

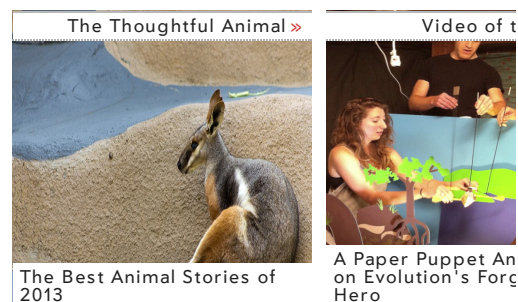
SCIENTIFIC
AMERICAN™Check out today's featured video on
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN'S VIDEO PAGESCIENTIFIC
AMERICAN™[Sign In / Register](#)[Search ScientificAmerican.com](#)[Subscription Center](#)[Subscribe to Print & Tablet >](#)[Subscribe to Print >](#)[Give a Gift >](#)[View the Latest Issue >](#)[Subscribe](#)[News & Features](#)[Topics](#)[Blogs](#)[Videos & Podcasts](#)[Education](#)[Citizen Science](#)[SA Magazine](#)[SA Mind](#)[Products](#)**Blogs** [About the SA Blog Network](#)[Choose a blog....](#)**Tetrapod Zoology**

Amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals - living and extinct

[Tetrapod Zoology Home](#)**A new living species of large mammal: hello, *Tapirus kabomani*!**By [Darren Naish](#) | December 17, 2013 | 26[Share](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)Illustration of *Tapirus kabomani* by G. Braga, from Cozzuol et al. (2013).

For some considerable time now, there have been rumours of an incredible zoological discovery: a new species of living perissodactyl – a tapir – due to be announced from the Amazon. At long last, the paper is out. Published in *Journal of Mammalogy*, and authored by Mario Cozzuol and a team of colleagues, it describes the new *Tapirus* species *T. kabomani*, first realised to be novel following the recognition of specimens obtained by Brazilian indigenous hunters in 2009, and since recognised in museum collections (Cozzuol et al. 2013). This is the first officially recognised new tapir to be described since 1865 (when Baird's tapir *T. bairdii* was named).

T. kabomani is known from several specimens obtained by local hunters. The type

More from Scientific American**Blog Network Highlights**

ADVERTISEMENT

**Most Read Posts****Latest Posts**

Guest Blog

[Gone in 2013: A Tribute to 10 Remarkable Women in Science](#)

Observations

[The Most Fascinating Human Evolution Discoveries of 2013](#)

Plugged In

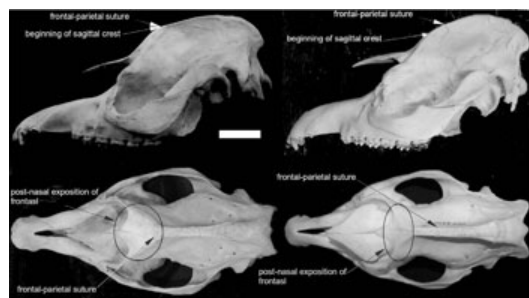
[What's it look like inside an abandoned power plant? Strangely majestic.](#)

Observations

[An Inside Look at an 18 Million-year-old Fossil Dig Site in Florida](#)

specimen is a young adult male (represented by both skin and skeleton) and other recently hunted specimens are known as well. Perhaps most remarkable is the fact that a partial skull and skin collected by Theodore Roosevelt in 1912 (and today residing in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History in New York) also belongs to this species (Cozzuol *et al.* 2013). As so often turns out to be the case, this 'new' species has in fact been sitting on a museum shelf for about 100 years. Ah, hindsight. The species name honours the local Paumari name for tapir, 'Arabo kabomani'.

Tapirus kabomani is morphologically distinct from other tapirs



Skulls of *T. kabomani* and *T. terrestris* compared (sorry for small size, you'll have to see the paper for the details). From Cozzuol *et al.* (2013).

How is *T. kabomani* distinguished as a new species? For a start, it's small: 1.3 m long, 90 cm tall at shoulder, and estimated to weigh about 110 kg. This makes it the smallest living tapir. In life, it is especially dark, with a lower mane and broader forehead than the well known and familiar Brazilian or Lowland tapir *T. terrestris*.

