

Pilia malenadu

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species | Conservation

Why in news?

Researchers discover a **new species of spider** in a Chikkamagaluru village, name it after 'Malenadu'

- Family Salticidae.
- Genus Pilia, a genus of jumping spiders.
 - These spiders are *small, agile predators* known for excellent vision, agile movements and jumping ability.
 - It exhibit complex courtship behavior and active hunting, <u>unlike</u> <u>web-building spiders</u>.
 - 1st described by Eugène Louis Simon in 1902.
- Location Madhugundi village, Mudigere taluk of Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka.
- Etymology Named after the Malenadu region of Karnataka, locally known as the "land of hills" "mala" means hill, "nadu" means land.
- Taxonomic importance -
 - \circ This is the 1^{st} *time* both male & female specimens of the genus have been identified, resolving a long-standing taxonomic gap.
 - Previously, only three species all male specimens, are known.
- Distinctiveness It <u>differs</u> from common <u>house or garden spiders</u>, both in appearance and behaviour.
- **Habitat 2 plant species** Memecylon umbellatum & Memecylon malabaricum the spiders were found concealed between the leaves of these plants.
- **Morphology** New species is morphologically closest to **Bristowia**, another genus of jumping spiders, sharing robust first legs and comparable genital structures.



• **Significance** - This is the 1st discovery of a Pilia genus spider species in 123 years, last recorded in **1902** in **Kerala**, underscores the importance of Western Ghats' status as a biodiversity hotspot.

Reference

The Hindu | New spider species is discovered in Chikkamagaluru

