

Tiny chameleons discovered in Madagascar

February 15 2012

Four new species of miniaturized lizards have been identified in Madagascar. These lizards, just tens of millimeters from head to tail and in some cases small enough to stand on the head of a match, rank among the smallest reptiles in the world. The full report can be found in the Feb. 15 issue of the open access journal *PLoS ONE*.

The researchers, led by Frank Glaw of the Zoological State Collection of Munich in Germany, also conducted a genetic analysis to determine that the mini lizards, though similar in appearance, are in fact [distinct species](#). The smallest of the new species, *Brookesia micra*, was found only on a very small islet called Nosy Hara, and the authors suggest that this species may represent an extreme case of island [dwarfism](#).

"The extreme miniaturization of these dwarf reptiles might be accompanied by numerous specializations of the bodyplan, and this constitutes a promising field for future research." says Frank Glaw. "But most urgent is to focus conservation efforts on these and other microendemic species in Madagascar which are heavily threatened by deforestation."

More information: Glaw F, Kohler J, Townsend TM, Vences M (2012) Rivaling the World's Smallest Reptiles: Discovery of Miniaturized and Microendemic New Species of Leaf Chameleons (*Brookesia*) from Northern Madagascar. *PLoS ONE* 7(2): e31314. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0031314](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0031314)

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