Apterichtus kanniyakumari

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Why in news?

A new species of finless snake eel named have discovered in Kanniyakumari.

- It is a finless ***snake eel species***.
- **Scientific name –** Apterichtus kanniyakumari.
- **Genus –** Apterichtus.
  - It is the 16th species discovered by the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) team from the Indian coast.
- **Discovery location –** Colachel coast in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.
- The specimens were collected from deep-sea trawl landings at ***a depth of about 100 meters.***
- **Nomenclature -** Named after Kanniyakumari to honor the district's cultural, linguistic, historical and geographical significance.
- **Morphology -**
  - **Appearance -** Golden-yellow body with a pale white underside on its head and three distinct black blotches.
  - One blotch is located behind the eye, one is at the corner of the mouth (rictus), and one is behind the origin of the rictus.
  - **Size -** The eel measures less than 40 cm in length.
- **Sex -** Sex of the specimens could not be confirmed.
- **Distinguishing characteristics -** It can be differentiated from similar species by its head length, tail length, and body depth at the gill openings.
- **Genetical variation -** Genetic analysis confirmed it as a distinct species.
  - It is closely related to another local eel, *Apterichtus nanjilnaduensis,* which was named after the ancient name of the same region.
- **Significance –** The finding highlights the unexplored biodiversity of the Arabian Sea and the rich marine ecosystem of the Kanniyakumari region.



Reference

[The Hindu | Apterichtus kanniyakumari]

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