

1. Moray eel

Why in News?

- Recently, a new species of Moray eel is discovered off the Cuddalore coast (Tamil Nadu) and has been named after the state as *Gymnothorax tamilnaduensis*.

Highlights

- This is the first ever record of this genus, *Pyothorax*, collected through an exploration survey conducted along the coastal waters of Cuddalore.
- 4 specimens (total length 272-487 mm) were collected, and the species is notably different from other species of the genus *Gymnothorax*.
- The distinction point is a series of lines of small dark spots present on the head and a single line of black spots on the midline of the body.
- The name of the species has been registered in ZooBank, the online registration system for the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN).
- Moray Eels occur in all tropical and subtropical seas, they live in shallow water among reefs and rocks.
- They are known for two types of jaws: one is regular (oral) jaws with big teeth and the second jaw is called the pharyngeal jaw (which drags prey inside the eels stomach).
- Their IUCN red list status is Least Concern (LC).
- Including the newly discovered species, 29 species of *Gymnothorax* have been documented in Indian waters so far.