

Greek heroic deity Prometheus now has a namesake in a new tiny rain frog from Ecuador

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Mating Prometeo Rain Frogs in their natural habitat. Credit: Dan Cogalniceanu

Prometheus, the mythological Greek heroic deity, has been given a namesake in a new species of tiny rain frog, discovered in southwestern

Ecuador. The name was chosen by the international team of scientists, led by Dr Paul Szekely, Ovidius University, Constanta, Romania, in acknowledgement of the Prometeo program, funded by the Ecuadorian government.

The description of this [new species](#) (*Pristimantis prometeii*) is the result of the cooperation between three Romanian Prometeo investigators affiliated with the Universidad Tecnica Particular de Loja and Universidad Nacional de Loja, and two Ecuadorian specialists from Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Ecuador. The full study is available from the open access *ZooKeys*.

During the day, [frogs](#) of the new species were found hiding in flowering plants, while at night—perching on leaves at low heights in well preserved cloud forests. They grow to 2-3 cm with the females being larger than the males.

The newly described species is part of a group of frogs called Terrarana (meaning 'Land or terrestrial frogs'). This is a lineage of frogs that has evolved directly developing eggs, which are deposited in terrestrial habitats. Unlike other frogs, these ones do not have an aquatic tadpole stage and the embryos develop directly into froglets on land.

The newly described species is only known from Reserva Biologica Buenaventura, southwestern Ecuador, at elevations between 878 and 1082 m. This reserve is privately owned by the Jocotoco Conservation Foundation. The reserve has at least another four endemic species of amphibians, reptiles, and birds.



Adult female Prometeo Rain Frog in its natural habitat. Credit: Dan Cogalniceanu

With more than 470 species, the directly developing rain frogs of the genus *Pristimantis* continue to surprise everyone.

"While new [species](#) are described every year, there are over a hundred discovered over the last decade only," remind the authors.



Habitat at the type locality of *Pristimantis prometeii* sp. n. in Reserva Buenaventura. Credit: Dan Cogalniceanu

More information: Paul Székely et al, A new species of *Pristimantis* from southern Ecuador (Anura, Craugastoridae), *ZooKeys* (2016). [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.606.9121](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.606.9121)

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