

12TH NOVEMBER 2025

‘Lucifer’ Bee with Devil-like Horns Found in Australia

Why in News

- Scientists in **Western Australia** have discovered a **new species of wild bee** named *Megachile (Hackeriapis) lucifer* — commonly called the “*Lucifer bee*.”
- It is named for its **devil-like horn structures** on the female bee’s face.
- Discovery announced by **Curtin University**, Australia, in **November 2025**.



Taxonomic & Biological Details

Feature	Description
Scientific Name	<i>Megachile (Hackeriapis) lucifer</i>
Common Name	Lucifer Bee
Discovered By	Dr. Kit Prendergast, Curtin University
Discovered In	Western Australia (while surveying a critically endangered wildflower)
Genus	<i>Megachile</i> (Leafcutter bees)
Family	Megachilidae
Distinctive Feature	Female bees have <i>horn-like projections</i> on the face
Year of Discovery	2019 (announced in 2025)

Ecological Importance

- Belongs to the group of **leafcutter bees**, known for cutting leaves to **build nests**.
- Plays a **vital role as a pollinator** for wild and flowering plants.
- Discovery highlights **Australia’s rich but underexplored bee diversity**.

Conservation Significance

- Found while surveying a **critically endangered wildflower**, showing the close **link between pollinators and rare plants**.
- Scientist warned that **mining companies rarely survey native bee populations**, leading to the **possible loss of undiscovered species**.
- Stresses the need for **biodiversity mapping and protection of pollinator habitats**.

Environmental Context

- **Nearly all flowering plants** depend on **wild pollinators** like bees for reproduction.
- **Habitat loss, climate change, and industrial activities (like mining)** are major threats to wild bee species globally.
- The discovery reinforces the importance of **pollinator conservation** to maintain ecosystem balance.

UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Question 1. Consider the following statements regarding the recently discovered “*Lucifer Bee*”:

1. It belongs to the genus *Megachile*, commonly known as leafcutter bees.
2. It was discovered in India’s Western Ghats while surveying an endangered orchid species.
3. The species is named *Megachile (Hackeriapis) lucifer* due to the horn-like projections on its face.

Which of the statements given above is/are **correct**?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only

Explanation:

- The *Lucifer bee* was discovered in **Western Australia**, not India.
- It belongs to the genus ***Megachile* (leafcutter bees)**.
- It was named ***Megachile (Hackeriapis) lucifer*** for its *devil-like horns*.

Question 2. With reference to *Megachile (Hackeriapis) lucifer*, recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It plays a significant ecological role as a wild pollinator.

2. It was discovered during a survey of a critically endangered wildflower species.
3. Mining activities pose a threat to its habitat and other native bee species.

Which of the statements given above are **correct**?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) 1 only

Answer: (c) 1, 2 and 3