Nothobranchius Sylvaticus

Why in News?

A team of international scientists have recently discovered and described a new type of 'killifish', Nothobranchius sylvaticus that is endemic to a Kenyan forest.

- **Scientific name -** Nothobranchius sylvaticus, from the Latin meaning *"pertaining to the forest".*
- It is also the ***1st known endemic killifish*** to persist in a forest.
- **Genus –** Nothobranchius
    - Known as "annual killifish" because they live in temporary pools that dry up seasonally, with their eggs surviving in the dry mud until the next rainy season.
- **Distinction -** N. sylvaticus lineage diverged from its sister species about 7.09 million years ago.
    - Phylogenetic analysis of mitochondrial sequences, along with nuclear genes, identifies the new species as a distinct evolutionary lineage.
- **Morphology** – Light blue scales on its trunk extend to cover its body, and the head is grey with distinct red lobes and brown-red oblique bars.
- Dorsal and anal fins are golden, marked with dark grey dots and stripes, which merge into a uniform dark grey zone; the caudal fin is dark red to red, slender black distal band.



- **Sexual dimorphism**
    - **Males** – They are generally larger than females.
- **Threats** – Increasing impacts on land and water resources will continue to cause habitat degradation.
- **Conservation Status -** It is ***critically endangered*** and may become extinct soon.

KilliFish

• Killifish are oviparous or egg-laying fish.
• There are around 1,270 species of killifish.
• **Size -** Most killifish species are relatively small, typically reaching a length of 1-2 inches (2.5-5 cm), although some can grow larger.
• **Appearance –** Generally, male killifish will be far more colorful and have much more developed finnage than females.
• **Habitat -** Killifish live in small pools of water in the wild, which may occasionally dry up.
• This means that some species are not particularly long-lived and are unlikely to live for over 2 years.
• **Distribution –** They are mainly found in the fresh or brackish waters of the Americas, southern Europe, much of Africa, the Middle East and Asia.
• **Diet -** In the wild, killifish eat small crustaceans, insects, and seeds, while in aquariums, they can be fed live or frozen foods like brine shrimp, daphnia, and mosquito larvae.

References

1. Down to Earth | Nothobranchius sylvaticus
2. Phys Org | Nothobranchius sylvaticus
3. Zootaxa | Nothobranchius sylvaticus

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