

# New 'Moby Dick' lizard species found in Madagascar

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A new lizard species has been discovered in Madagascar and named "Moby Dick" mermaid skink—after the albino sperm whale imagined by Herman Melville—for its flipper-like forelimbs and unpigmented skin, France's National Centre for Scientific Research said Tuesday.

The CNRS said the "Sirenoscincus mobydick" presents a unique combination of anatomical features that can be found in amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds.

The discovery, made by French, Malagasy, American and German researchers, was published in the *Zoosystema* journal at the end of December.

The centre said the "Moby Dick" lizard was discovered in the dry north-western forests of Madagascar.

Because of its life underground, the animal's skin has lost pigmentation and its eyes have almost disappeared. And although the lizard has retained [forelimbs](#), its hindlimbs have completely disappeared.

The centre called it an "morphological organisation" reminiscent of cetaceans, the carnivorous marine mammals such as whales and dolphins.

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