Several cranial characters clearly allow its differentiation from *T. terrestris* and other tapirs. Compared to *T. terrestris*, *T. kabomani* has broader, more inflated frontal bones, a lower sagittal crest and shallower, smaller concavities on the top of its snout. Cozzuol *et al.* (2013) include a figure that shows some of the main cranial differences between *T. kabomani* and *T. terrestris*: the most obvious concern the form of the sagittal crest and position of the fronto-parietal suture, though you can also see that *T. kabomani* has a rather more gracile, far straighter rostrum than *T. terrestris* (does this mean anything for feeding behaviour and ecology?). Now that we know what to look for, it should be easy to spot additional *T. kabomani* skulls in collections.

The authors included cranial measurements from living (and several fossil) tapirs in a morphometric analysis. *T. kabomani* is well separated from the others as a distinct cluster – it does *not* overlap with their large *T. terrestris* cluster, nor is it at all close to it (Cozzuol *et al.* 2013).

What makes *T. kabomani* especially interesting is the fact that it has unusually short limbs compared to other living tapirs – in fact, this feature even makes *T. kabomani* different from a number of fossil tapirs as well as from all the living ones (Cozzuol *et al.* 2013). So, is it a recently evolved, short-legged form (perhaps a dwarf, specialised forest tapir), or a primitive form that retains primitive proportions?

Where within the tapir radiation?

Guest Blog

Teaching Kids to Love Science, and Falling in Love with the Kids

Follow Us:



See what we're tweeting about
Scientific American Editors

Free Newsletters

Get the best from Scientific American in your inbox

Email address



Latest Headlines on
ScientificAmerican.com

Women's "Benevolent" Sexism Can Hurt Marital Satisfaction

What an Exomoon Would Look Like from Earth [Video]

Happy New Solar Ellipse!

The Most Fascinating Human Evolution Discoveries of 2013

Titan's Seas Get an Earthly Stand-in as Robot Explores Chilean Lake [Slide Show]

Latest from **SciLogs**

Nitrogen's intense impact

An entomological wish list for the new year

A Four Part Series on Open Notebook Science (Part 1)

Top Five Science Marketing Hits of 2013

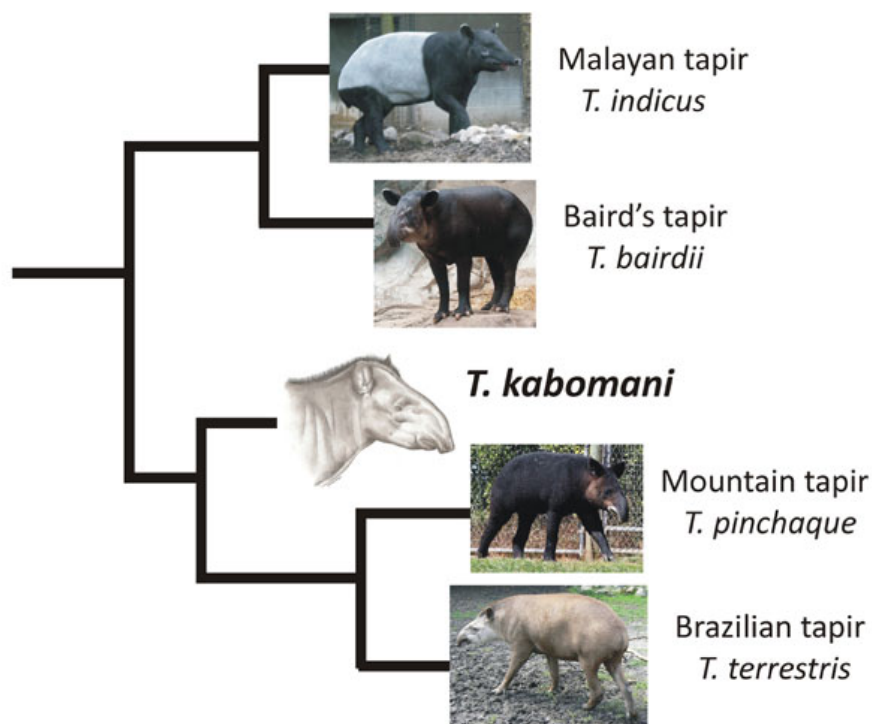
Birdbooker Report 301

[More »](#)

