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Newly Discovered Lizard Named for IWU Titans by Edgar Lehr

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — The newest member of the Titan community has orange eyes and lives in the remote mountainsides of Peru.

The lizard species discovered by Illinois Wesleyan University's Robert Harrington Endowed Professor of Biology Edgar Lehr

has been named *Proctoporus titans* or *Titans Spectacled Lizard* in honor of the IWU mascot.

"This expedition was, for my research team members and me, the most challenging. The lizard was the first new species (discovered by the team) and my team members agreed to dedicate it to the university," he said.

Lehr and a group of Peruvian biologists including Juan C. Cusi, Maura Fernandez and Ricardo Vera spotted the lizard [while on a 2022 research trip to Otishi National Park in Peru](#). The reptile's name was announced in a publication of the journal "Taxonomy" on Dec. 31, with Lehr as the lead author along with his teammates and collaborator Alessandro Catenazzi.

"The species epithet 'titans' is used in reference to the Titan community of Illinois Wesleyan University, including former, current and future students, faculty and staff. We dedicate this species in recognition of the Titans' mission 'to go out and do well, but more importantly, to do good,'" [the biologists explained in the journal](#).



The *Proctoporus titans* lizard was discovered and named by Illinois Wesleyan University's Robert Harrington Endowed Professor of Biology Edgar Lehr and fellow biologists during a research trip to Peru. Photo by Edgar Lehr.



Edgar Lehr photographs a newly discovered lizard species during a recent research trip to Peru. Photo by J.C. Cusi.

Lehr said a colleague from Peru found a very similar lizard on a separate trip. They were concerned it was the same species, but after consulting each others' work, found they were not the same and Lehr was able to continue publishing his manuscript.

According to the journal, *Proctoporus titans* are about 10 cm long, have orange eyes, a greenish-brown to orange-brown body with a pale greenish-yellow dorsolateral stripe. The lizard's habitat consists of tall Peruvian feather grass, moss, bushes, trees and bamboo patches along mountain slopes at an elevation up to 3,269 meters above sea level.

The team of biologists also named several natural landmarks in the area — Kitamarapó Waterfall, Shirampari Matsiri Mountain Ridge and Pantano La Esperanza.

Lehr, who has studied reptiles, amphibians and Peruvian biodiversity for more than 20 years, has contributed to the [discovery of 103 new species to date](#). He was named a 2022-23 Fulbright Scholar and will be teaching and conducting research from March to June this year at the National Zoological Collection of Suriname/Center for Environmental Research of the Anton de Kom University of Suriname. Lehr said he has planned a research

expedition to a remote river island in Suriname surrounded by primary tropical lowland forests.

By Julia Perez