

Tiny gecko species discovered in Odisha

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In news- Odisha's forest officials have announced measures to preserve the newly discovered tiny gecko species of the genus *Hemiphyllodactylus*.

Key updates-

- The species, which grows up to 6 centimetres in length, was first spotted within the premises of a temple at Humma in Ganjam district in 2014.
- Scientists studied the species till 2017 and made 612 observations during the period, with a maximum of 22 sightings in each.
- The team traced its habitat to **Jhadeswar sacred grove**.
- It is **found only in mango trees surrounding the temple** and was never found on concrete walls or below rock boulders unlike other members of the genus.
- Their population in the area is over 100.
- They feed on ants, termites, small roaches, spiders and beetles.
- The new species is the **seventh Indian species of the genus**, the second from the northern Eastern Ghats and 41st globally.
- It is the **first non-island species of the genus which is distributed in lowland habitats**.