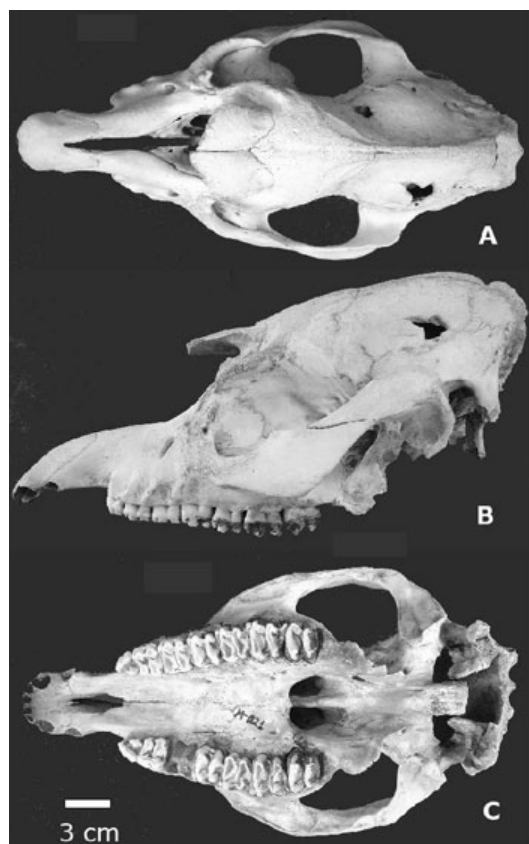
ADVERTISEMENT



Video of the Week



Highly simplified version of tapir cladogram from Cozzuol *et al.* (2013), with fossil taxa removed. Malayan tapir image by Sasha Kopf, licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license; Baird's tapir image by Eric Kilby and Mountain tapir image by Just chaos, both licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license; Brazilian tapir image in public domain. *T. kabomani* image by G. Braga, from Cozzuol *et al.* (2013).



Skull of *T. kabomani* holotype, image courtesy of M. Cozzuol.

Cozzuol *et al.* (2013) produced a new morphology-based phylogeny of tapirs. As the authors note, the results are surprising in placing the Baird's tapir *T. bairdii* and Malayan tapir *T. indicus* together (in a clade that contains the North and Central American fossil species *T. polkensis*, *T. haysii* and *T. veroensis*), and as the sister-group to a clade that contains endemic South American species. Within the latter clade, *T. kabomani* is recovered as outside a clade that contains the Mountain tapir *T. pinchaque*, *T. terrestris* and the extinct Pleistocene and Holocene Brazilian species *T. cristatellus*. *T. kabomani* groups specifically with the Pleistocene Brazilian tapir *T. rondoniensis*.

Some of these results might be set to change, especially the position of the Malayan tapir: there are indications from elsewhere that this species is highly distinct relative to *Tapirus* tapirs, normally being recovered as their sister-taxon (Ashley *et al.* 1996, Norman & Ashley 2000). In fact, it is so distinct relative to the others that use of the 'old' generic name *Acrocodia* is favoured by some. However, another recent morphological analysis also found the Malayan tapir to be nested well within the clade that includes extant Central and South American tapirs, and closer to Baird's tapir than to any other living tapir



A Paper Puppet Animation on Evolution's Forgotten Hero

Image of the Week



Freezing, Boiling, Dehydration and Starvation



NEW! DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS INCLUDE IPAD ACCESS!

Read issues, enjoy exclusive videos, bonus interactive features, audio interviews & more.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN | DIGITAL

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

(Holanda & Ferrero 2012).

Molecular data seemingly shows that *T. kabomani* is unique and diagnostic too, and in fact it lacks molecular characters that group *T. pinchaque* and *T. terrestris* together. So, overall, we have a population of small, dark tapirs that can be distinguished osteologically, look obviously different in integumentary characters and body size from other living tapirs, and which exhibit unique molecular characters. All in all, the case here looks strong. I happen to know that the authors tried for some time to get this most significant publication into a higher-hitting technical publication, but – as so often happens – they failed due to reviewer scepticism. Nevertheless, let's hope that this discovery gets the publicity and attention that it deserves.



