



New Butterfly Species Discovered in Kerala

Why in News?

Recently, a butterfly subspecies (*Caltoris bromus sadasiva*) from the fringes of Akkulam and [Vembanad lakes](#) in Kerala has been discovered.



What are the Key Points Related to the Discovery?

- **About:** It belongs to the skipper butterfly family of Lepidoptera (**moths and butterflies**).
 - It is the **first documented** subspecies of the **Bromus swift** (*Caltoris bromus*) butterfly in the [Western Ghats](#) and Peninsular India.
- **Number of Butterfly Species:** The discovery of *Caltoris bromus sadasiva* brings the **count of butterfly species** in the Western Ghats to **336** and the count of **skipper butterflies to 83**, with the **last skipper butterfly** discovery being almost **75 years ago**.
- **Caltoris:** *Caltoris*, an *Indo-Australian* genus has over 15 species distributed across south-east Asia. *Caltoris bromus*, one of them, has two other subspecies *Caltoris bromus bromus* and *Caltoris bromus yanuca*.

What are the Key Facts about Vembanad Lakes?

- This is the largest lake in Kerala and the **longest Lake in India**.
- Vembanad Lake is **also known as Vembanad Kayal, Vembanad Kol, Punnamada Lake** (in Kuttanad) and **Kochi Lake** (in Kochi).
- The lake has its **source** in four rivers, **Meenachil, Achankovil, Pampa and Manimala**.
- It is **separated** from the **Arabian Sea** by a narrow barrier island and is a popular backwater stretch in Kerala.
- In 2002, it was **included in** the list of wetlands of international importance, as defined by the **Ramsar Convention**.
 - It is the **second-largest Ramsar site in India** only after the [Sundarbans](#) in West Bengal.



UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. Recently, for the first time in our country, which of the following States has declared a particular butterfly as State Butterfly? (2016)

- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
- (b) Himachal Pradesh
- (c) Karnataka
- (d) Maharashtra

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- Maharashtra became the first State in the country to have a 'State Butterfly'. It declared the Blue Mormon (*Papilio polymnestor*) as the State Butterfly.

- It is the second largest butterfly in India after the *Troides minos* commonly known as the Southern Birdwing.
- It is found only in Sri Lanka, Western Ghats of Maharashtra, South India and coastal belts of the country.
- It has velvet and black wings with bright blue spots. **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

Q2. In which of the following regions of India are you most likely to come across the 'Great Indian Hornbill' in its natural habitat? (2016)

- (a) Sand deserts of northwest India
- (b) Higher Himalayas of Jammu and Kashmir
- (c) Salt marshes of western Gujarat
- (d) Western Ghats

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- Great Indian Hornbills are large and wide-ranging birds and most species are dependent on tropical forest habitats that contain large and tall trees.
- India has nine Hornbill species, of which four are found in the Western Ghats – Indian Grey Hornbill (endemic to India), Malabar Grey Hornbill (endemic to the Western Ghats), Malabar Pied Hornbill (endemic to India and Sri Lanka) and endangered Great Indian Hornbill.
- India also has one species that has one of the smallest ranges of any Hornbill – the Narcondam Hornbill, found only on the island of Narcondam in Andaman Sea. **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer**

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