

Peru surprises with two new amazing species of woodlizards

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This image shows the male holotype of the newly discovered species *Enyalioides binzayedi*. Credit: Pablo J. Venegas

Two new woodlizard species have been uncovered from poorly explored areas of the Peruvian jungles. The males have beautiful body colouration with a distinctive green pattern before a dark brown and black

background. It is assumed that the two species share the same territory, with only a slight difference in altitude ranges, which makes their biological divergence intriguing from an evolutionary point of view. The study was published in the open access journal *Zookeys*.

Being traditionally regarded as a group with a low [species diversity](#), recent [fieldwork](#) on *Enyalioides* has increased the [species richness](#) considerably with three of the ten known species described in last 5 years. The new members of this still poorly known group of animals have been discovered during expeditions on both sides of the [Andes'](#) slopes, parts of Ecuador and Peru. This success rate suggests that more of these lizards might be awaiting discovery in other unexplored areas of the region.



This is a picture of a male and a female of the newly discovered *Enyalioides azulae* species. Credit: Pablo J. Venegas

The two newly described [lizards](#) were found in [Cordillera Azul National Park](#), the 3rd biggest national park in Peru protecting the largest mountain rainforest in the country. The area includes some of the least explored forests in Peru. The basins of the rivers Pisqui and Pauya in the National park are remarkable with their great diversity of reptiles and amphibians.

One of the new species, *Enyalioides azulae*, is known only from a single locality in the mountain rainforest of the Río Huallaga basin in northeastern Peru. It was named after the Spanish word "azul" (blue) referring to the Cordillera Azul National Park where this species was discovered. The second newly described lizard, *Enyalioides binzayedii*, can be seen in the same river basin and is named after the sponsor of the field survey Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE, who created the [Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund \(MBZSCF\)](#).



This image shows the montane rainforest on the top of the mountain ridge that

forms the boundary between Region de San Martin and Region de Loreto -- the habitat of the woodlizards Credit: Pablo J. Venegas

"Thanks to these discoveries, Peru becomes the country holding the greatest diversity of woodlizards. Cordillera Azul [National Park](#) is a genuine treasure for Peru and it must be treated as a precious future source of biodiversity exploration and preservation!", says the lead author Dr Pablo Venegas from Centro de ornitología y Biodiversidad (CORBIDI) in Lima, Perú.

More information: Venegas PJ, Torres-Carvajal O, Duran V, de Queiroz K (2013) Two sympatric new species of woodlizards (Hoplocercinae, Enyalioides) from Cordillera Azul National Park in northeastern Peru. *ZooKeys* 277: 69, [doi: 10.3897/zookeys.277.3594](https://doi.org/10.3897/zookeys.277.3594)

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