

Purple Frog

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A special fund to save Purple Frog, a 'living fossil', in the Western Ghats.



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About Purple Frog:

- The purple frog (**Nasikabatrachus sahyadrensis**) is a **species of amphibian** that is native to the **Western Ghats in India**.
- It is also known as the **Mahabali frog**.
- It is believed to have **co-existed with dinosaurs**, the Purple Frog is often dubbed as a 'living fossil', as it has similarities to the **Sooglossidae family of frogs in Seychelles**, supporting the **Gondwana landmass hypothesis**.
- It's considered one of the **rarest frog species** and a "**once in a century find**" by bio-geographers worldwide.
- **Diet:** Adult purple frogs eat small invertebrates, **primarily termites**.

Habitat:

- It is endemic to **Kerala and Tamil Nadu States** of the Western Ghats mountains.
- The **Anamalai hills** near Coimbatore is one of the prime habitats of the Purple Frog in Tamil Nadu, while they occur in higher numbers in the **Western Ghat mountains in Kerala**.
- The purple frog is **underground for most of the year**, except for 2-3 weeks during the monsoon when it comes out to mate.

Characteristics:

- It is a rare frog having a triangular shape **bloated body** with **small eyes, pointed snout and stout limbs**.
- Its small eyes indicate that it **doesn't need much sight**.
- The **frog's triangular shape** helps it navigate the damp earth of its forest homes.

Two types in Tamil Nadu:

- Tamil Nadu is home to **two types of Purple Frog**: *Nasikabatrachus sahyadrensis* and ***Nasikabatrachus bhupathi***.
- The **discovery of *N. bhupathi***, a new species of frog, was made by scientists from the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad, in the **eastern slopes of the Western Ghats** near the Srivilliputhur Grizzled Giant Squirrel Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu in 2017.
- The frog was named after **Indian herpetologist S. Bhupathy**.
- The first frog, described by S.D. Biju and Franky Bossyut in Idukki district of Kerala in 2003, is another notable species.

Major Threats and Conservation:

- **Habitat loss**, road networks, and climate change pose significant threats.
- **Rain-triggered mating process vulnerable to climate change.**
- Pesticide use in plantation areas identified as a potential threat.
- **Conservations status: Near Threatened (IUCN) and Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act.**

About Tamil Nadu Endangered Species Conservation Fund (TNESCF):

- Announced in budget 2024, it marks a significant step towards the **preservation of lesser-known and endangered species.**
- Purple Frog, pangolin, otter, Nilgiri marten, slender loris, lion-tailed macaque, and dugong among the species included.
- Emphasis on the conservation of lesser-known species **often overlooked in traditional wildlife conservation programs.**