New species of fireflies

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Why in News?

Bethune College, Kolkata assistant professor Srinjana discovered 2 new species of fireflies.

- **Discovered species -** Triangulara sunderbanensis and Medeopteryx bengalensis.
- **Triangulara sunderbanensis** – It is found at the Sunderbans Sunderban Biosphere Reserve, a world heritage site.
- It is the 2nd species to be discovered in the world under the Triangulara genus. The other was recorded in Thailand.
- **Medeopteryx bengalensis –** It is found near Thakurpukur, Kolkata.
- It is the 1st discovery of a new species under the Medeopteryx genus in India. This is the 26th species of this genus to be discovered.
- **Threats**
  - Use of pesticides,
  - disappearance of habitats like water bodies and associated plants,
  - changes in the distribution of earthworms and molluscs that firefly larvae feed on,
  - encroachment of invasive species, and
  - exposure to automobile exhaust and heavy metals.
- The most significant factor affecting the firefly population is ***artificial light pollution.***
- The light in fireflies is a cold light caused *by an enzymatic reaction*.
- The light they emit plays an important role in courtship signals during the mating season.
- When exposed to artificial light, their signal gets masked, which affects mating and their reproduction.
- The disappearance of the insect has also affected the food chain of frogs and birds. Fireflies also act as *potential pollinators.*



Reference

[Times of India | New Species of Fireflies]

