

Scientists Find 27 New Species in Caves

Discovering one new species of animal must be very exciting. Imagine discovering 27!

That's what happened to scientists exploring caves in California. They found 27 new species of spiders, centipedes, scorpion-like creatures, and other animals.

Among the creatures the scientists found was an insect whose body is so clear you can see inside it. It's easy to spot its bright yellow liver. One spider the scientists discovered looks like a daddy long legs, but has jaws bigger than its body.

Scientists have not named the new species yet. They need to learn more about the tiny cave-dwellers before they label them. Scientists do not know how long the new species live, what kind of habitats they prefer, how many babies they have, and many other things.

While it is very unusual to find new species above ground, unexplored caves could be home to all kinds of new animals. As one scientist put it, exploring caves is like "charting undiscovered territory."

MORE FACTS ABOUT CAVES AND CAVE CRITTERS

- To find these new species, scientists spent three years exploring 35 caves under Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks.
- Many cave dwelling species are "blind." They don't have eyes because they don't need eyes in their pitch-black habitats.
- Park officials have taken steps to protect the caves, because too many visitors could disturb the animals.



NEWS WORD BOX

species scorpion
centipede imagine
unexplored liver

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

"You get the feeling you're Lewis and Clark," one of the cave scientists said. What do you think she meant by that?