



Wayanad sanctuary yields a new spider

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Team from CATE spots a spider taxonomically related to an Australian species

- A new species of spider has been discovered from the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, a major biodiversity hotspot in the State.
- The new species, Cocalus lacinia, spotted in the Kurichiad forest range of the sanctuary, is taxonomically related to an Australian species, described by arachnologist Fred Wanless in 1981.
- A biodiversity investigation team, based at the Centre for Animal Taxonomy and Ecology (CATE), Christ College, Irinjalakuda, spotted the new species.

‘United biosphere’

- The nocturnal spider hides in the crevices of teak plants during day, and hunts at night for small insects.
- This discovery of a new species of spider from India and the presence of its close relative from Australia supports the theory that millions of years ago the biosphere was united and the present continents were formed by splitting a single big continent named Pangea.
- Investigations are on with the help of genetic samples from the Australian species and Indian species to get more evidence for the theory of supercontinents.
- It may give more information on plate tectonics and the evolution of modern spiders.

The Hindu