

Culicoides

Why in News?

Recently, researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have identified 23 species of blood-sucking flies in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- **Culicoides** - They are ***tiny insects*** similar in appearance to flies.
- They are *more closely related to mosquitoes* in their feeding habits.
- They are called Midges and are locally called Bhusi Files in Andaman and Nicobar.
- **Taxonomy**
 - **Scientific name** - Culicoides.
 - **Order** - Diptera, the smallest haematophagous member.

Haematophagous means *especially an insect or tick feeding on blood.*



- **Distribution** - Africa, North and South America and Europe.
 - **India** - Includes *93 valid species*, recognized as potential vectors of important pathogens of animal health.
 - 13 new species recorded for the 1st time in India, in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- **Feeds on** - The blood of *livestock* such as sheep, goats, cattle and wild

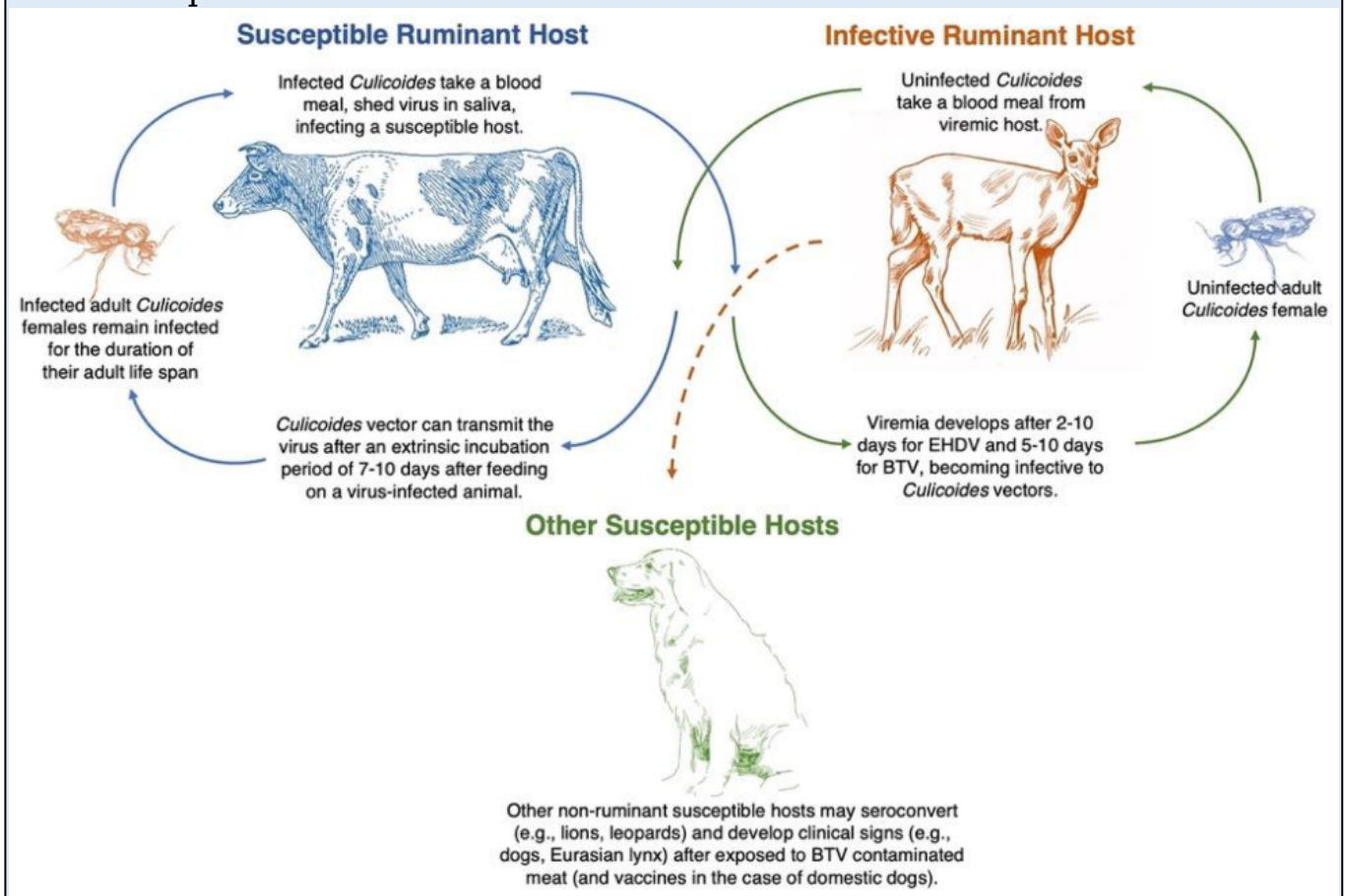
animals like deer.

- **Transmitting agents** - 5 of the species are known to transmit the **Bluetongue (BT) disease**.

A study conducted in 2022 and 2023, revealed that 17 of the 23 species identified are known to bite humans, although no human disease transmission has been reported.

Bluetongue (BT)

- It is an infectious, non-contagious, vector-borne viral disease.
- **Symptoms** - Blue discolouration of the tongue, fever, facial swelling and excessive salivation.
- **Causes** - It can potentially lead to death in affected animals.
- It poses a significant threat to livestock farming and the agricultural economy.
- It also impacts humans.



Reference

[The Hindu| 23 species recorded in Andaman & Nicobar Islands](#)



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