

# New Butterfly Species in Matheran

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As many as 77 new species of butterflies have been found in the ecologically sensitive forest of Matheran hill station near Mumbai during a study conducted there over the last eight years, according to the **Bombay Natural History Society**. **The last time butterflies were codified in this eco-sensitive zone was in 1894**, when a researcher identified 78 species.

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**'Finding the forgotten gems: Revisiting the butterflies of Matheran after 125 years'**, a research paper by scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Somaiya Vidya Vihar University published in the **Biodiversity Data Journal**, provides a glimpse of the rare butterflies in the hill station. The scientists have also introduced a **novel barcode system for denoting seasons and activities of Indian butterflies** and hope this will help butterfly biologists to concisely and effectively present the data.

The scientists observed a **strong seasonal variation in butterfly diversity**. The maximum diversity (125) of butterflies was recorded during winter, while the least (80) during monsoon. A high similarity of butterfly species composition was observed between the pairs of sites studied, tending towards perfect nestedness. This also emphasises the fact that **butterfly diversity in the region is quite stable and chances of emigration to, or immigration from, surrounding regions are very low**. With this, the total number of butterfly species in the Matheran forest has now gone up to 140. Matheran is spread over an area of 214.73 sq km and is located about 80 km from the Maharashtra capital.

Bombay Natural History Society

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) is a **pan-India wildlife research organization that has been promoting the cause of nature conservation since 1883**. In 1883, eight nature-loving residents of Bombay decided to exchange notes and exhibit interesting specimens of natural history. They came together at Bombay's Victoria and Albert Museum on September 15 and constituted the Bombay Natural History Society. Of them, two were Indians. It aims for **conservation of nature, primarily biological diversity through action based on research, education and public awareness**.