

TWO NEW SPECIES OF ANTS DISCOVERED FROM KERALA AND TAMIL NADU

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Biodiversity, Ecology, and Wildlife Related Issues

Ooceraea decamera (top) and *Ooceraea joshii*. Credit: Zookeys [Bharti H. et al. 2021]

Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in Kerala and Tamil Nadu by a team of scientists, the Department of Science and Technology said on Saturday.

One of the two species found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala has been named *Ooceraea Joshii* in honour of professor Amitabh Joshi — a distinguished evolutionary biologist from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR). The other named *Ooceraea decamera* (*decamera* refers to the ten-segmented antennal count) was discovered from Alagarkoil in Madurai.

"The species of the ant genus *Ooceraea* found in Kerala and Tamil Nadu add to the diversity of this rare genus. They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments," the DST said. [The discovery has been published](#) in the journal *ZooKeys*.

The genus is currently represented by 14 species of which eight possess nine-segmented antennae, while five possess 11-segmented antennae and one species has recently been reported with eight-segmented antennae.

In India, the genus was so far represented by two species with nine and 11-segmented antennae respectively. "The newly discovered ant species with 10-segmented antennae discovered, establish an old world lineage that contains a species emerging as the only model organism among the ant subfamily," the statement added.

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Sexual cannibalism — when the female of a species consumes the male during or after mating — is also known among spiders and scorpions

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