One of several *T. kabomani* images captures by remote cameras: from Cozzuol *et al.* (2013).

On that note, very little is known of this tapir in the wild. Aided by local indigenous hunters, the authors were able to identify live specimens photographed by remote cameras. Observations indicate that *T. kabomani* is not rare in some parts of the southwestern Brazilian Amazon, but this area – recognised as a biodiversity hotspot – is under threat due to rapid deforestation, an increasing human population and planned hydroelectric schemes (Cozzuol *et al.* 2013). The species may actually be widespread, since it also seems to be present in the far eastern Amazon and in Colombia too (Cozzuol *et al.* 2013).

More hot new tapir news to come?

Some of you might be wondering what the deal is with another recently named claimed tapir species: Marcus van Roosmalen's *Tapirus pygmaeus*, also from the Brazilian Amazon. While the *T. kabomani* type specimen can be shown to be osteologically mature due to its erupted first molar teeth, the same cannot be said of *T. pygmaeus*: it seems that the type specimen (named, obviously, for its supposedly novel small size) is a juvenile, and a juvenile of *T. terrestris*. Cozzuol *et al.* (2013) don't even mention *T. pygmaeus*, I assume because it was never officially published.

However, it may be that other surprises from the world of tapirs are set to be announced at some point. *T. terrestris* was not monophyletic in Cozzuol *et al.*'s (2013) molecular analysis, instead forming two clusters separated by *T. pinchaque*: an intriguing result which *might* mean that one of those clusters deserves separate recognition.

New, large terrestrial mammals are not reported often, but they are reported on occasion. Since the 1990s, the Saola or Vu Quang ox *Pseudoryx nghetinhensis* (Van



A friendly *Tapirus terrestris* I once knew. Photo by Darren Naish, CC BY.

Dung *et al.* 1993), Dingiso *Dendrolagus mbaiso* (Flannery *et al.* 1995), Giant or Large-antlered muntjac *Muntiacus vuquangensis* (Do Tuoc *et al.* 1994), Small red brocket *Mazama bororo* (Duarte & Jorge 1996), Kipunji *Rungwecebus kipunji* (Beckman 2005, Jones *et al.* 2005), Giant peccary *Pecari maximus* (van Roosmalen *et al.* 2007, though see Gongora *et al.* 2007) and Burmese snub-nosed monkey *Rhinopithecus strykeri* (Geissmann *et al.* 2010) have all been named – an encouraging indication that there might be a small number of cryptic large mammals still out there. However, let's not get ahead of ourselves...

Anyway: a new living tapir – wow!!

For previous Tet Zoo articles on tapirs and other perissodactyls, see...

- [War rhinos](#)
- [Tet Zoo picture of the day # 3 \(*Elasmotherium*\)](#)
- [How did the White rhino get its name? Not how you think \(even if you're very clever\)](#)
- [Stuffed megamammal week, day 4: Sumatran rhino](#)
- [A new species of modern-day rhinoceros](#)
- [A day at London's Grant Museum of Zoology](#) (includes discussion of Quagga and other zebras)
- [Mysteries of the diceratheriine rhinos](#)
- [Tapir attacks past, present, but hopefully not future](#)

Refs – -

Ashley, M. V., Norman, J. E. & Stross, L. 1996. Phylogenetic analysis of the perissodactylan family Tapiridae using mitochondrial cytochrome c oxidase (COII) sequences. *Journal of Mammalian Evolution* 3, 315-326.

Beckman, M. 2005. Biologists find new species of African monkey. *Science* 308, 1103.

Cozzuol, M. A., Clozato, C. L., Holanda, E. C., Rodrigues, F. H. G., Nienow, S., de Thoisy, B., Redondo, R. A. F. & Santos, F. R. 2013. A new species of tapir from the Amazon. *Journal of Mammalogy* 94, 1331-1345.

Do Tuoc, Vu Van Dung, Dawson, S., Arctander, P. and MacKinnon, J. 1994. [Introduction of a new large mammal species in Vietnam]. Hanoi: Forest Inventory and Planning Institute. (In Vietnamese.)

