

New 'Lucifer' bee

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species in news

Why in news?

Australian scientists discover **new 'lucifer' bee** with devil-like horns in the state of Western Australia.

- **Scientific name** - Megachile lucifer.
- **Family** - Megachilidae.
- **Genus** - Megachile.
- **Subgenus** - Hackeriapis.
- **Discovered Location** - Found in the Goldfields region of **Western Australia**, while surveying the critically endangered wildflower *Marianthus aquilonaris* in 2019.
- **Inspiration** - The name was also a playful nod to the ***Netflix series Lucifer***.
- Lucifer means "light bringer" in Latin.
- **Unique Features** -
 - **Distinctive Horns in Female Bees** - Female bees have tiny horn-like facial protrusions—**absent in males**—that inspired the species' devilish name.
 - **Size** - The horns, each measured at about 0.9 millimeters long.
 - These horns may serve a defensive or ecological function, possibly aiding in flower access or deterring predators.
 - **Genetic Breakthrough** - A DNA test confirmed this bee species doesn't match any known bees, marking it as the **first newly identified member** of its group in over 20 years.



- **Ecological Role** - It plays a vital role in pollinating endangered native plants, especially in isolated ecosystems threatened by habitat loss and climate change.
- **Significance** - Australia has about 2,000 native bee species, with over 300 still unnamed and undescribed; this discovery emphasizes the importance of studying native bees.

References

1. [The Hindu | Australian scientists discover new 'lucifer' bee](#)
2. [NBC news | Discovery of new 'lucifer' bee](#)