

## Sheathia Rosemalayensis

### *Syllabus*

**Prelims** - General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.

**Mains** - GS- III | Conservation

### Why in the News?

A team of researchers from Mar Athanasius College, Kothamangalam, have discovered a new species of freshwater algae.

- **Sheathia Rosemalayensis** - It is a new species of **freshwater red algae** from the Western Ghats.
- **Discovered in** - Rosemala in Kollam district, Kerala.
- **Taxonomy**
  - **Family** - Batrachospermaceae.
  - **Scientific name** - Sheathia Rosemalayensis, which has been named after the place where it was found.
  - **Genus** - Sheathia.
- The Sheathia species are **extremely rare in India**.
- **Habitat** - It has been documented **only in the southern Western Ghats**, a geographically distinct region.
- It is the **4<sup>th</sup> new species** of the Batrachospermaceae family described from this region.
- **Distinguished from other species** - It is distinguished based on **morphology and molecular sequence** data from previously identified 3 other new species of freshwater red algae:
  - Kumanoa chaugulei, Kumanoa periyarensis, and Macrosporophycos sahyadricus.
- **DNA barcoding** - It was performed on all 4 newly discovered species, confirming their unique identity.



- **Significance** - It is crucial to study the freshwater red algae which thrive only in pristine (fresh) water and undisturbed habitats.
- Their presence has significant bio-geographical and environmental implications.

## References

1. [The New Indian Express|New freshwater algae species discovered in Western Ghats](#)
2. [Phycologia| Sheathia Rosemalayensis](#)