

Top 20 New Species Discovered in 2013

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Sci-News.com presents some of the best species officially described in 2013. A walking shark, a snail with semi-transparent shell, a venomous crustacean, a flying squirrel and giant viruses are among the top 20.

1. *Hemiscyllium halmahera*, a 'walking' shark from Indonesia:

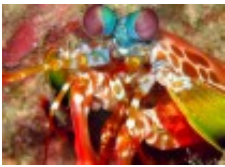


Bamboo shark *Hemiscyllium halmahera* (© Mark Erdmann).

Hemiscyllium halmahera belongs to the shark family Hemiscylliidae.

Rather than swim, these sharks 'walk' by wriggling their bodies and pushing with their pectoral and pelvic fins.

2. *Tapirus kabomani*, a new species of tapir from the forests and open savannas of Brazil and Colombia:



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This camera-trap photo shows a female, left, and a male *Tapirus kabomani* in the southern Amazon State, Brazil. Image credit: Cozzuol MA et al.

Tapirus kabomani is the smallest living tapir. The adults weigh around 110 kg. Shoulder height is about 0.9 m, while body length can reach 1.3 m.

3. Baturite porcupine (*Coendou baturitensis*), a new species of prehensile-tailed porcupine from Brazil:



The Baturite porcupine, *Coendou baturitensis*. Image credit: Hugo Fernandes-Ferreira.

The Baturite porcupine is known only from the Baturité Range in the Brazil state of Ceará. Its scientific name is *Coendou baturitensis*.

The most prominent feature of these animals is their long, unspined tail. They use it as a fifth hand that helps them hold on to branches as they climb through the forest canopy.

4. *Leopardus guttulus*, a new species of oncilla from Brazil:

