

Xylophis deepaki

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In news: A tiny wood snake has been named as “Xylophis deepaki” to honour Indian herpetologist Deepak Veerappan for his contribution in erecting a **new subfamily Xylophiinae** for wood snakes.

About Xylophis deepaki:

- The **common name suggested** for the species is ‘**Deepak’s wood snake**’.
- It is **a tiny snake of just 20 cm length** with **iridescent scales**.
- It was first found on a coconut plantation in **Kanyakumari**.
- It is now reported to be an **endemic species** of **Tamil Nadu**.
- It has also been sighted in **some parts of the Southern Western ghats**, especially in the drier regions and in lower altitudes around Agasthyamalai hills.

Xylophis is a small genus of snakes in the family Pareidae. They constitute the monotypic subfamily Xylophiinae. **The following 5 species are recognized** as being valid which are **all endemic to Western ghats-**

- *Xylophis captaini* – Captain’s wood snake, Captain’s xylophis
- *Xylophis deepaki* – Deepak’s wood snake
- *Xylophis mosaicus* – Anamalai wood snake
- *Xylophis perroteti* – Perrotet’s mountain snake, striped narrow-headed snake
- *Xylophis stenorhynchus* – Günther’s mountain snake

They are the **only pareidae** snakes found in India and the only snakes in the family found outside Southeast Asia.