

# A new dwarf boa species

written by iasexam.com | 09/01/2023



**Context-** Scientists have recently discovered a new species of dwarf boa in the Ecuadoran Amazon and it was named after an Indigenous activist.

## Key Highlights

- The dwarf boa snake from the Tropidophiidae family was found in the cloud forest in northeastern Ecuador and was up to 20 centimetres long.
- Tropidophis cacuangoae can be identified from other reptiles in the same genus based on its unique external features and bone structure.
- The scientists found two verified specimens of this species.
- The colouring of the species is primarily light brown with darker brown or black blotches i.e. similar to a boa constrictor.
- The species inhabits eastern tropical piedmont and lower evergreen montane forests particularly in the Amazon tropical rainforest biome and the researchers suspect it to be an Ecuadorian endemic.
- The species is unusual for having a “vestigial pelvis”, which is a prominent characteristic of primitive snakes.
- It could be evidence that snakes descended from lizards that lost their limbs over millions of years.

## History of naming:

- The name of the snake honours Dolores Cacuango, an early 20th-century pioneer in the fight for indigenous and farmers’ rights in Ecuador.

## Significance of the discovery

- The discovery of T cacuango states that small and cryptic vertebrates can undergo large periods of time without being detected and formally described by science.
- The discovery of this new species highlights a critical need to accelerate research in remote areas where information gaps remain but these are suspected of harbouring high biodiversity and are severely threatened by human impacts.