



ZOOLOGICA

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PISODONOPHIS KALINGA - NEWLY DISCOVERED EEL SPECIES

The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) recently made an exciting discovery in the waters of Odisha's Ganjam district. Scientists from ZSI identified a previously unknown species of eel, which has been named as *Pisodonophis kalinga*. *Pisodonophis kalinga* belongs to the family Ophichthidae and the order Anguilliformes. These classifications provide valuable insights into the evolutionary lineage and characteristics of this newly discovered eel species. The species of eel was found in the Palur canal, situated in Odisha's Ganjam district. This area is renowned for its diverse aquatic ecosystems. In particular, the eels were spotted in the Chilika lagoon, which holds the distinction of being Asia's largest brackish water lagoon. The collaborative efforts between ZSI, Berhampur University, and Ravenshaw University played a crucial role in this discovery. The teams worked together to document and study the unique eel species.



PISODONOPHIS KALINGA (held by the team of discoverers)

BLACK TIGER SAFARI TO BE IN SIMLIPAL TIGER RESERVE

The Odisha government has unveiled plans for the establishment of the world's first 'black tiger safari' near the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj. This visionary project aims to provide tourists and visitors with a rare glimpse of the melanistic tigers, commonly known as black tigers, spotted at the Similipal National Park. The chosen site,



PANTHERA TIGRIS (BLACK TIGER)

approximately 15 km from the reserve, mirrors the landscape of Similipal, providing a suitable environment for these rare creatures. Melanin tigers, characterized by a captivating dark stripe pattern set against a backdrop of white or golden fur, have become a recent attraction in the Similipal region. This safari would be the only place in the world to witness such a unique species. The safari site, near Baripada and spanning 200 hectares, will be located adjacent to National Highway 18. Out of this area, 100 hectares will be dedicated to the display zone, while the remaining space will be utilized for essential infrastructure, including veterinary care facilities, a rescue center, staff amenities, and visitor services.



SIMILIPAL TIGER RESERVE

TWO NEW SPECIES OF JUMPING SPIDERS DISCOVERED

Two new species of jumping spiders have been discovered by researchers at the Zoological Survey of India. These spiders are similar to other members of the genus *Phintella*, which typically inhabit under leaves and barks of shrubs and grasses. Their discovery is a major contribution to arachnology, a branch of science that deals with the study of arachnids, which includes spiders, scorpions, and pseudoscorpions. Prior to the discovery of these latest species of



PHINTELLA DHRITIAE

jumping spiders, there were already 12 identified species of *Phintella* that were acknowledged in India. One of the new species of jumping spiders discovered by the Zoological Survey of India has been named *Phintella dhritiae* in honour of Dr. Dhriti Banerjee, who became the first female director of the ZSI in August 2021. The other species, *Phintella platnicki*, has been named after Dr. Norman Platnick, who made significant contributions to the study of arachnology before his passing. *P.dhritiae* was discovered in the Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka, while *P.platnicki* was found in the Salem district of Tamil Nadu.



PHINTELLA PLATNICKI

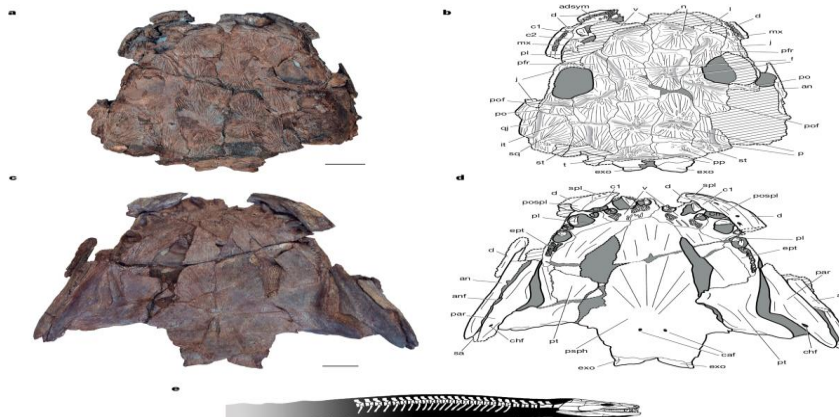
GAIASIA JENNYAE- THE GIANT SALAMANDER OF ICE AGE

Gaiasia jennyae, giant salamander dated to 280 million years ago, is supposed to be the top most predator of ice age. It lived 40 million years before the first dinosaurs, and it was the top predator



PROPOSED STRUCTURE OF *GAIASIA JENNYAE*

in its ecosystem. *Gaiasia jennyae* was considerably larger than a person, and it thrived near the bottom of swamps and lakes or most probably stretches of ice and glaciers. It has a big, flat, toilet seat-shaped head with a large skull, which allows it to open its mouth and suck in prey. It has huge interlocking fangs which enables the whole front of the mouth to act like teeth and engulf prey. The fossil is named for the Gai-as Formation in Namibia where it was found, and for Jenny Clack, a paleontologist who specialized in the evolution of early tetrapods. This species belongs to stem tetrapods which are the four-limbed vertebrates that evolved from lobe-finned fishes and gave rise to amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals.



SKULL OF *GAIASIA JENNYAE*