

Two new earthworms are found in Kerala

Scientists have discovered two new species of primeval earthworms in the Western Ghats in Kerala.

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Scientists have discovered two new species of primeval earthworms in the Western Ghats in Kerala.

Specifically, researchers at Mahatma Gandhi University in Kerala and Shoolini University in Himachal Pradesh named the new earthworm *Drawida polydiverticulata* and *Drawida thomasi*.

For *Drawida polydiverticulata* worms, this species has many lobes with the same limb located in front of the body.

The species is commonly found in shola, protected areas in Munnar region, including Eravikulam National Park, Pampadun Shola National Park and Chinnar Wildlife Reserve, the researchers said.



The second earthworm named *Drawida thomasi* was collected at Kozhippara Waterfall near Kakkadampoyil, on the boundary between Malappuram and Kozhikode.

In addition to the new worms belonging to the recently discovered genus *Moniligastridae*, the scientists also reported the occurrence of five new species of the same worms but have not been officially recognized from the state.

So far, 73 species of worms belonging to the genus *Drawida* have been confirmed to live in the Indian subcontinent, the researchers said.

However, the largest concentration is 43 species found in the Western Ghats that are important habitats mainly in Kerala, they said.

Before this study was published in ZooKeys, there were sixteen species of the genus Drawida known from the state with 10 unique species.

The current discovery of these two new species of worms and the last five newly discovered species contributes to enriching the species of the genus Drawida in the state.

Currently, there are about 200 species of worms belonging to the genus Drawida. Their habitat spread throughout India in the Indochina region to Southeast Asia to the North of Japan.

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