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# New tapir is one of the biggest mammals discovered this century

By MIKAEL ANGELO FRANCISCO December 24, 2013 6:35pm

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Theodore Roosevelt first described it as a “distinct” kind of tapir way back in 1912, but *Tapirus kabomani* [only earned its name recently](#), after being officially identified by scientists as a distinct new species.

*T. kabomani*, which reaches a length of 4 ft (1.2 m) and weighs about 243 lbs (110 kg), is the first new species of tapir named since 1865, and the first ‘odd-toed’ animal (Perissodactyla) identified in over a hundred years.

The tapir, which also holds the distinction of being the largest land animal discovered in recent history, resides in the Amazon rain forest in Brazil and Colombia, as well as Guyana.

However, the newly discovered animal is smaller than the other four species of tapir – three in Central and South America and one in Asia. Previously thought to be merely a variation of the Brazilian tapir, *T. kabomani* has darker hair, a lower mane, and a broader forehead. *T. kabomani* females are larger than the males, with a gray-white area around their head and neck.

The discovery is certainly not news for the Brazilian and Colombian locals, though, who even helped the researchers by providing animals for study and identifying them from camera-trap photos. “Local peoples have long recognized our new species, suggesting a key role for traditional knowledge in understanding the biodiversity of the region,” said study leader Mario Cozzuol.

Researchers derived the creature’s new species name from ‘arabo kabomani’, which means ‘tapir’ in the native Paumari language of southern Brazil.

It is currently unknown if *T. kabomani*, like the other four tapir species, is endangered or at risk of extinction.

The findings of the new study [were recently published in the Journal of Mammalogy](#). — TJD, GMA News

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**Newly-discovered tapir.** Tapirus kabomani is a 4-foot-long tapir species that lives in the Amazon rain forest. Officially named in 2013, it is the first tapir species to be identified in over a century. Samuel Nienow, via National Geographic

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