

Animal and Plant Discoveries, 2019

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In News

Scientists have discovered at least 364 new species of animals and 253 new species of plants from India in 2019. While these 364 animal species were unknown to humans, another 116 species of animals, which were earlier found elsewhere in the world but not recorded from India previously, have also been found in the last one year. The list of discoveries, published in the form of two books by the **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and Botanical Survey India, both of which have their headquarters in Kolkata** have been released.

More About the Discoveries

- Out of the 364 new animal species that have been discovered, **four are fossil species. Another four subspecies have been discovered.** The **maximum numbers of species that have been discovered are of insects.** The list also includes reptiles, fish and amphibians among others.
- Among the new discoveries, 294 species are invertebrates and 74 are vertebrates.
- The **highest number of new species 68 have been recorded from Kerala followed by Arunachal Pradesh** from where 66 new species have been recorded.
- Among the 10 biogeographic zones in the country the **maximum number 155 have been found in the Western Ghats.** Himalayan region has recorded 56 species out of which 17 are new records. The **biodiversity hotspots of India** once again proved as the never ending treasure house for species richness where several species have been newly described.

- With the new animal discoveries, India now has 102,161 species of animals-starting right from one-celled protozoans to large animals such as elephants and tigers. This is around **6.52% of the global share.**
- More than 50,000 species of plants have also been identified from the country. India is a signatory to the **Convention on Biological Diversity**, hence it is important that we document our bio-resources in a bid to establish sovereign rights, use it sustainably and share the benefits derived from these resources equitably.
- Plant Discoveries 2019 lists **180 new plant species and 73 new records discovered from the country.** This volume of plant discoveries contains 134 seed plants; five fern and fern allies; six bryophytes; 18 lichen; 51 fungi; 23 algae; and 16 microbes.
- During 2019, **vascular plants contributed to 55% of all new discoveries and new records**, while non-vascular plants contributed to 45%.
- Data provided by the BSI stated that **28% of all plant discoveries in 2018 were made from the Western Ghats during 2019**; followed by the eastern Himalayas (21%); the east coast (11%); and eastern plains (10%).
- The west coast has contributed 7% of the total discoveries, while the western Himalayas have contributed 6% of the discoveries. **Maximum (flora) discoveries were made from the State of Kerala**, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Scientists from across the globe have managed to identify 1.8 million species till date which is only a small fraction of the estimated 30 to 50 million species thought to exist in the world. India **ranks 8th in the world with its 1.02 lakh species.**
- The list of newly discovered plants includes seed-bearing plants, ferns, fungi, algae and various species of microbes. Many close relatives of crop plants, potential plants for product development, horticultural value and alternative foods, such as wild jamun, balsams

and mushrooms have also been discovered.