

This new lemur species is adorable

BY ARIEL SCOTTI

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The Groves' dwarf lemur is categorized based on its teeny 6.7-inch frame. (HENRY DOORLY ZOO)

A newly discovered tiny lemur on the African island nation of Madagascar is simply adorable.

Madagascar is the native home of all of the 100-or-so species of lemur on Earth but now, researchers have discovered a new one. It's called the Groves' dwarf lemur, categorized based on its teeny 6.7-inch frame. The large-eyed nocturnal animal lives in the rainforest canopies of the southeastern corner of the island in two of the country's national parks — Ranomafana and Andringitra.

The lemur was named after the late British-Australian primatologist Colin Groves "in recognition of his more than 40 years of work in the fields of primatology, evolutionary biology, morphological analysis, mammalian taxonomy and associated disciplines," Science Alert reported.

Groves, who died last year, identified over 50 different animal species throughout his career, including several dwarf lemurs in 1999.

In discovering the new lemur, scientists used DNA samples taken from a few lemurs caught and then released back into the wild to compare against others on file. They were able to determine that the Groves' dwarf lemur was newly discovered but said that evidence points to more new species being identified soon.

"This new species is one of several new dwarf lemurs in the genus *Cheirogaleus* that have been or are in the process of being described," Global Wildlife Conservation researcher Russell Mittermeier told Mongabay — a nature news site. "It is indicative of how little we know about biodiversity in general, and even of our closest living relatives, the primates."

Many lemurs face the threat of endangerment and extinction but the scientists who discovered the new species said that the protected lands where it was found could shield it from a similar fate.

"The continuing identification of new primate species in Madagascar's remaining wild places highlights the need to protect this habitat from additional disturbance by human encroachment," the research team wrote in a statement.