

## 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 aguilonaris 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—<u>absent in males</u>—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 <u>first newly</u> <u>identified member</u> 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

