Zographetus mathewi – Butterfly Species

***Prelims**: Current Events of National and International Importance*

Why in News?

Recently, a team from the Travancore Nature History Society, the Institute of Tropical Research, Ecology and Conservation, and the Zoological Survey of India has identified a new butterfly species.

- **Location** - A new butterfly species, *Zographetus mathewi*, has been discovered in the **Western Ghats**, a global biodiversity hotspot.

Western Ghats is one of the world's 8 "hottest hotspots" of biological diversity.

- **Discovered by** – A team of lepidopterists (a person who studies or collects butterflies and moths).
- **Nomenclature** - The butterfly is named in honour of George Mathew, a prominent Indian entomologist and former head of the Kerala Forest Research Institute's Entomology Division.
- **Family –** Hesperiidae.
- **Common name** - ***Sahyadri Spotted Flitter,*** referencing the local name for the Western Ghats.
- **Genus** - It is the 15th species in the genus *Zographetus* and the 5th recorded in India.
    - It belongs to the Zographetus satwa species group.
- **Appearance** - Yellow-ochre scaling on the underside of the hindwing, hairy forewings with a basal hair tuft, and swollen forewing veins in males, which serve as secondary sexual characteristics.



- **Distinct Features -** It is noted for its unique *wing venation* (the pattern of veins on an insect's wing) and secondary sexual traits such as swollen forewing veins in males.
- It also exhibits distinct genital structures in both males and females, key features that distinguish it from similar species such as Zographetus ogygia.
- **Diet -** The larvae feed on Aganope thyrsiflora, a native leguminous vine from the Fabaceae family.
- **Conservation Significance** - The discovery highlights the rich, unexplored biodiversity of the Western Ghats.
- It also emphasizes the need to conserve low-elevation forests that harbour such rare, endemic butterflies.

Reference

The Hindu| Zographetus Mathewi

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