

Earth Changes

Dramatic discovery of new tapir species in south-west Amazon

wildlifeextra.com
Tue, 24 Dec 2013 10:11 CST

Tapirus kabomani is the largest land mammal to be discovered in decades

In one of the most important zoological discoveries of the 21st century, scientists have announced they have found a new species of tapir in Brazil and Columbia. The new mammal, hidden from science but known to local indigenous tribes, is actually one of the biggest animals on the continent, although it's still the smallest living tapir. Described in the Journal of Mammology, the scientists have named the new tapir *Tapirus kabomani* after the name for 'tapir' in the local Paumari language: 'Arabo kabomani'.

Tapirus kabomani, or the Kobomani tapir, is the fifth tapir found in the world and the first to be discovered since 1865. It is also the first mammal in the order Perissodactyla (which includes tapirs, rhinos, and horses) found in over a hundred years. Moreover, this is the largest land mammal to be discovered in decades: in 1992 scientists discovered the saola in Vietnam and Cambodia, a rainforest bovine that is about the same size as the new tapir.



© Cozzuol et al.

Scientists have uncovered a new tapir in Brazil:

Tapirus kabomani.

Found inhabiting open grasslands and forests in the Brazilian states of Rondônia and Amazonas, as well as the Colombian department of Amazonas, the new species is regularly hunted by the Karitiana tribe who call it the 'little black tapir'. The new species is most similar to the Brazilian tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), but sports darker hair and is significantly smaller: while a Brazilian tapir can weigh up to 320 kilograms (710 pounds), the Kabomani weighs just 110 kilograms (240 pounds). It also has shorter legs, a distinctly-shaped skull, and a less prominent crest.



Lead author and paleontologist Mario Cozzuol first found evidence of the new species a decade ago while looking at tapir skulls, which were markedly different than any other. Researchers then collected genetic material and tapir specimens from local hunters and the Karitiana Indians and extensive research into both the tapir's physical appearance and genetics proved that the researchers were indeed dealing with an as-yet-undescribed species.

Like Share 6 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

[\(Register to add your comments!\)](#)