Crocothemis Erythraea

Prelims – *Current event of National and International importance| Biodiversity*

Why in News?

Recently, the elusive dragonfly species Crocothemis erythraea, a relic from the Ice Age, was rediscovered in the high-elevation regions of the southern Western Ghats.

- **Genus –** Crocothemis.
- **Common name –** Scarlet dragonfly or broad scarlet.
- **Family –** Libellulidae.
- **Size –** *35-45 millimetres in length,* with a wingspan of approximately 60-75 millimetres.
- **Morphology –**The adult male scarlet dragonfly has a ***bright scarlet red*,** widened abdomen, with small amber patches at the bases of the hindwings.
- The veins on the leading edges of the wings are red.
- Females and immatures are yellow-brown and have a conspicuous pale stripe along the top of the thorax.



- **Habitat –** It is often found slow-moving freshwater bodies such as ponds, lakes, marshes, and slow rivers.
- **Distribution –** It is widely distributed across Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia.
- **Recent Rediscovery Location –** Southern Western Ghats after decades of misidentification as *Crocothemis servilia*.
- It is also recorded in high ranges of Munnar, Wagamon, Rajakumari, Pampadum Shola, and Parambikulam.
- **Diet –** They are active hunters, preying on various small insects such as mosquitoes, flies, and other small arthropods. They catch their prey mid-air using their legs.
- **Reproduction –** Females lay their eggs by dipping the tip of their abdomen into the water while hovering above the surface.
- The eggs hatch into aquatic larvae (nymphs), which live in the water for several months to a few years before emerging as adults
- **Conservation Status –** Listed as ***Least Concern*** by the IUCN.

References

1. The Hindu| Ice Age's winged relic.
2. Scarlet dragonfly| Crocothemis erythrea.

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