

Gangaichthys indonepalicus

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

A 2024 TikTok video of an eel-like creature from a borewell near the India-Nepal border led to its formal description in 2026 as a new subterranean species.

- **Gangaichthys indonepalicus** - It is a small, blind, and unpigmented earthworm eel that inhabits groundwater systems throughout its entire life beneath the Gangetic Basin.
- **Family** - Chaudhuriidae, order Synbranchiformes.
- **Naming**
 - **Gangaichthys** means “fish of the Ganga”.
 - **Indonepalicus** refers to its geographical association with **India and Nepal**.

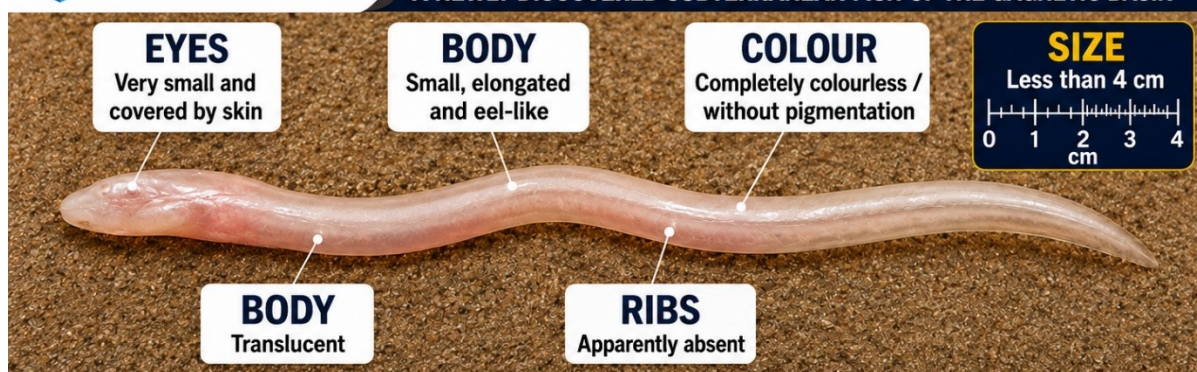
*A **stygotitic fish** is an aquatic animal that is adapted to living in underground water systems.*

- **Characteristics**



GANGAICHTHYS INDONEPALICUS

A NEWLY DISCOVERED SUBTERRANEAN FISH OF THE GAGNETIC BASIN



MORPHOLOGICAL FEATURES		
	SIZE	: Less than 4 cm
	BODY	: Small, elongated and eel-like
	COLOUR	: Completely colourless / without pigmentation
	EYES	: Very small and covered by skin
	BODY	: Translucent
	RIBS	: Apparently absent
	HABITAT ADAPTATION	: Adapted to complete darkness
	ENVIRONMENT	: Underground groundwater / aquifer systems

• Significance

- Expands knowledge of **groundwater biodiversity** in the Indo-Gangetic Basin.
- Reveals aquifers as **specialised subterranean ecosystems** with unique adaptations.
- Underscores the **importance of studying overlooked subterranean life** and its evolution in darkness.

Why was it difficult for scientists to study?

- **Locating & Collection** - Scientists struggled to identify suitable borewells, obtain permissions, and manually pump thousands of litres across 15 sites, yielding only three specimens.
- **Identification Challenge** - The fish's tiny, colourless, subterranean form required detailed morphological study to confirm it as a new species.

Reference

[The Hindu | Gangaichthys indonepalicus](#)



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