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IN THE WILD

Guy Walking Through Forest Shines Flashlight On Something VERY Blue

"Something made me go back ... And it is a good thing I did."

BY SARAH V SCHWEIG

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Andrew Snyder is accustomed to going into the woods at night — indeed, that's just part of doing his job.

As a [herpetologist](#), much of his work involves scouring the rainforest floors and tree trunks looking for snakes, [frogs](#) and lizards.

"When I am on expeditions, my research has me going out in the mornings and at night in search of amphibians and reptiles," Snyder told The Dodo. "Generally, the nocturnal searches are far more interesting, as there are a great number of other organisms that come out that are normally hiding during the day."

Recently, he was hiking at night through the lush rainforest of Guyana, South America, shining his flashlight into the darkness, when it flashed on something [bright blue](#).



"During this particular night, my light beam reflected back with a small glint of brilliant, cobalt blue sticking out of a small hole in a rotting stump," Snyder wrote on a blog run by [Global Wildlife Conservation](#) (GWC), one of the organizations that helps support his research. "At first I quickly dismissed it — surely it was just the eye shine coming from a spider. But something was different, and I must have been subconsciously aware. Something made me go back ... And it is a good thing I did."



Snyder found that this was not at all the cobalt blue eye of a spider — it decidedly *was* a spider. That is, the blue was the shiny color of a wild tarantula's delicate legs and body. "I immediately knew that this one was unlike any species I have encountered before," Snyder said.

But he needed to be sure, so he snapped several pictures and sent them to the perfect person: a colleague who specializes in tarantulas of Neotropical regions like this one.

"The excitement in his email response was beyond palpable," Snyder said.

It appears Snyder's discovery is a new species of tarantula no one ever knew about before.



And this is just one reason why preserving these fascinating rainforests is so important — so that scientists like Snyder can go into the woods and find some of nature's most interesting creatures.

"Places like these remote rainforests still have so many secrets that haven't been uncovered," Snyder said. "Unfortunately, much of the world's rainforests are being destroyed before biologists even get the chance to study them."

Every kind of animal plays a part in keeping these delicate ecosystems healthy. "While this tarantula, just like many of my study subjects, might not be everyone's idea of 'cute' like other [charismatic rainforest fauna](#), it doesn't mean they are any

less important," Snyder said. "Ecosystems depend on all of their constituent parts in order to function properly, and these often-overlooked organisms are crucial to this balance."



"I knew that this tarantula was something special," Snyder added.