Conservation Society