

## Dr. Juan Daza, Assistant Professor of Biology, Published and Acclaimed for Albanerpetontid Research

### Publication Featured In:

- [\*National Geographic\*](#)
- [\*Smithsonian Magazine\*](#)
- [\*Science Daily\*](#)
- [\*Science Alert\*](#)
- [\*Phys.org\*](#)
- [\*Cnet\*](#)

The research specimens are the earliest examples, to date, of amphibians with rapid-fire tongues.

Dr. Juan Diego Daza, SHSU COSET's own Assistant Professor of Program Biology, has been [published](#) in a prominent science journal for his research related to the ancient amphibians known as "albies."

The specimens studied for the research published were the first found to be so well preserved in amber. According to Dr. Daza and his co-authors in the abstract of their published research: "These specimens preserve skeletal and soft tissues, including an elongated median hyoid element, the tip of which remains embedded in a distal tongue pad. This arrangement is very similar to the long, rapidly projecting tongue of chameleons. Our results thus suggest that albanerpetontids were sit-and-wait ballistic tongue feeders, extending the record of this specialized feeding mode by around 100 million years."

Smithsonian Magazine published an [article](#) on November 5, 2020 that provides more detail on the research specimens and states that "the fossils will provide context for how the enigmatic amphibians lived for years to come."

The study has been covered by more than 30 media outlets around the world including National Geographic, Smithsonian Magazine, Cnet, Mail Online, The Conversation, Inverse, Science Daily, Foreign Affairs, Phys.org, Gizmodo, Europa Press, Science Alert, Madrid, The Hindu, Blick, among others.

According to [Florida Museum Research News](#), *Y. perettii* puts albies on a new part of the map. "With two exceptions in Morocco, all other fossil albies have been found in North America, Europe and East Asia, which formerly formed a northern continental landmass. Daza said *Y. perettii* may have rafted to the island from mainland Asia or could represent a new southern record for the group. "



**"Taken together, the various traits of the fossil indicate that the albies in amber is a new species. Daza, Evans and colleagues named it *Yaksha perettii*."**

(<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/scientists-find-worlds-oldest-slingshot-tongue-preserved-amber-180976216/>)