



Assam Keelback Rediscovered

Why in News

The **Assam keelback (*Herpetoreas pealii*)**, a snake **endemic** to Assam, has been found 129 years after it was last spotted by British tea planter **Samuel Edward Peal in 1891**.

Key Points

- The snake was considered a **lost species** since no sighting had been reported since its discovery in 1891.
- In 2018, it was found in the **Poba Reserve Forest (RF)** by a team of scientists from the [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#), who were retracing the steps of the Abor Expedition.
 - Abor Expedition was a military expedition by the British against the Abors in 1911.
- **Assam Keelback:**



- The **non-venomous** snake was **named after Samuel Peal and the place where it was found**.
- It is small — about 60 cm long, brownish, with a patterned belly.
- It has a **unique genus (*Herpetoreas*)** belonging to a smaller group of four species, found in Eastern and Western Himalayas, South China and Northeast India.
- It is categorised as '**data deficient**' in the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** list.
 - This is the **worst category** because there is practically no information available about it and it is difficult to determine its status.
- **Poba Reserve Forest:**
 - Poba RF is located along the Assam-Arunachal border, in Assam.
 - The **National Highway -15** passes through the reserved forest.
 - The reserved forest is now under threat due to destruction of forest cover and random hunting, poaching and illegal collection of forest resources by unscrupulous people.

Source: IE

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