

Dravidogecko Coonoor

Why in News?

A new species of gecko, Dravidogecko coonoor, has been discovered in the Coonoor Hills, Upper Nilgiris, Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu.

- **Scientific Name** - *Dravidogecko coonoor*
- **Family** - Gekkonidae (Geckos)
- **Endemic to** - Coonoor Hills, Upper Nilgiris, Western Ghats.
- It brings the total known *Dravidogecko* species in the Western Ghats to nine.

Geckos

- **Geckos** - They are small to medium-sized **lizards** belonging to the family Gekkonidae.
- They are known for their ability to climb vertical surfaces and ceilings, by **specialised toe pads**.
- India hosts a rich diversity of geckos, particularly in biodiversity hotspots like the Western Ghats, Northeast India, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- **Notable Indian genera:**
 - *Hemidactylus* (common house geckos)
 - *Cyrtodactylus* (bent-toed geckos)
 - *Dravidogecko* (endemic to Western Ghats)

- **Habitat** - It is found in high-elevation regions of the Western Ghats, specifically around Coonoor, Tamil Nadu.
- It prefers **montane forest edges, plantations, and urban areas** like walls of buildings, tree bark, crevices, and vegetation near human settlements.
- It occurs in **matrix habitats** a mix of fragmented forest patches and monoculture plantations amidst human habitation.
- **Ecological significance** - It is unique to the high-elevation regions of the Western Ghats, a global biodiversity hotspot.
- It controls insect populations, especially pests like mosquitoes and cockroaches.
- It is the prey for birds, snakes, and larger lizards—important in food webs.
- **Physical features** - A small to medium-sized gecko and distinct from its close relatives by subtle morphological differences, noted during field studies.
- It displays typical gecko features like adhesive toe pads suited for climbing.



- **Threats**
- **Habitat fragmentation** - Due to urbanisation, expansion of tea/coffee plantations.
- **Deforestation** - Clearing of forest patches for human activities.
- **Climate Change** - Potential impact on montane ecosystems affecting species distribution.

Reference

[The Hindu| Dravidogecko coonoor](#)