



Malabar Gliding Frog

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Why in News

Recently, a rare amphibian i.e. **Malabar Gliding Frog (*Rhacophorus malabaricus*)** was spotted in Pullad, Kerala.

The amphibian is **endemic** to the rainforest of **western ghats**.

Endemic species are those plants and animals that exist only in one geographical region.

Key Points



- **Characteristics:**

- It is a **green frog with slender body, webbed feet, unusual body positions** and very well **camouflaged**.

Camouflage, also called **cryptic coloration**, is a defense mechanism or tactic that organisms use to disguise their appearance, usually to blend in with their surroundings.

- The fingers and toes are like sticks to attach and walk through tree branches.
- It has a **high gliding abilities**, with the long skin between the fingers which helps to cover **10 to 12 feet** in one leap.
- It has a **body length of 10 cm**, making it one of the **largest mossy frogs**.

Mossy Frogs: These frogs have the skin which is green in colour and resembles moss growing on the rock.

- The breeding period is during the monsoon and usually, the females choose to spawn on the lush green leaves overhanging a waterbody.
- As their body is so soft, they can live only in moist forests with streams.

- **Foam Nests:**

They built **foam nests** above small pools of water, into which the tadpoles drop after hatching.

Behaviour like **cannibalism** has been found among tadpoles.

- **Protection Status:**

In the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List**, it is placed in the **Least Concern** category.

- **Concern:** The Malabar gliding frog population is declining **due to deforestation, climate change, developmental activities, and toxic chemicals**.

The Western Ghats

- These are the mountain ranges running parallel along the **western coast of India starting from Gujarat and ending in Tamil Nadu.**
- **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala** are the six Indian states covered by Western Ghats.
- The mountain range is also a “**Hottest Hotspot**” of biodiversity.
- The Ghats are often called the **Great Escarpment of India** and are also a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **High Biodiversity and Endemism** are special features of Western Ghats along with the presence of **Evergreen Forests.**

Amphibia

- They fall under the **Chordata phylum** of the kingdom Animalia, Eg., **Frogs, Salamanders etc.**
- These are **multicellular vertebrates** that live both on **land and water.**
- They are the **first cold-blooded animals** to have appeared on land.
Cold-blooded animals can be defined as the animals which cannot regulate their internal body temperature with the change in the environment.
- They respire through the lungs and skin.
- They have **three chambered** hearts.

Source: TH