

# Litoria mira frog

June 2, 2021

## In news

A team of researchers led by Griffith University has described a new species of the Australasian tree frog genus *Litoria* from the rainforests of New Guinea.

## About *Litoria mira*

- This frog is called *Litoria mira*, inspired by the Latin adjective *mirum*, which means surprised or strange, stemming from the scientist's surprise in discovering an undescribed member of the predominately Australian *Litoria* genus of tree frogs.
- An Australian scientist spotted the creature in 2016 and took a few specimens for genetic tests and research.
- The cocoa-coloured frogs have turned out to be a new species

## Relation with Australian green frog

- The cocoa-coloured frog has a well-known relative, the common green tree frog of Australia called *Litoria cerulean*.
- Except for the colour of their skins, the two seem alike
- *Litoria mira* can be distinguished from all other *Litoria* by its unique combination of moderately large size, webbing on hand, relatively short and robust limbs, and small violet patch of skin on the edge of its eyes
- While the discovered species is similar to the Australian green tree frog, genetic analysis shows that the *Litoria mira* has evolved to become genetically distinct to a point where the two species will not be able to breed.

## **Geographical link**

Chocolate frog from New Guinea and the Australian green tree frog are similar because Australia and New Guinea used to be linked by land for much of the late Tertiary period (2.6 million years ago), and share many biotic elements

Today, the island of New Guinea is separated from the 'horn' of Queensland by the Torres Strait. New Guinea is dominated by rainforest, and northern Australia by the savannah.