# Lyriothemis keralensis

***Prelims:*** *Current events of national and international importance | Species*

**Why in News?**

*Recently, a new dragonfly species, Lyriothemis keralensis, has been formally identified from Kerala after being misidentified for over a decade.*

- **Common name –** Slender Bombardier.
- **Genus –** Lyriothemis.
- **Discovery –** ***First spotted in 2013 in Varappetty*** near Kothamangalam, Ernakulam district, Kerala.
- Previously ***misidentified as Lyriothemis acigastra or Little Bloodtail*** odonate family, widely found in northeastern India.

*Dragonflies and damselflies constitute the insect order Odonata, and are collectively known as odonates. These predatory, amphibious insects are known for their aquatic larvae and terrestrial, winged adult stages.*

- **Habitat –** It inhabits *vegetated pools and irrigation canals* within well-shaded pineapple and rubber plantations.
- **Distribution –** It is found in the *low-lying coastal plains of Kerala.*
- **Characteristics – Dimorphism –** Males and females look different in colour and body shape.
- **Size –** About 3 cm long.
- **Male –** Males are bright blood-red with black markings.
- **Female –** Females are yellow with black markings.
- **Body Shape –** Females are bulkier, males have a slimmer body.
- **Abdomen –** Males have a slender abdomen.
- **Behaviour –**
  - Seasonally *visible only during the Southwest monsoon* (late May to the end of August).
  - Believed to persist in the aquatic larval stage during the remaining months.
- **Diet –** Feed on insects like mosquitoes, flies, midges, moths, and butterflies, often catching them mid-air.
- **Threats –** Occur mainly *outside protected areas and depend on fragile microhabitats.*
- Vulnerable to land-use changes in plantation-dominated landscapes.
- **Ecological Significance –** *Odonate* species are known as ***ecological bioindicators***

of healthy, clean wetlands.
- Demonstrates Kerala’s high insect biodiversity.
- Underlines the need for sustainable land-use practices for species conservation.



**References**


1. TH | Lyriothemis keralensis
2. The Tribune | Slender Bombardier



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