

New iridescent lizard species found in Cambodia

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A handout photo released by Conservation International shows a new lizard species at Ratanak Kiri province, some 600 kilometers northeast of Phnom Penh.

A new species of lizard with striking iridescent rainbow skin, a long tail and very short legs has been discovered in the rainforest in northeast Cambodia, conservationists announced Wednesday.

Scientists named the skink *Lygosoma veunsaiensis* to honour the Veun Sai-Siem Pang [Conservation Area](#) in Rattanakiri province where it was found, Conservation International (CI) said in a statement.

The lizard was discovered in 2010 in the remote and little-explored [rainforest](#) area during biological surveys led by Fauna & Flora International (FFI) in partnership with CI, the group said.

"These creatures are difficult to find because they spend so much of their life underground', said Neang Thy, a Cambodian national working for FFI and the first herpetologist to see the new skink.

"Some similar species are known from only a few individuals. We were very lucky to find this one," said Neang Thy.

The new species is unusual because it has very short limbs and a tail that is much longer than its main body. Its skin has a refracting quality to the scales that creates a rainbow-like effect in sunlight, the group said.

The lizard was the third new species in the last two years to be found in Veun Sai, following the discovery of a new type of bat and a gibbon.

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