

# Scientists Discover New Rodent Species

Do you think the world already has enough rodents? Now you can add one more to the list.



A scientist with the Wildlife Conservation Society discovered a new species of rodent at a market in Laos. Finding a new species of mammal is very unusual. Called kha-nyou (KAH-neeyoo) by the local people, the rodent is similar to a guinea pig or a chinchilla.

## NEWS WORD BOX

rodent	Laos
chinchilla	nocturnal

Kha-nyous are about one-and-a-half feet long and have tails coated with thick fur, long whiskers, and stubby legs. Some think the rodent looks like a combination of a rat and a squirrel. They also are called rock rats because they live in an area with rocky ledges.

Scientists already know that kha-nyous come out at night, which means they are nocturnal. They also like to eat vegetables.

Kha-nyous likely evolved tens of millions of years ago from other rodents, scientists believe.

In Laos, people eat kha-nyou. They cook it over a flame. As they eat kha-nyou, they crunch up the small bones and spit out the large ones.

## **MORE FACTS ABOUT KHA-NYOUS**

- Some people describe the new rodent as a “spineless porcupine.”
- Scientists discover new species of rodent as often as once a year.

## TALK ABOUT THE NEWS

If you were the scientist who found the kha-nyou, what are some of the other things you would want to know about it?