

Metadon ghorpadei and Metadon reemeri

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in News?

Recently, two new extremely rare ant fly species have been discovered in India, and their findings have been published in the international journal Zootaxa.

- **Genus** - Metadon.
- **Family** - Syrphidae.
- **Discovery**
 - **Metadon Ghorpadei** - Discovered in the northern ridge forest of Delhi.
 - **Metadon reemeri** - Discovered in the Siruvani hills of Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu.
- **Habitat** - These insects are generally associated with ant nests, where their larvae often live as inquilines (living within the nest without causing harm to the host ants).
- Moderately dense vegetation patches within thorny scrub forest.
- **Behavior** - Exhibit specialised behaviour known as myrmecophily.

Myrmecophily is the beneficial relationship between ants and other organisms, often plants or insects, where both species gain advantages.

- Larvae live inside ant nests and feed on ant brood.
- Adults seldom visit flowers and tend to remain close to ant nests.
- Extremely rare and difficult to detect.
- **Uniqueness** - Highly specialized ant-associated lifecycle.
- Only 27 Microdontinae species are known from the Indian subcontinent.
- **Threats** - Habitat fragmentation and human pressure.
- Urbanisation and infrastructure development.

- Invasive plant species.
- **Ecological Significance** - Demonstrate the **ecological value of conserving urban forests** such as the Delhi Ridge and biodiversity hotspots.



Metadon ghorpadei



Metadon reemeri

Reference

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