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# India adds 664 animal species to its faunal database in 2022, 339 taxa to its flora

In 2022, the maximum new discoveries of animals and plants were from Kerala

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SHIV SAHAY SINGH



(Clockwise from left) Sela macaque (*Macaca selai*); *Calanthe lamellosa*, an orchid species; *Glischropus meghalayanus*, a species of bamboo dwelling bat; *Nandadevia pusalkar*, a genus common throughout the foothills and warm outer valleys of the Uttarakhand Himalayas; *Ficedula zanthopygia*, yellow-rumped flycatcher. Photo: Special Arrangement

India added 664 animal species to its faunal database in the year 2022. These comprise 467 new species and 197 new records [species found in India for the first time].

The country also added 339 new plant taxa – 186 taxa that are new to science and 153 taxa as new distributional records from the country in 2022. The details of new discoveries and new records were released by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav in Kolkata on July 1.

The faunal discoveries have been compiled in a publication by Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) titled *Animal Discoveries - New Species and New Records 2023*, whereas floral discoveries are contained in *Plant Discoveries 2022* published by the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).

Among the major fauna species discovered are three new species and one new record of mammals; two new records of birds; 30 new species and two new records of reptiles; six new species and one new record of amphibia; and 28 new species and eight new records of fish. The mammal species discovered include two species of bats – *Miniopterus phillipsi*, a long-fingered bat, and *Glischropus meghalayanus*, a bamboo-dwelling bat – both from Meghalaya. Sela macaque (*Macaca selai*), a new macaque species discovered in the western and central Arunachal Pradesh and named after the Sela Pass, is also among the highlights of Animal Discoveries 2022.

The new records include *Macaca leucogenys*, a white-cheeked macaque earlier found in Modog, southeastern Tibet, and sighted in India for the first time in 2022 in West

Sela macaque, a new species discovered in the western and central Arunachal Pradesh. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

The faunal discoveries have been compiled in a publication by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) titled 'Animal Discoveries – New Species and New Records 2023'. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

Siang, Arunachal Pradesh. The list also includes *Ficedula zanthopygia*, the yellow-rumped flycatcher, earlier known from Mongolia, Transbaikal, southern China, Korea, western Japan, and found last year in Narcondam Island of the Andaman archipelago.

The maximum number of new faunal discoveries has been of invertebrates with 583 species, while vertebrates constitute 81 species. Insects dominate among invertebrates with 384 species, whereas fish dominated among vertebrates, followed by reptiles, amphibia, mammals and aves.

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The yellow-rumped flycatcher was recorded in Narcondam Island of the Andaman archipelago. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

In 2022, the maximum new discoveries were recorded from Kerala. As many as 82 animal species new to science and 15 new records were from Kerala, which contributes to 14.6% of the new species and new records. Karnataka followed with 64 new species and 24 new records accounting for 13.2%. Tamil Nadu saw 71 new discoveries and 13 new records contributing to 12.6% of all the new discoveries and new records in the country. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands contributed to about 8.4% of the discoveries, whereas 7.6 % discoveries were from West Bengal and 5.7% from Arunachal Pradesh. With the new discoveries and new records, the fauna diversity of the country increased to

*Glischropus meghalayanus*, a species of bamboo dwelling bat from Meghalaya. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

1,03,922.

Speaking at the launch of these publications, Mr. Yadav said that work done by the ZSI is critical to the faunal diversity of the country. "We must protect the diversity for our own sake," he said.

ZSI Director Dhriti Banerjee said the year 2022 witnessed the highest number of new discoveries in the last 10 years.

'Plant Discoveries 2022' contains an enumeration of 339 taxa, which have been added to the Indian flora during 2022. These comprise 319 species, and 20 infraspecific taxa as new to the Indian flora. Of these, 186 taxa are new to science and 153 taxa are new distributional records from India.

Among the new discoveries, 37% are of seed plants, 29% fungi, 16% lichen, 8% algae, 6% bryophytes, 3% microbes and remaining 1% pteridophytes. Seed plants contributed the maximum discoveries, of which dicotyledons contribute 73% and monocotyledons 27%. About 21% of the total discoveries were made from the western Himalayas followed by 16% from the Western Ghats. The Plant Discoveries 2022, include 125 angiosperms, one gymnosperm, five pteridophytes, 19 bryophytes, 55 lichens, 99 fungi, 27 algae and nine microbes..

*Calanthe lamellosa*, an orchid species that was spotted for the first time in India in the Japfu mountain range in Kohima, Nagaland. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

A State-wise analysis of the plant taxa points out that maximum discoveries of

57 were made in Kerala, which alone accounts for 16.8% of all plant discoveries in the country in year 2022. The plant discoveries in 2022 include wild relatives of many potential horticultural, agricultural, medicinal, and ornamental plants such as begonia, impatiens (balsams), legumes, zingibers, orchids etc.

Among the new genus of plants discovered are *Nandadevia Pusalkar*, a genus common throughout the foothills and warm outer valleys of the Uttarakhand Himalayas, and *Nilgiriella Pusalkar*, endemic to the southern Western Ghats of India and

distributed in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Among the new records in orchid species, *Calanthe lamellosa*, earlier recorded in China and Myanmar, and found for the first time in India in the Japfu mountain range in Kohima, Nagaland.

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