

# Rare Amazonian butterfly named after British national treasure Sir David Attenborough

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Upper (left) and under (right) side of the male holotype of Attenborough's Black-eyed-Satyr (*Euptychia attenboroughi*). Credit: Andrew Neild, Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London.

A beautiful new Black-eyed Satyr species has become the first butterfly named in honour of the popular naturalist and TV presenter Sir David Attenborough. Although not the first animal to be named after the British national treasure, the butterfly is so rare that it is known only from lowland tropical forests of the upper Amazon basin in Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil. The study, conducted by an international team of

researchers, led by Andrew F. E. Neild, Natural History Museum, London, and Shinichi Nakahara, McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity and Entomology & Nematology Department, University of Florida, is published in the open-access journal *ZooKeys*.

The presently described Attenborough's Black-eyed Satyr, scientifically called *Euptychia attenboroughi*, has such a restricted distribution that all of its known sites lie within 500 kilometres from each other in the north-west of the upper Amazon basin.

Best known for scripting and presenting the BBC Natural History's 'Life' series, Sir David Attenborough is also a multiple winner of the BAFTA award and a president of [Butterfly Conservation](#).

"Other animals and plants have previously been dedicated to Sir David, but it makes us happy and proud to be the first to dedicate a butterfly species in his name," says Andrew Neild. "Although we are a large team from several countries from across four continents and speaking different languages, we have all been deeply influenced and inspired by Sir David's fascinating and informative documentaries."

The butterfly's atypical wings in comparison to its relatives, have been the reason the scientists took to plenty of diagnostic characters to define its taxonomic placement. The peculiar patterns and morphology initially led the researchers to think the species could be even a new genus.

"It was a surprise for us that DNA data supported inclusion of this new species in the existing genus *Euptychia*, since this [species](#) lacked a distinctive structural character which was considered to be shared by all members of the genus" explains Shinichi Nakahara.



View from the Instituto Chico Mendes (ICMBio) research station at 200 m elevation of the river Moa and lowland tropical rainforest on the flatlands and mountain slopes of the northern Serra do Divisor National Park. Credit: Diego R. Dolibaina.





Seasonally inundated lowland tropical rainforest habitat with a predominance of *Mauritia* palms in the northern Serra do Divisor National Park. Credit: Diego R. Dolibaina.

**More information:** Andrew Neild et al. Two new species of *Euptychia* Hübner, 1818 from the upper Amazon basin (Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae, Satyrinae), *ZooKeys* (2015). [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.541.6297](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.541.6297)

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