

# Lushai hills dragon snake

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**In news-** The researchers from Mizoram University have discovered a new species of the *Stoliczka* genus of snakes.

## **Key updates-**

- This is the **third species of *Stoliczka*** from India.
- The team has named it ***Stoliczka vanhnuailianai***, in honour of Vanhnuailiana, a famous Mizo warrior.
- The team has given it a common name, '**Lushai hills dragon snake**' and in the local Mizo language it will be called **rulphusin**, meaning 'snake with small scales'.
- The snake is about 50 cm in length, **non-venomous**, and has a dark brown shade above with a few dorsal scale rows bright yellow in colour.
- The head scales are uniformly dark brown and have bright pinkish sutures.
- Though some members of the **family *Xenodermidae*** exhibit fluorescence under ultraviolet light, this snake did not exhibit any significant sign of **fluorescence**.
- Its sister species *Stoliczka khasiensis* was found more than a century ago in 1904.
- The new species is known only from a single specimen at a point locality and further studies are needed to know its distributional range.

## **About *Stoliczka* –**

- It is a genus of snakes in the family *Xenodermidae*.
- The genus contains **only two species**, one from Northeast India and the other from Borneo.
- ***Stoliczka borneensis*** (1899) – Borneo red snake
- ***Stoliczka khasiensis Jerdon***, (1870) – Khasi earth snake, Khase red snake

The genus is **named after Ferdinand Stoliczka**, Moravian-born

zoologist who later worked for the Geological Survey of India.