Duarte, M. B. & Jorge, W. 1996. Chromosomal polymorphism in several populations of deer (genus *Mazama*) from Brazil. *Archivos de Zootecnia* 45, 281-287.

Flannery, T. F., Boeadi, and A. L. Szalay. 1995. A new tree-kangaroo (*Dendrolagus*: Marsupialia) from Irian Jaya, Indonesia, with notes on ethnography and the evolution of tree-kangaroos. *Mammalia* 59: 65-84.

Geissmann, T., Lwin, G., Aung, S., Naing Aung, T., Aung, Z. M., Hla, T., Grindley, M. & Momberg, F. 2010. A new species of snub-nosed monkey, Genus *Rhinopithecus* Milne-Edwards, 1872 (Primates, Colobinae), from northern Kachin State, northeastern Myanmar. *American Journal of Primatology* doi:10.1002/ajp.20894

Gongora, J., Taber, A., Keuroghlian, A., Altrichter, M., Bodmer, R. E., Major, P., Moran, C., Damayanti, C. S. & González, S. 2007. Re-examining the evidence for a 'new' peccary species, '*Pecari maximus*', from the Brazilian Amazon. *Suiform Soundings* 7 (2), 19-26.

Holanda, E. C. & Ferrero, B. S. 2012. Reappraisal of the genus *Tapirus* (Perissodactyla, Tapiridae): systematics and phylogenetic affinities of the South American tapirs. *Journal of Mammalian Evolution* doi: 10.1007/s10914-012-9196-z

Jones, T., Ehardt, C. L., Butynski, T. M., Davenport, T. R. B., Mpunga, N. E., Machaga, S. J. & De Luca, D. W. 2005. The Highland mangabey *Lophocebus kipunji*: a new species of African monkey. *Science* 308, 1161-1164.

Norman, J. E. & Ashley, M. V. 2000. Phylogenetics of Perissodactyla and tests of the molecular clock. *Journal of Molecular Evolution* 50, 11-21.

Van Dung, V., Giao, P. M., Chinh, N. N., Tuoc, D., Arctander, P. & MacKinnon, J. 1993. A new species of living bovid from Vietnam. *Nature* 363, 443-445.

van Roosmalen, M. G. M., Frenz, L., van Hooft, P. de Iongh, H. H. & Leirs, H. 2007. A new species of living peccary (Mammalia: Tayassuidae) from the Brazilian Amazon. *Bonner zoologische Beiträge* 55, 105-112.



About the Author: Darren Naish is a science writer, technical editor and palaeozoologist (affiliated with the University of Southampton, UK). He mostly works on Cretaceous dinosaurs and pterosaurs but has an avid interest in all things tetrapod. His publications can be downloaded at darrennaish.wordpress.com. He has been blogging at Tetrapod Zoology since 2006. Check out the Tet Zoo podcast at tetzoo.com!



Follow on Twitter @TetZoo.

[More »](#)

The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily those of Scientific American.

Tags: [mammalogy](#), [mammals](#), [perissodactyls](#), [tapirs](#)

**Previous: Were
azhdarchid pterosaurs
really terrestrial stalkers?
The evidence says yes,
yes they (probably) were**

**More
Tetrapod Zoology**

**Next: A Squamotastic
Christmas at Tet Zoo**

Rights & Permissions

Like 2.4k Tweet 25 8+1 66 Share 5 Stm reddit this!

26 Comments**Add Comment**

1. Cameron McCormick

7:56 am 12/17/2013

Marc van Roosmalen's 'anta-pretinho' does resemble *Tapirus kabomani* in being small, dark and recognized by natives as distinct... so it's really unfortunate an actual specimen wasn't acquired.

there might be a small number of cryptic large mammals

I'm suspecting some people may not really grasp that the discovery of hiding-in-plain-sight cryptic species doesn't really support the notion of hyper-distinct-but-impossible-to-catch cryptids.

[Link to this](#)

2. Dartian

8:27 am 12/17/2013

A new extant tapir? Bloody hell, this was surprising news!

"I happen to know that the authors tried for some time to get this most significant publication into a higher-hitting technical publication, but – as so often happens – they failed due to reviewer scepticism."

Any insider info that you are allowed to share on this issue? What, specifically, did the reviewer(s) object to?

