

Lepidocampa Sikkimensis

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Lepidocampa Sikkimensis Latest News

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) recently discovered a new species of Diplura named *Lepidocampa sikkimensis* in the eastern Himalayas.

About *Lepidocampa Sikkimensis*

- It is a **new species of Diplura** discovered in Ravangla, **Sikkim**.
- **Diplura** are **small, wingless, soil-dwelling arthropods**.
- It represents the **first time** a species within this **primitive hexapod group** has been **described by an Indian research team**.
- While 17 species had been previously documented within the country, all were historically described by foreign researchers.
- **Morphological Distinctiveness:** The species is distinguished by its **unique arrangement of body scales**, specific chaetotaxy (bristle patterns), and specialized appendage structures.

- **Ecological Role:** As primitive, blind hexapods, Diplurans (**two-pronged bristletails**) are fundamental to **soil health**, playing a critical **role in nutrient cycling** and the **maintenance of soil structure**.
- Beyond the description of a new species, the study provides a comprehensive update to Indian soil fauna records:
 - Rediscovery: The team **successfully relocated** a **rare Indian** Diplura subspecies, **Lepidocampa juradii bengalensis**, which had **not been recorded** in nearly **50 years**.
 - **Molecular Breakthrough:** The study provides the **first-ever DNA barcode data globally for an Indian Lepidocampa species**, bridging a significant gap between traditional morphology and modern molecular phylogenetics.

Source: TS

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