



South Indian Cicada Species Gets a New Identity

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Why in News?

Recent taxonomic research has unveiled a significant discovery regarding a [cicada](#) species commonly found in South India.

- Previously mistaken for the **Malaysian species *Purana tigrina***, this cicada has now been identified as a distinct species named ***Purana cheeveda***.
- The study also highlights the **potential implications of the cicada's distribution for ecological assessments**.

What are the Major Findings of the Research?

- *P. cheeveda*'s distribution extends across **tropical evergreen forests** from **Goa to Kanyakumari in South India**.
- This discovery supports a high degree of endemism among cicadas.
- The **declining presence of cicadas in homesteads** may indicate the **deterioration of [soil quality](#) and vegetation**.

What are Cicadas?



- **About:**
 - Cicadas are insects that belong to the order **Hemiptera** and the superfamily **Cicadoidea**.
 - Hemipteran insects, also called **true bugs**, have mouthparts used for piercing and sucking and have two pairs of wings.
 - They have **large eyes, transparent wings and loud calls** that are produced by special organs called **tymbals**.

▪ **Dietary Pattern and Life Cycle:**

- Cicadas are mostly **herbivorous and feed on plant sap** using their piercing and sucking mouthparts.
- They have complex life cycles that involve **long periods of underground development** and short periods of adult emergence.

▪ **Habitat:**

- Most cicadas are **canopy dwellers** and are found in **natural forests with large trees**; found in every continent except **Antarctica**.
- The **generic diversity of cicadas in India and Bangladesh ranks the highest** in the world, followed by **China**.

▪ **Significance:**

- Cicadas are important for biodiversity because they **provide food for many predators, pollinate flowers, aerate the soil**, recycle nutrients and indicate environmental health.

▪ **Major Threat:**

- **Human development activities** reduce the number of trees that cicadas depend on for feeding and reproduction.
- Climate change may **disrupt the timing and synchronization of cicada emergence**.
- **Pesticides, herbicides and fungicides** contaminate the soil and water and affect the health and survival of cicadas and their host plants.

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