"Cozzuol et al. (2013) don't even mention T. pygmaeus, I assume because it was never officially published."

There are good reasons to be sceptical about van Roosmalen's alleged new tapir species, but I still think that it would at least have deserved a mention by Cozzuol *et al.* – even if only a critical mention. Wonder how many people will confuse van Roosmalen's tapir discovery (or 'discovery', if you prefer) with Cozzuol *et al.*'s?

[Link to this](#)

3. Lou Jost

9:08 am 12/17/2013

This is indeed very exciting news. I must wonder why the authors would be satisfied with a morphology-based phylogeny rather than a DNA-based one, given that they had DNA from this new species.

Nothing was mentioned about sympatry or elevation preference—I guess this species is sympatric with *T. terrestris*? Do you think it might be found in Ecuador?

Thanks for the exciting news!

[Link to this](#)**4. imhennessy**

9:18 am 12/17/2013

It's really great to learn, and be able to show others, how new species are actually discovered. Letting folks know how this sort of thing happens helps them evaluate the higher profile searches for cryptids.

Ivan

[Link to this](#)**5. naishd**

9:49 am 12/17/2013

Thanks for comments.

Lou (comment # 3): I think I say in the article that both morphology-based and molecular analyses feature in the paper. You can check yourself: it's free and linked to above. Does *T. kabomani* live in Ecuador? That's absolutely possible, but we need evidence...

[Link to this](#)**6. Lou Jost**

12:16 pm 12/17/2013

Darren, when I read above that the authors produced a new morphology-based phylogeny, and when I didn't see a discussion of a molecular phylogeny per se, I assumed there wasn't a full molecular phylogeny. I was wrong. The molecular phylogeny in the paper places the new species as sister to the clade containing the other South American endemic tapirs, as in the morphological phylogeny, but unlike the morphological tree it has *indicus*/a as sister to all the New World tapirs.

It is a very surprising and exciting discovery!!!

[Link to this](#)**7. David Marjanović**

12:51 pm 12/17/2013

Somebody should put the LOL in the Journal of Mamma[lo]logy. [As it stands](#), it looks like a journal of boob science. :-p

[Link to this](#)**8. Andreas Johansson**

2:06 pm 12/17/2013

it looks like a journal of boob science

Can't hurt sales ...

I, too, am curious what the reviewers objected to.

[Link to this](#)**9. naishd**

3:16 pm 12/17/2013

Thanks for comments 😊

Lou (comment # 6): good call, I had missed that the morphological and molecular analyses produced different results... There aren't all that many studies to go on (yet), but I wonder if the position of the Malayan tapir will be one of those problem areas where morphology and molecules consistently give distinct results?

Van Roosmalen's tapir: the general thinking (going from discussion elsewhere online as well as here) seems to be that Cozzuol *et al.* should at least have *mentioned* it. However, given that van Roosmalen never published his data, it is possible that the journal may have objected to its discussion, or even mention. This does happen.

Finally, as goes 'reviewer objections', I recall (this being from a communication that Mario Cozzuol posted on a discussion group) there being scepticism about the alleged distinction of the new species — scepticism enough to scupper its appearance in any of the glamour mags.

[Link to this](#)

10. David Marjanović

7:21 pm 12/17/2013

However, given that van Roosmalen never published his data, it is possible that the journal may have objected to its discussion, or even mention. This does happen.

Bizarre. It's not exactly bad to include evidence that they're not actually scooping someone.

[Link to this](#)

11. AlHazen

2:34 am 12/18/2013

I would have thought that the Journal of Mammalogy was, for the field, a fairly high-profile journal: the sort of thing that university libraries would have had paper subscriptions to until the last half dozen or so years.

What did they want to publish in? (I guess Balaenoptera omurai was announced in Science or maybe Nature, but wouldn't the Journal of Mammalogy be the obvious place to publish a new species?)

((Off topic p.s.: I know it isn't Darren's fault, so this isn't a complaint about him, but I find the log-in requirement for comments on Scientific American's platform really, really, annoying.))

[Link to this](#)

12. Dartian

3:15 am 12/18/2013

David:
"Somebody should put the LOL in the Journal of Mamma[lo]logy. As it stands, it looks like a journal of boob science."

