

The Starry Dwarf Frog

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Why in news?

India's newest frog, a starry dwarf frog *Astrobatrachus kurichiya* has been found in Kerala.

About the frog:

- The **thumbnail-sized species** was discovered in India's Western Ghats, one of the world's "hottest" biodiversity hotspots.
- Scientists have **named the frog *Astrobatrachus kurichiyana* for its constellation-like markings and the indigenous people of Kurichiyarmala**, living in Wayanad of Kerala, where it was found.
- Its two closest relatives, frogs in the genera *Nyctibatrachus* and *Lankanectes* are found in the Western Ghats and Srilanka respectively.
- It's the **sole member of an ancient lineage**, and researchers have classified as a **new subfamily, *Astrobatrachinae***.
- Dark brown with a bright orange underbelly and speckled with pale blue dots, the **frog camouflages well in wet leaf litter**.
- **Pointed toes** are one of the starry dwarf frog's unusual characteristics.
- It is a **nocturnal amphibian**.
- Genetic analysis reveals that the species is **at least 60 million years old**.