

New large crab species discovered in Costa Rica

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A river is pictured in the Costa Rican Pacific coast. A new species of large land crab was discovered on Cocos Island in Costa Rica, a local newspaper reported on Monday.

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University researchers from Costa Rica and the United States discovered the new species, named "Johngarthia cocoensis," on the Pacific Ocean island. The distinguishing characteristic of *J. cocoensis*, according to the researchers, is its large size--a male can measure 40 cm (15.7 inches) with their front legs extended (females measure smaller).

The crabs live in holes dug into the soil and eat primarily grasses and seeds.

Robert Perger and Rita Vargas from the University of Costa Rica and Adam Wall from the Los Angeles County [Natural History Museum](#) are credited with discovering the new species.

Perger told the local newspaper that *J. cocensis* resembles the *J. malpilensis* crab, which lives on nearby islands.

"The similarity with other species in the western Pacific indicates that [larvae](#) (which develop in the sea) may have crossed to Cocos Island by sea currents," and then adapted to the habitat to grow into a new species he said.

Cocos Island is located off the coast of Colombia but within the [territorial waters](#) of Costa Rica and is the only island in the Western Pacific that has a humid tropical forest climate and a wide variety of [animal species](#).

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