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ENVIRONMENT

Big role for small national park in saving threatened butterflies



Shiv Sahay Singh

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One of the smallest national parks records one-fifth of the country's species

Gorumara National Park, one of the smallest national parks in India, has turned out to be a safe haven for butterflies as evident by recent studies that have recorded more than 330 species of butterflies in the park.


There are about 600 known species of butterflies in West Bengal and about 1,500 in India. Gorumara alone accounts for more than half of the species found in the State and about one-fifth found in the country.

The park, located in the State's Jalpaiguri district, covers an area of only 80 sq. km., and has recorded at least four species of butterflies that have never been found in the State before.

Of these, the Bicolour Cupid and Malayan Nawab are placed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Witch and the Branded Young Fly are in Schedule II of the Act. Animals and insects who are most threatened are slotted in Schedule I of the Act.

Among the 330 species, about 50 are placed in the different Schedules of the Act. Four species of butterflies belonging to Schedule I, 39 species in Scheduled II and seven species categorized in Scheduled IV can be found in the park.

"About 314 of the butterflies were recorded initially as part of an inventory building exercise and published in the form of a book. After the publication about 15 more species have been found," Sumita Ghatak, Divisional Forest Officer, Wildlife



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huge collection of lesser-known but interesting species of butterflies,” Arjan Basu Roy, a representatives of Nature-Mates said.

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