

Scientists spot more of Wayanad's wildlife inhabitants

The discoveries named after Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary that is home to many spider and millipede species

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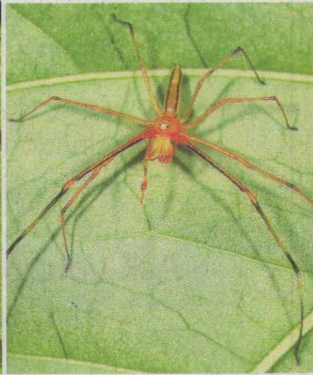
Scientists have discovered a new species of spider and millipede at the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.

A team led by A.V. Sudhikumar, Principal Investigator and Head, Centre for Animal Taxonomy and Ecology, Christ College, Irinjalakuda, and research scholars P.P. Sudhin, K.S. Nafin, and Pooja Anilkumar, made the discovery.

Home to such species

Considering the abundance of spiders and millipedes in the sanctuary, the team named the new discoveries *Hindumanes wayanadensis* and *Anoplodesmus wayanadensis* after the sanctuary.

Hindumanes wayanadensis



The female (left) and the male spiders of the *Hindumanes wayanadensis* species and *Anoplodesmus wayanadensis*, the new millipede species.

comes under the family Salticidae (jumping spiders) that inhabits the riparian scrub jungles of the sanctuary. *Hindumanes*, the first part of the scientific name, relates to the presence of this genus only

in Hindustan.

"The orange-coloured male spider and the light-green coloured female spider may be mistaken as two separate species. There is a longitudinal black stripe on the dorsal surface of

abdomen in the male spider. Elongated legs also have long black lines. The males have long venom fangs projected in the front," Dr. Sudhikumar said.

"In the eight-eyed female, median eyes are enormously

larger than other eyes. There are white coloured plumose hairs present in the eye area. Abdomen and legs are covered by fine smooth hairs. It is difficult to detect the presence of this spider in green foliage. This spider is present only during the monsoon season and feeds on insects in the foliage," he said.

Millipede species

Anoplodesmus wayanadensis, the new millipede species, was discovered in the litters of the moist deciduous forest of the sanctuary. Its body is composed of dorsally flat and ventrally round 20 black segments. There are yellow sideways projections on the dorsal side. It hides under soil during the summer season and comes out only

during the monsoon season. This is a detritivore (which feeds on dead organic material) and males and females feed together.

So far, 1,466 species of spiders and 270 species of millipedes have been discovered from India. There is a possibility of discovery of new species of organisms from this rarely studied area, the team said.

The study was the part of exploration of biodiversity of the Western Ghats, funded by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

The discovery has been approved by international specialists and will be published in the next issue of *Zootaxa*, an international scientific journal of natural history.