Vela carli

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance | Species in news*

Why in News?

A tiny crab displaying both male and female biological traits on the same body has been discovered in the Western Ghats.

- **Vela carli** – It is an *endemic freshwater crab* found only in the forests and streams of the Central Western Ghats.
- **Location** – Discovered from the tree holes in the forests of the Silent Valley National Park.
- **Observation** – The dual-sex condition (both male and female at the same time) was observed in three crabs found here.

***Gynandromorphy** – A rare condition in which individuals exhibit both male and female characteristics.*

- **Traits** – The bodies of the crabs displayed male reproductive structures, while other parts showcased female features, including gonopores.
- **Rarity** – Gynandromorphy has been documented in several marine and freshwater crab families; it is the first instance observed in the family Gecarcinucidae.
- **Causes** – Likely, could only be from intrinsic developmental processes rather than external environmental pollution.
- **Survival Strategy** – The crab's habitat was free from environmental pollutants; the reason for the phenomenon could be related to survival tactics.
- **Significance** – This discovery highlights the biodiversity and micro-ecosystem richness of Silent Valley National Park.

Reference

[The Hindu | Crab in Silent Valley found displaying both male & female biological traits]