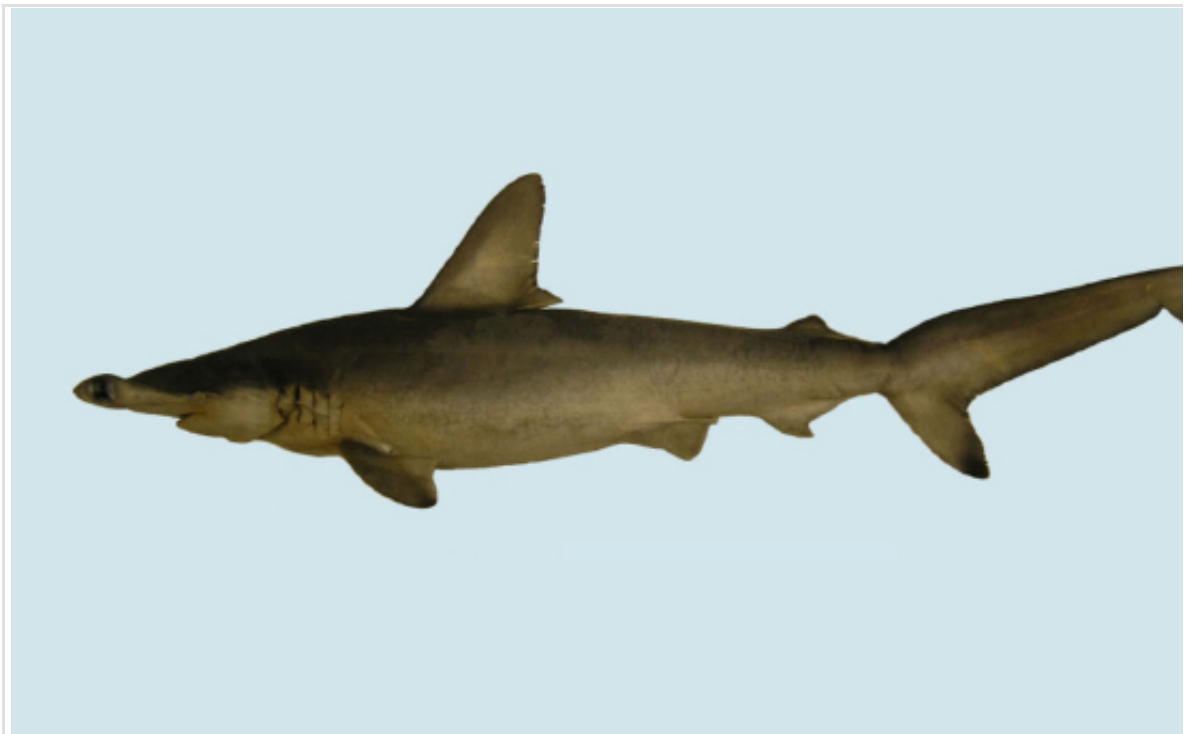


Leopardus guttulus. Image credit: Trigo TC et al.

Oncillas, also known as tigrinas, little spotted cats or tiger cats, are housecat-sized leopards native to montane and tropical rainforests of Costa Rica, Brazil, and Argentina.

Scientists had thought that there was a single species of oncilla, *Leopardus tigrinus*. However, a DNA study has shown that oncilla populations in northeastern versus southern Brazil are completely separate, with no evidence of interbreeding between them.

5. Carolina Hammerhead (*Sphyrna gilberti*), a species of shark from water off the South Carolina coast:



The Carolina hammerhead, *Sphyrna gilberti*. Image credit: Joe Quattro.

The Carolina Hammerhead is a harmless, grey to brown hammerhead shark belonging to the family Sphyrnidae. The estimated adult length is about 3 –

6. *Sousa* sp. nov., a new species of humpback dolphin from Australian wa



A newly identified species of humpback dolphin, *Sousa* sp. nov., strongly resembles *Sousa chinensis* shown here. Image credit: Takoradee / CC BY-SA 3.0.

Humpback dolphins – named for a peculiar hump just below the dorsal fin –

belong to the dolphin genus *Sousa*. These animals measure from 5 to 8 feet in length and range from dark gray to pink or white in color. They are found throughout the Indian and Pacific oceans to the coasts of Australia.

The new species of *Sousa*, which has yet to be named, occurs off northern Australia.

7. *Speleonectes tulumensis*, the first known venomous crustacean:



Speleonectes tulumensis. Image credit: University of Bonn.

Speleonectes tulumensis is a type of crustacean known as a remipede.

Remipedes are a group of blind, aquatic and cave-dwelling crustaceans first described in 1981. These crustaceans have long, segmented bodies, with most segments equipped with swimming legs and bear a certain resemblance to terrestrial centipedes. They occur in underwater caves in Central America, the Caribbean, the Canary Islands, and western Australia.

Speleonectes tulumensis is found in caves in Quintana Roo (Mexico) and Belize. The neurotoxin of this remipede is very similar to neurotoxins in spider venom.

8. Cape Melville Leaf-tailed Gecko (*Saltuarius eximius*), a new species of leaf-tailed gecko from Australia:



The Cape Melville Leaf-tailed Gecko with regenerated tail. Image credit: Conrad Hoskin.

Leaf-tailed geckos are large, impressive lizards that are highly camouflaged against rocks and tree trunks.

The Cape Melville Leaf-tailed Gecko is known only from the vicinity of the locality in the uplands of the Melville Range, Cape Melville. It measures about 12 cm in length and weighs around 20 g. It has a short head and very large eyes.

9. *Zospeum tholussum*, a cave-dwelling snail with semi-transparent shell from Croatia:



The cave-dwelling snail *Zospeum tholussum*. Image credit: J. Bedek.

Zospeum tholussum is a tiny and fragile snail with a beautifully shaped dom like semi-transparent shell.

Biologists found only one living specimen of *Zospeum tholussum* in an unnamed large chamber of the Lukina Jama–Trojama cave system, at the remarkable depth of 980 m.

10. Laotian giant flying squirrel (*Biswamoyopterus laoensis*), a species of flying squirrel from Laos:



Biswamoyopterus laoensis, female, ventral view (adapted from Daosavanh Sanamxay et al).

The Laotian giant flying squirrel weighs 1.8 kg and measures about 1.1 m in total length.

Biologists incidentally found the only known specimen of this squirrel at a meat market in Central Lao PDR.

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