

## World's Smallest Reptile

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### Why in News

Scientists believe they may have discovered the **smallest reptile on earth - a Chameleon subspecies** that is the size **of a seed**.

Two of the tiny lizards were discovered by a **German-Madagascan** expedition team in **Madagascar**.



### Key Points

- **About the Discovery:**

- The team found **one male and one female of the species, named *Brookesia nana***, during an expedition in 2012.
- The **Male *Brookesia Nana*, or *Nano-Chameleon***, has a body of just **13.5 mm**. Its length from top to tail is 22 mm. The **female** is far **bigger** at around **29 mm**.
- According to the **Bavarian State Collection of Zoology in Munich, *Nano-Chameleon*** is the **smallest of about 11,500 known species** of reptiles.
  - Previously, the chameleon species ***Brookesia micra*** was thought to be the smallest. The average length of adults of this species is **16 mm (29 mm with tail)**, while the **smallest adult male** has been recorded at **15.3 mm**.
  - The **longest, the reticulated python**, at 6.25 m is almost as long as 289 *Brookesia nanas*.
- The New Chameleon is only known from a degraded **Montane Rainforest in Northern Madagascar** and might be threatened by extinction.
  - Nano-chameleons have **previously suffered deforestation**, but their habitat is now protected.
- In their report, scientists recommended that the chameleon be listed as Critically endangered in the **International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN)** Red List of Threatened Species to help protect it and its habitat.

- **About Chameleons:**

- **Chameleons (family *Chamaeleonidae*)** are a distinctive and highly specialized **Clade of Old World Lizard** with 202 species described as of June 2015. **Madagascar is home to nearly two-thirds** of all chameleon species.
- Chameleons are adapted for climbing and visual hunting. They live in warm habitats that range from **Rainforest** and **Desert** Condition. They are best known for their ability to change body colour.
- The Indian chameleon is found in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

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