Well, considering that nipples are a mammalian synapomorphy the title is actually rather appropriate, isn't it?



Etymologically speaking you are, of course, correct regarding the journal title. It's been called like that since it was founded in 1919 though. As for LOL; I've been watching *Boardwalk Empire* religiously, but I haven't yet heard them use the expression "LOL" in it. Perhaps that acronym wasn't yet in wide use in those days...? 😊

Darren:

"scepticism enough to scupper its appearance in any of the glamour mags"

If by "glamour mags" you mean *Nature* and *Science*, I'm personally not at all surprised that they would turn down this kind of a paper – even if there were no doubts about the validity of this new species. It's actually quite rare for those two journals to publish discoveries of new extant mammals (even large-bodied ones) – for that to happen, they have to be *really* sensational* discoveries. Of recent mammal discoveries, pretty much only the saola and the kipunji have been deemed newsworthy enough to be published in either *N* or *S*. Most other new mammal discoveries have been published in various specialist journals: new primates mostly in primatological journals, new cetaceans mostly in marine mammal journals, and the rest mostly in general-purpose mammalogical journals such as *Mammalia*, *Mammalian Biology* and *Journal of Mammalogy*.

* The average Tet Zoo reader might perhaps not agree with a *Nature* or *Science* editor regarding what qualifies as 'sensational'. But it's their journals, their decision.

Having said that, I'm mildly surprised by any suggestion that Cozzuol *et al.* had to 'settle' for publishing in *Journal of Mammalogy*. It's a perfectly respectable and authoritative journal; IMO, it's a quite suitable publication venue for this tapir discovery.

David again:

"It's not exactly bad to include evidence that they're not actually scooping someone."

My thoughts too.

[Link to this](#)

13. Dartian

3:23 am 12/18/2013

AlHazen:

"I would have thought that the Journal of Mammalogy was, for the field, a fairly high-profile journal"

It is (you published your comment while I was composing mine; sorry for the topical overlap).

*“I guess *Balaenoptera omurai* was announced in *Science* or maybe *Nature*”*

I forgot about that one; perhaps subconsciously as I’m sceptical of that species’ validity. But yes, it was indeed described in *Nature* in 2003.

[Link to this](#)

14. naishd

6:37 am 12/18/2013

Yeah, I would certainly agree that *Journal of Mammalogy* is a fine, high quality journal, and that being published therein is a good thing. However, for a discovery as significant as this, an even higher-hitting journal would be appropriate and would certainly have done more good as goes worldwide recognition of this tapir and any issues (e.g., those related to Amazonian destruction) attached to it. However, the peer review process is what it is, and what happened, happened. So, we move on. *Journal of Mammalogy* it is.

Dartian (comment # 12) noted that the Kipunji and Saola are the only new mammals deemed ‘significant enough’ to make it into *Nature* or *Science*... David added Omura’s whale. There are a couple of others: the Annamite striped rabbit was published in *Nature* in 1999 and *Laonastes* was published in *Science* in 2006. A new PERISSODACTYL would be far from out of keeping in view of this record. Just sayin’.

[Link to this](#)

15. Dartian

7:24 am 12/18/2013

Darren:

*“the Annamite striped rabbit was published in *Nature* in 1999”*

Thanks, you’re right, I forgot about that one too.

*“Laonastes was published in *Science* in 2006”*

Actually, it wasn’t; its discovery had already been published the year before in another journal:

Jenkins, P.D., Kilpatrick, C.W., Robinson, M.F. & Timmins, R.J. 2005. Morphological and molecular investigations of a new family, genus and species of rodent (Mammalia: Rodentia: Hystricognatha) from Lao PDR. *Systematics and Biodiversity* 2, 419-454.

“A new PERISSODACTYL would be far from out of keeping in view of this record.”

Personally, I fully agree.

[Link to this](#)

16. naishd

7:32 am 12/18/2013

Ok, the rabbit wasn't *described* in *Nature* but, hell, they still got a *Nature* paper out of it. Clever 😊

[Link to this](#)

17. naishd

7:33 am 12/18/2013

I mean, *Laonastes* wasn't described in *Nature*...

