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Ophichthus Kailashchandrai: Snake Eel

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Why in News

A new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal has been discovered by the Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) at Gopalpur in Odisha.

The discovery of the new species suggests that the marine biodiversity of the long Indian coastline is considerably unexplored.



Key Points

- The new marine species has been named as **Ophichthus kailashchandrai** to honour the vast contributions of Dr Kailash Chandra (Director of Zoological Survey of India) to Indian animal taxonomy.
It is the **eighth species** of the **Ophichthus genus** found on the Indian coast.
- It lives at a **depth of around 50 metres** in the sea.
- It is **420 mm to 462 mm in length** and **light brown** in colour, with white fins. The outer surface of their bodies is slimy but they are **not poisonous**.
- Their teeth are moderately elongated, conical and sharp and thus they feed on small fish and crabs.

Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC)

- Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) **at Gopalpur on-sea Odisha** is one of the 16 **regional centres of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)**.
- It was established in 1980 under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- The main objective of the Centre is to conduct surveys, explorations and research on the faunal diversity of estuaries, backwaters, lagoons and mangrove ecosystem of India.

Source: TH