

Georissa mawsmaiensis

October 23, 2021

In news- Recently, researchers have discovered a micro micro snail species named *Georissa mawsmaiensis* in Mawsmai Cave in Meghalaya.

About the new snail species-

- These snails are so small in size that an adult measures less than 2 millimetres in length.
- These new species were discovered by researchers from Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), Bengaluru.
- It has been discovered after 170 years.
- It was **in 1851 that *Georissa saritta*, a member of the same genus as the latest find**, was collected and described from the Musmai (Mawsmai today) valley near Cherrapunjee.
- The members of the ***Georissa* genus** are widely **distributed across** and reported from **Africa, Asia, and the Pacific**.
- However, they are **confined to microhabitats consisting of limestone caves or karst landscapes** formed by the dissolution of limestone.
- ***Georissa* is found in soil or subterranean habitats in lowland tropical forest** as well as high altitude evergreen forests or on rock surfaces rich in calcium.
- Compared to the earlier one, the **new species is different in its shell morphology, starting from shell size variation to the presence of four very prominent spiral striations on body whorls of the shell**.
- Until now, five snail species have been found from the caves of Meghalaya.

Mawsmai cave-

- It is situated in the small village of Mawsmai, around four kilometres from Cherrapunjee (Sohra) in the **East**

Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

- The term 'Mawsmi' means 'Oath Stone' in the Khasi language.
- The Khasi people use the local term 'Krem' for the cave.

Mawsmi cave is located at an altitude of 1,195 metres above sea level and is indirectly influenced by the **streams of the Kynshi river** originating from the East Khasi Hills.