



OKINAWICIUS TEKDI: SPECIES IN NEWS

- **Species Name:** The newly discovered jumping spider has been named *Okinawicius tekdi*, derived from the Marathi word "tekdi," meaning hill.
- **Significance:** This discovery highlights Baner hill's biodiversity and brings India's jumping spider species count to 326.



Research Details

- **Location and Habitat:** Researchers observed *O. tekdi* on ficus, plumeria, and Morinda trees, which have thick branches and dense foliage, common on Baner hill.
- **Study Timeline:** Field observations were conducted between January and April.
- **Documented Behaviour:** Researchers recorded the spider's habitat preferences and unique morphological features.
- Findings were published in the Journal of Arachnology, an international peer-reviewed journal.

Unique Morphological Features

- **Comparative Analysis:** *O. tekdi* shows significant morphological differentiation from the closely related *O. takarensis* species.
- **Distribution Observations:** The spider has also been spotted at the Ram-Mula confluence area, showing similar habitat preferences.

Importance of Urban Biodiversity

- **Urban Ecosystem Significance:** The discovery underscores the biodiversity richness of urban landscapes, calling for the preservation of green spaces in Pune.
- **Cultural and Environmental Emblem:** *O. tekdi* is seen as a symbol of Baner hill, encouraging the community to appreciate and conserve urban biodiversity.



Conservation Calls

- **Need for Protective Policies:** Researchers emphasize the need for policies to protect urban biodiversity, preventing habitat loss and degradation.
- **Impact of Invasive Species:** The team highlights the importance of planting native tree species, as exotic species could disrupt the spider's natural habitat.

Role of Spiders in Ecosystems

- **Ecological Value:** Spiders like *O. tekdi* play a vital role in maintaining insect diversity, which benefits the ecosystem.
- **Habitat Sensitivity:** Degradation of hills, planting exotic species, and other disturbances could threaten *O. tekdi*'s habitat.

Future Research Plans

- **Further Studies on Ecosystem Role:** The research team plans to conduct more studies on the ecological role and adaptations of *O. tekdi* and other local species.
- **Upcoming Publication:** They aim to publish additional findings to further illuminate the species' impact and adaptation within its ecosystem.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/exciting-discovery-new-jumping-spider-species-found-in-punes-baner-hill/articleshow/114991171.cms>