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New species of cricket frog discovered by Pune-based zoologists

This discovery was acknowledged and published in the international journal 'Zootaxa', a peer-reviewed scientific mega journal for animal taxonomists published in Auckland

PUNE Updated: Jan 13, 2019 14:38 ISTHT Correspondent
Hindustan Times, Pune

This cricket frog can be found in Lonavla and Mulshi areas.(HT PHOTO)

A team of zoologists from the Department of Zoology, Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) has discovered a new species of cricket frog from the northern Western Ghats of Maharashtra.

This discovery was acknowledged and published on Friday in the international journal 'Zootaxa', a peer-reviewed scientific mega journal for animal taxonomists published in Auckland.

The new species has been named "Fejervarya marathi", which is derived from the indigenous language. The species has been found to be endemic in its distribution in Maharashtra.

The team of zoologists included Samadhan Phuge, Kalyani Bhakare, Ramnath Andhale and Radhakrishna Pandit from SPPU who spent one month in the western ghats during the 2017 monsoon which led them to the discovery of the new species.

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Sharing his experience about this find, Phuge said, "It took us nearly one and a half years to officially claim this as the new discovery in this category of species. On the midnight in July 2017 when we were in the Western Ghats, we happened to discover the new species of frog. While we collected a few more samples in the entire month of July, it took us another three months to realise this new discovery."

The discovery was done in collaboration with scientist from the Zoological Survey of India, western regional centre, Pune, using 'Integrated Taxonomic Approach' including differences in morphological characters, call patten (acoustics), ecology and DNA based molecular phylogeny studies.

According to Phuge, this particular new species of frog can be found in very few localities near Lonavla and Mulshi region of western part of Pune district.

Looking the habitat preference being endemic to the northern Western Ghats, the Marathi Fejervarya frog could have possible distribution in other parts of adjacent districts of Ahmednagar and Raigad as well, said Phuge.

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