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## DNA Bar-coding an Effective Tool

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Discovering and identifying species can be done effectively via DNA bar-coding, according to a recent study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

A team of researchers from the University of Guelph (U of G) (Guelph, ON), the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History (Washington, DC) and the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA), used DNA bar-coding to recognize 521 different species of moths and butterflies. Researchers also uncovered evidence that 13 previously recognized species actually comprise two or more species each.

The study was based out of Costa Rica because of the nation's biodiversity. U of G integrative biology professor and study participant Paul Hebert, PhD was the first to suggest that a short sequence of DNA could be used for species identification. The technique involves analysis of a portion of a mitochondrial gene that plays an important role in cellular energy production.

Hebert heads up the Canadian Barcode of Life Network, the world's first national network committed to large-scale DNA bar-coding.

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