New shark species identified in Indian Ocean

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Why in News?

A collaborative team of researchers has officially identified and described a new deep-sea shark species in the Indian Ocean: Echinorhinus roinee, popularly known as the Indian Bramble Shark.

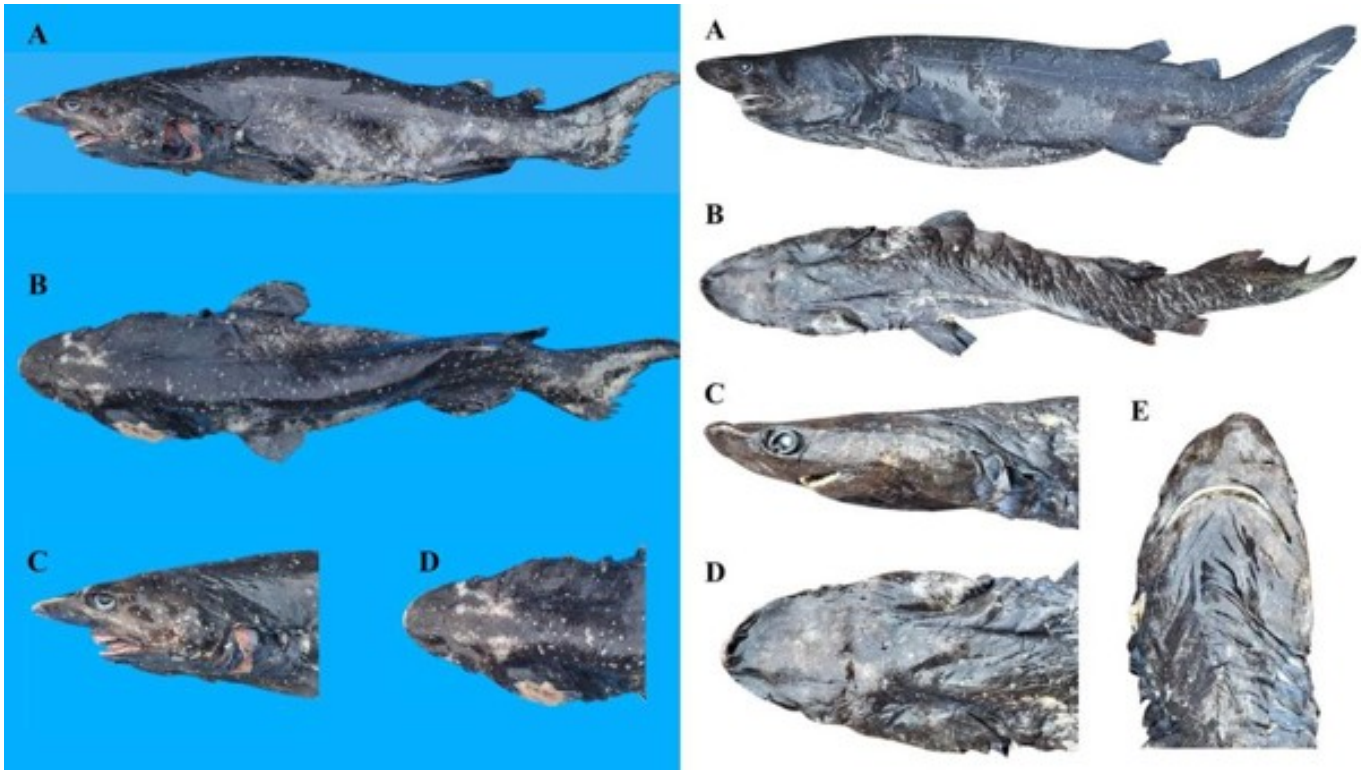
- For decades, specimens of this shark landed along India's southwest coast were misclassified and assumed to be the **Atlantic bramble shark** (*Echinorhinus brucus*).
- Mitochondrial DNA analysis and distinct morphological profiling finally proved it to be a separate, endemic Indian Ocean genetic lineage.

Key Highlights

- **Common Name -** Indian Bramble Shark.
- **Scientific Name -** Echinorhinus roinee.
- **Discovery Site -** Type specimens were collected from the **Sakthikulangara Fishing Harbour in Kollam district, Kerala**.
- **Habitat Zone -** Deep continental slope waters (350–450 metres depth)
- **Physical Characteristics**
  - Grows up to **3 metres** in length.
  - Features a dark brown to blackish body covered with prominent, thorn-like dermal denticles that fuse into multi-pointed plates as the shark matures.
  - Distinguished from related counterparts by its relatively larger eyes, larger pelvic fins, and longer snout-to-gill region.
- **Naming Significance -** The specific name *roinee* honours Roinee, the daughter of Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, Director of the Zoological Survey of India.
- The study was published in the *Records of the Zoological Survey of India* and supported by the Ministry of Earth Sciences under India's **Deep Ocean Mission**.

Significance for Marine Conservation

- Deep-sea sharks are highly vulnerable to commercial overexploitation because of their slow growth rates and low reproductive potential.
- These sharks frequently turn up as unmanaged deep-sea trawl bycatch.
- Thus, establishing a correct taxonomic baseline is vital to tracking their population status, assessing extinction risks, and designing targeted management strategies under Indian fisheries frameworks.



Reference

[The Hindu | New shark species identified in Indian Ocean]

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