Srirangam butterfly park records a rare bushbrown, its 132nd species

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News

Daily Thanthi reported on 21 November 2026 that forest officials had spotted a rare butterfly, 'Karumpulli Pudharsiragan', at the Tropical Butterfly Conservatory at Melur, Srirangam, in Tiruchirappalli district. It is the 132nd butterfly species recorded at the park, which began in 2015 with 38 species and had recorded 131 after more than 60,000 plants were raised. It is a medium-sized butterfly with a wingspan of 40–45 mm, brownish upper wings with eye-like spots along the margins, and colours that change with the season. It is usually found in grassy areas and in moist evergreen forests, especially at the foothills of hills. The paper did not give a scientific name; its English web address calls it a 'black-spotted bush brown'. It is a bushbrown (Mycalesis sp.) – bushbrowns belong to the genus Mycalesis; its scientific species name has not been officially given in reports. The park has also recorded 112 bird species.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Place	Tropical Butterfly Conservatory, Melur, Srirangam (Tiruchi)
New species	Karumpulli Pudharsiragan – park's 132nd species
Identity	A bushbrown (Mycalesis); exact species not officially named

Point	Details
Classification	Family Nymphalidae → subfamily Satyrinae (Browns)
Wingspan	40–45 mm
Park	25 acres; Upper Anaicut reserve forest; opened 2015
Species count	38 in 2015 → 132 now; 112 birds
Tamil Nadu	About 329 butterfly species; about 39% seen at this park

Background

- Butterflies belong to the order Lepidoptera. Nymphalidae, the 'brush-footed' butterflies, is the largest family; its subfamily Satyrinae is known as the 'Browns', marked by brown colours and eye-spots near the wing margins. Bushbrowns (Mycalesis) are highly diverse in South Asia.
- Many bushbrown species have wet-season and dry-season forms that differ mainly in the eye-spots on the underside of the wings, set by the temperature during development (BMC Evolutionary Biology, 2017). Daily Thanthi says this butterfly too has darker wings and clearer spots in the rainy season. One genotype producing different looks with the environment is called 'seasonal polyphenism'.
- A butterfly's antennae end in a club-like swelling, while most moths have slender, tapering antennae. Taste receptors lie mainly on the palps and the feet (tarsi), so butterflies 'taste' with their feet.
- The Srirangam park lies in the Cauvery–Kollidam basin, in the Upper Anaicut reserve forest, over 25 acres under the Tiruchirappalli Forest Division. Built for ₹8.67 crore, it was opened in 2015 by then Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa; a 'Nakshatravanam' with trees for the 27 stars is part of it. About 20.81 lakh people had visited by November 2025 (DT Next).

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu has about 329 butterfly species, and DT Next (Dec 2025) reported that roughly 39% of them are found at the Srirangam park. In 2019 Tamil Nadu declared the Tamil Yeoman its State butterfly.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

Daily Thanthi reported on 21 November 2026 that forest officials had spotted a rare butterfly, 'Karumpulli Pudharsiragan', at the Tropical Butterfly Conservatory at Melur, Srirangam, in Tiruchirappalli district.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Place: Tropical Butterfly Conservatory, Melur, Srirangam (Tiruchi); New species: Karumpulli Pudharsiragan – park's 132nd species; Identity: A bushbrown (Mycalesis); exact species not officially named; Classification: Family Nymphalidae → subfamily Satyrinae (Browns).

What is the background to this news?

Butterflies belong to the order Lepidoptera. Nymphalidae, the 'brush-footed' butterflies, is the largest family; its subfamily Satyrinae is known as the 'Browns', marked by brown colours and eye-spots near the wing margins.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Bushbrown butterflies belong to which subfamily, known as the 'Browns'?

A) Danainae

B) Satyrinae

C) Papilioninae

D) Pierinae

Answer: B – Explanation: Satyrinae – a subfamily of Nymphalidae, marked by brown wings with eye-spots. Danainae are the milkweed butterflies; Pierinae the whites.

2. A butterfly species showing bold eye-spots in the wet season but faint ones in the dry season is an example of what?

A) Seasonal polyphenism

B) Genetic drift

C) Industrial melanism

D) Hybridisation

Answer: A – Explanation: Seasonal polyphenism – one genotype gives different forms with temperature and humidity. Industrial melanism is the peppered-moth example.

3. Which body feature easily tells a butterfly apart from most moths?

A) Six legs

B) Two pairs of wings

C) Compound eyes

D) Club-tipped antennae

Answer: D – Explanation: A butterfly's antenna ends in a club; most moths have slender, tapering or feathery antennae. Six legs, four wings and compound eyes are common to both.

4. The Tropical Butterfly Conservatory at Srirangam lies in which reserve forest?

A) Kalakad

B) Point Calimere

C) Upper Anaicut

D) Anamalai

Answer: C – Explanation: Upper Anaicut reserve forest in the Cauvery–Kollidam basin; Tiruchi Forest Division, 25 acres. Kalakad is in Tirunelveli; Anamalai in Coimbatore.

5. Besides the mouthparts, where are a butterfly's taste receptors mainly located?

A) Wing scales

B) Feet (tarsi)

C) Abdomen

D) Compound eyes

Answer: B – Explanation: The feet (tarsi) – a female 'tastes' a leaf by standing on it to choose the right host plant for her eggs.

Sources: Daily Thanthi, 21 Nov 2026; DT Next, 4 Dec 2025 (park facts: 25 acres, ₹8.67 crore, opened 2015, 131 species, 329 TN species, 39%, 20.81 lakh visitors); Tamil Nadu Forest Department – Tiruchirappalli Forest Division; Butterflies of India – ifoundbutterflies.org (Mycalesis); BMC Evolutionary Biology (2017); Mongabay India (2019, Tamil Yeoman). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.