

New species of dwarf boa found

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In news– A new species of dwarf boa has been discovered in the upper Amazon basin.

About the new species-

- The **snake from the *Tropidophiidae* family** was found in the **cloud forest in northeastern Ecuador** and was up to 20 centimetres long.
- *Tropidophis cacuangoae* can be identified from other reptiles in the same genus based on its external features and bone structure.
- **The scientists found two verified specimens of the species.** Its colouring is primarily light brown with darker brown or *black blotches* – similar to a *boa constrictor*.
- **The species inhabits eastern tropical piedmont and lower evergreen montane forests in the Amazon** tropical rainforest biome and the researchers suspect it to be an Ecuadorian endemic.
- Both specimens were found within 50 kilometres of each other – **Colonso Chalupas national reserve and in the private Sumak Kawsay park.**
- **The species is unusual for having a “vestigial pelvis”, which is characteristic of primitive snakes.** This could be **evidence that snakes descended from lizards** that lost their limbs over millions of years.
- **The snake’s name honours Dolores Cacuango,** an early 20th-century pioneer in the fight for indigenous and farmers’ rights in Ecuador.
- The researchers also talk about the relationships of the new species with South American *tropidophiidae* and provide the key to the identification of mainland South

American *dwarf boas*.

- Their morphological evidence provides support against the recognition of the posterior extension of the *maxilla suborbital ramus*, the posterior extent of maxillary teeth rows and dentary teeth count as synapomorphic characters of Tropicodphiidae.
- **The discovery of *T cacuangoae* demonstrates that small and cryptic vertebrates can undergo large periods of time without being detected.**