

Dancing frogs

The Western Ghats of India are one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots, housing a wide range of flora and fauna. One of the fascinating groups of creatures found in this region is the Micrixalus frogs, which belong to the family Micrixalidae. These frogs are endemic to the Western Ghats and are known for their unique features and important role in the ecosystem.

Characteristics	Description
Name	Micrixalus
Scientific Name	Micrixalus species
Colour	Various colours including brown, green, and yellow
Habitat	Forest streams, leaf litter, and moist rocks
Indian states where it’s found	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra
IUCN status	Varies by species, ranging from Least Concern to Critically Endangered

Features

The Micrixalus frogs are small-sized, with a length of around 20-40mm. These frogs are characterized by their bright colors, which range from green, yellow, and brown to black. Their skin is often covered in warts or granules, and they have a bumpy appearance. One of the unique features of these frogs is their ability to communicate through a series of calls and whistles.

Habitat and food

The Micrixalus frogs are primarily found in the forested areas

of the Western Ghats, including both lowland and highland forests. These frogs prefer to live near streams and wetlands and are mostly active during the night. Their diet consists of small insects and other invertebrates, such as spiders and beetles.

Where is it found in India

The *Micrixalus* frogs are endemic to the Western Ghats of India, which includes the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. These frogs are found in a variety of habitats within the Western Ghats, including evergreen and deciduous forests, grasslands, and agricultural lands.

Why are they called dancing frogs ?

The *Micrixalus* frogs of the Western Ghats of India are often referred to as “dancing frogs” due to their unique behavior during the breeding season. Male frogs of this genus exhibit an unusual mating behavior, where they engage in a form of leg-waving or foot-flagging, which appears to be a courtship display to attract females. The males wave their legs, often in a synchronized manner, while calling to females, which has been compared to a dance. This behavior is why these frogs have been given the nickname “dancing frogs.”

List of some of these frogs

list of *Micrixalus* frogs found in the Western Ghats of India along with their descriptions:

***Micrixalus fuscus*:** This frog is known for its distinctive brown coloration with black markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Micrixalus gadgili: This species is known for its greenish-brown coloration with white markings on its back. It is a relatively large species, measuring about 3-3.5 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra.

Micrixalus kottigeharensis: This species is known for its bright green coloration with black markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Karnataka.

Micrixalus kurichiyari: This species is known for its brown coloration with yellow markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala.

Micrixalus mallani: This frog is known for its bright orange coloration with black markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala.

Micrixalus nudis: This species is known for its brown coloration with white markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Micrixalus sairandhri: This frog is known for its bright green coloration with black markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Micrixalus saxicola: This species is known for its brown coloration with black markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Micrixalus silvaticus: This frog is known for its brown coloration with yellow markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Micrixalus specca: This species is known for its bright green coloration with black markings on its back. It is a relatively small species, measuring about 2.5-3 cm in length. It is found in the Western Ghats of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Importance to ecosystem

The *Micrixalus* frogs play an important role in the ecosystem as both predators and prey. They help to control the populations of insects and other invertebrates, which in turn helps to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. These frogs are also an important food source for predators such as snakes and birds of prey.

In addition, the *Micrixalus* frogs have cultural significance to the local communities living in the Western Ghats. Many of these communities have traditional beliefs and practices related to the frogs, and they are often featured in local folklore and stories.

IUCN status

Several species of *Micrixalus* frogs are listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The loss of their natural habitat due to deforestation and agricultural activities, as well as pollution and climate change, are the main threats facing these frogs. Conservation efforts, such as habitat restoration and protection, are crucial to ensuring the survival of these unique and important creatures.