

NEW SPECIES OF SHREW DISCOVERED IN ANDAMANS' NARCONDAM ISLAND

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New species of shrew *Crocidura narcondamica* discovered from Narcondam island | Photo Credit: [Special Arrangement](#)

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new species of insectivorous mammal, a white-toothed shrew, from Narcondam Island of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands.

The species *Crocidura narcondamica* is a new addition to the list of mammals found in the country. Shrews are small and mouse-like mammals, and they live in sub-leaf stratum in the forests. Insects are the primary diet of these animals.

“This is the first discovery of a shrew from this volcanic island (Narcondam Island) and it increases the number of White-toothed shrew (genus *Crocidura*) species in India from 11 to 12,” said Chandrakasan Sivaperuman, Scientist and Officer-in-Charge, at ZSI, Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre.

The new species is of medium size (head and body lengths) and has a distinct external morphology with darker grey dense fur with a thick, darker tail compared to other species of the genus, Dr. Sivaperuman added. He also said craniodental characters of the species such as braincase was rounded and elevated with weak lambdoidal ridges makes the species distinct in comparison to other close congeners.

The [details of the discovery have been published in journal *Scientific Reports*](#), a publication by the Nature group in an article titled ‘*Discovery of new mammal species (Soricidae: Eulipotyphla) from Narcondam volcanic Island, India*’

“With this discovery the number of mammals found in the country have increased from 429 to 430. This discovery is based on both osteological and DNA molecular studies of the specimen,” Kailash Chandra, former director and one of the authors of the publication, told *The Hindu*.

The other authors behind the publication who contributed to the discovery are Manokaran Kamalakannan, from Osteology Section of the ZSI, Chinnadurai Venkatraman, Scientist from the Mammal and Osteology Section of the ZSI, Shantanu Kundu Centre for DNA Taxonomy, the ZSI, and Gokulakrishnan, Research Associate at the ZSI.

The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change also took note of the important taxonomical finding through a series of tweets. “The new white-toothed shrew species is named after the type locality, Narcondam Island regarded as a volcanic island situated in the Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago, India: Narcondam Shrew *Crocidura narcondamica*,” the Ministry tweeted from its official handle.

The discovery of a new insectivorous mammal comes after 43 years. Prior to this, scientists from the ZSI had discovered *Crocidura jenkinsi* on the South Andaman Island in 1978.

The discovery comes from one of most remote and uninhabited islands, Narcondam island, of the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago. Narcondam Island is located about 130 km east of North

Andaman, and about 446 km of the west coast of Myanmar. The isolated island covers an area of 6.8 km² and the highest peak (volcanic cone) is 710 m above sea level; however, the base lies approximately 1,500 m beneath the sea. This thickly vegetated island is bordered by cliffs on the southern side and crested by three peaks is part of a volcanic arc that continues northward from Sumatra to Myanmar.

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