



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Report: Newly Found Chameleon May Be World's Smallest Reptile

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The island nation of Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa, may be home to the smallest kind of reptile in the world. The **chameleon**, at only 13-and-one-half millimeters long, could fit on the end of your finger.

The new **species** was given the scientific name *Brookesia nana*, but it is also called the nano-**chameleon**. It appears to have broken the old record for reptile size by 1.5 millimeters.

A Madagascar nature guide discovered two of the animals, a female and male, on a mountainside in 2012. Researchers from Madagascar and Germany began studying the animals. The female was larger. Tests showed she was an adult carrying two eggs.

The team's findings appeared in the publication *Scientific Reports*.

German scientist Frank Glaw, the lead researcher on the team, is an expert on amphibians and reptiles of Madagascar.

He said these new lizards are so small “you really have to get down on your knees to find them.”

Like other **chameleons**, they can hide by changing their appearance to **blend** with their environment. Glaw also noted that the nano-**chameleon** moves very slowly.

Among the more surprising discoveries is the size of the male's reproductive organs, which make up 20 percent of the animal's body size. The researchers think this quality may assist its mating efforts with the larger female of the species.

Researchers are searching for other *Brookesia nana* on Madagascar. They say the nano-chameleon lives in a forest area of Madagascar that humans are cutting down for agriculture space and wood.

However, team researcher Oliver Hawlitschek said the area has recently been named as a protected space. "Hopefully, that will enable this tiny new **chameleon** to survive," he said.

I'm Dan Friedell.

The Associated Press wrote this story. Dan Friedell adapted it for Learning English. Cathy Weaver was the editor.

What do you think of this story? We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments Section and [visit our Facebook page](#).

Words in This Story

species- n. a group of animals or plants that are similar and can produce young animals or plants : a group of related animals or plants that is smaller than a genus

blend in - v. to look like what is around you
