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# Lehr Discovers New Species of Lizard in Peru

July 18, 2022

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – In a recent research trip to Peru, Robert Harrington Professor of Biology Edgar Lehr discovered a new species of lizard, which he will have the honor of naming.

Similar to previous trips by Lehr, the goal of this research was to record the amphibian and reptile species (or herpetofauna), observe the amphibians for the presence of fungal disease and to identify new species, he said.

After three years of planning, Lehr and a team of Peruvian biologists traveled to Peru in May for two weeks to study the herpetofauna at the remote Otishi National Park (ONP). During the second day of searching for amphibians and reptiles at 10,670 feet, he discovered a new species of lizard among the moss and grass.

“The name of a new species becomes valid with the scientific publication of its description,” he said. “Consequently, I cannot reveal the new species name here, but I can say that IWU will be surprised.”

More information about the lizard, including the name, will be released after the findings are published in a scholarly journal later this year, he said.

Lehr was accompanied by Peruvian biologists Juan Carlos Cusi, Bachiller Ricardo Vera,

Bachiller Maura Fernandez and ONP guard Marco Antonio Mayta.

“All of them have experience with fieldwork at high elevations and I am grateful for their collaboration and companionship,” he said.

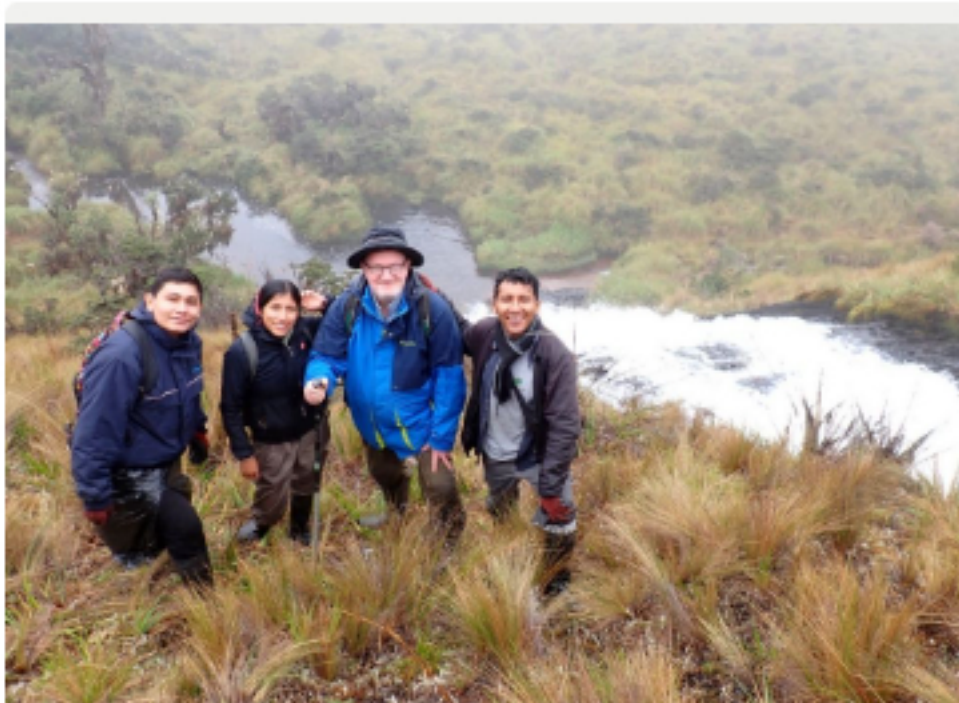
This is not Lehr’s last project in Peru. He was awarded a [2022-23 Fulbright Scholarship](#) which will allow him to return to teach and research museum specimens.

With the help of an artistic and scholarly development grant awarded by the Faculty Development Committee (FDC) of Illinois Wesleyan University, Lehr has been able to [pursue multiple research projects in Peru](#). He has discovered more than 100 species of amphibians and reptiles to date.

“It is always fascinating for me to go to remote places where no biologists have gone before to discover new species,” said Lehr. “Being exposed to forces of nature was a beautiful experience.”



Robert Harrington Professor of Biology Edgar Lehr stands by an IWU flag displayed at his research camp in Peru's Otishi National Park where he discovered a new species of lizard.



Lehr, second from right, and fellow biologists from Peru take in the rugged landscape near a waterfall in Otishi National Park.