[Link to this](#)

18. David Marjanović

9:55 am 12/18/2013

The *Nature* paper was about it being a diamantomyid, belonging to a clade that had been thought to have died out in the Miocene or something.

[Link to this](#)

19. naishd

10:15 am 12/18/2013

I mean.. I mean.. *Laonastes* wasn't described in *Science*! ARGH! Yup (with reference to comment # 18), Dawson *et al.*'s *Science* paper ('*Laonastes* and the "Lazarus effect" in Recent mammals') is about *Laonastes* being a diatomyid, a group previously thought to have died out in the Miocene. Surely, here is proof that there really are sauropods in the Congo.

[Link to this](#)

20. Dartian

1:02 pm 12/18/2013

Darren:
"I mean, Laonastes wasn't described in [Science]..."

Well, if we're being *really* pedantic, the striped rabbit wasn't actually *described* in *Nature* either. The Surridge *et al.* (1999) paper merely announced that striped rabbits were present in a region they weren't previously known to be. The actual *description* (and naming) of this new species, the Annamite striped rabbit *Nesolagus timminsi*, took place in another paper, in another journal, one year later (Averianov *et al.*, 2000).

References:

Averianov, A.O., Abramov, A.V. & Tikhonov, A.N. 2000. A new species of *Nesolagus* (Lagomorpha, Leporidae) from Vietnam with osteological description. *Contributions from the Zoological Institute, St. Petersburg* 3, 1–22.

Surridge, A.K., Timmins, R.J., Hewitt, G.M. & Bell, D.J. 1999. Striped rabbit in Southeast Asia. *Nature* 400, 726.

[Link to this](#)

21. Hydrarchos

2:17 pm 12/18/2013

How far geographically is *T. kabomani* from van Roosmalen's "pygmy tapir"? If there are no major biogeographical barriers between them, Occam's Razor would suggest that if van Roosmalen's tapir is distinct from *T. terrestris*, it's likely to be the same as *T. kabomani*.

Also, has there been any update on any of van Roosmalen's other alleged discoveries (the manatee, anteater, panther, etc)? His reports (and those of Peter Hocking) intrigue me because they do seem much more plausible than other "cryptids" – they are not "prehistoric survivors", they have no heroic, villainous, spiritual, superpowered, chimeric or otherwise mythological attributes, and they are not uniquely weird creatures that would require whole new "families" or "orders" to accommodate them, but all seem to be plausible members of existing clades in the area – yet the sheer number and concentration of them does inspire some skepticism...

I can't help wondering if people with more money than sense are going to start wanting pet "mini-tapirs" if this discovery is well-publicised. Hey, these ones can only bite a *very small* person's hand off!

[Link to this](#)**22. naishd**

3:37 pm 12/18/2013

Hydrarchos: a manuscript on some of Hocking's beasts is due to appear very soon. Stay tuned...

[Link to this](#)**23. Yodelling Cyclist**

10:43 am 12/19/2013

"Very soon" in this context being years or months?

[Link to this](#)**24. naishd**

10:47 am 12/19/2013

Weeks or days. Seriously.

[Link to this](#)**25. Yodelling Cyclist**

12:35 pm 12/19/2013

Awesome. That'll be interesting. Merry Christmas all, btw.

[Link to this](#)**26. David Marjanović**

2:33 pm 12/19/2013

...Heh. I apologise for the assertions in comment 18; they're a version of comment 19 distorted by a leaky memory.

[Link to this](#)**Add a Comment**

You must [sign in](#) or [register](#) as a ScientificAmerican.com member to submit a comment.

Click one of the buttons below to register using an existing Social Account.

TRY A RISK-FREE ISSUE

YES! Send me a free issue of Scientific American with no obligation to continue the subscription. If I like it, I will be billed for the one-year subscription.



Email Address

Name

Scientific American is a trademark of Scientific American, Inc., used with permission

© 2014 Scientific American, a Division of Nature America, Inc.

All Rights Reserved.

Advertise

Special Ad Sections

Science Jobs

Scientific American Network

International Editions

Travel

About Scientific American

Press Room

Site Map

Terms of Use

Privacy Policy

Use of Cookies

Subscribe

Renew Your Subscription

Buy Back Issues

Products & Services

Subscriber Customer Service

Contact Us