

# Belgian scientists name mantis after Attenborough

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British broadcaster and conservationist David Attenborough is a much-loved figure for his natural history documentaries

Belgian scientists have named a new "very large and robust" Vietnamese sub-species of praying mantis after British television naturalist David Attenborough.

According to the Royal Belgian Society of Entomology, a recent expedition to the Annamite mountains in central Vietnam uncovered a mantis now known as *Titanodula attenboroughi*.

The *Belgian Journal of Entomology* describes 94-year-old Attenborough as "one of the world's most beloved naturalists".

It describes the new-found insect as a "very large and robust praying mantis. Head triangular, antennae filiform. Long but robust pronotum, with smooth dorsal surface."

Mantises were once assigned to the catch-all *Herodula* genus—dubbed a "wastebasket taxon" by the journal—but species of this group display a great variety of male genitalia, suggesting they are separate.

The research has allowed scientists to assign Attenborough's eponymous [mantis](#) to a new group, *Titanodula*.

Attenborough was director of programming for British public broadcaster the BBC in the 1970s, but is best known for presenting an ambitious series of wildlife documentaries, beginning with *Life on Earth* in 1979.

He is a much-loved public figure and has received other honours, including a knighthood.

In 2016 the British polar research vessel was named the RRS Sir David Attenborough despite a poll of Internet users suggesting it be dubbed "Boaty McBoatface".

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