Syllabus subtopic: Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

Prelims and Mains focus: About the new species of the eel; about ZSI and its functions

News: A new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal has been discovered and documented this month (January) by the Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) at Gopalpur-on-sea in Odisha.

About the new species

- This new marine species has been named Ophichthus kailashchandrai to honour the vast contributions of Dr. Kailash Chandra, Director of ZSI, to Indian animal taxonomy.

- Ophichthus kailashchandrai is the eighth species of the Ophichthus genus found on the Indian coast.

- It is the fifth new species discovered by the Gopalpur ZSI in the last two years.

- In 2019, two new species of marine eel, Gymnothorax andamanensesis and Gymnothorax smithi were been discovered by this ZSI centre.

About Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)

- It is a subordinate organization of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India.
- It was established in 1916 as a premier Indian organisation in zoological research and studies to promote the survey, exploration and research of the fauna in the country.
- The headquarters is at Kolkata.
The main activities of the ZSI are:

- Study of the fauna of states
- Fauna of conservation areas
- Fauna of important ecosystems
- Status survey of endangered species
- Fauna of India and
- Ecological Studies & Environmental impact assessments.