



Scientists rediscover wood snake last seen in 1878

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The species is endemic to the Meghamalai forests and Periyar Tiger Reserve area

- A species of wood snake that wasn't seen for 140 years has resurfaced in a survey conducted by scientists in the Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The species, endemic to the Meghamalai forests and the Periyar Tiger Reserve landscape, was recently rediscovered by R. Chaitanya, a herpetologist, and Varad Giri, director, Foundation for Biodiversity Conservation.

Specimens deposited

- The local population of wood snakes was last spotted and recorded by British military officer and naturalist Colonel Richard Henry Beddome in 1878, who went on to describe it as a new species, *Xylophis indicus*.
- The specimens he collected were deposited by the officer in the Natural History Museum, London, and labelled as being from "the dense heavy evergreen forests on the mountains at the south of the Cumbum valley, Madura."
- The rediscovery of the snake indicated that the quality of the habitat was good.
- The documentation of the existence of this species will aid in both the management and conservation of biodiversity in this region.
- In their research paper, the scientists also mention their rediscovery of *Xylophis indicus* needs to be validated by both morphological and genetic data.

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