

New research on snakes may provide insights on evolution

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Pythons and boas are distantly related, but new research indicates that they have evolved convergent physical characteristics when living in similar habitats—meaning that they evolved similar solutions to similar problems.

For the research, investigators collected data on the head shape of 1,073 python and boa specimens from different habitats. Parallel adaptations to similar lifestyles resulted in the independent evolution of similar characteristics.

The findings, which are published in *Ecology Letters*, indicate that pythons and boas provide a [new model](#) system for studying various aspects of evolution.

More information: Damien Esquerré et al, Parallel selective pressures drive convergent diversification of phenotypes in pythons and boas, *Ecology Letters* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/ele.12620](https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.12620)

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