

Melanochlamys droupadi

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Key Facts

Melanochlamys droupadi

The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) unveils a new marine species of **head-shield sea slug** discovered off the **West Bengal and Odisha coast**.



[ref- independent]

About *Melanochlamys droupadi*:

- The species is named after the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, and belongs to the **Melanochlamys** genus.

Distinctive Features:

- **Short, blunt, cylindrical body.**
- **Smooth dorsal surface** with two **dorsal shields** named the **anterior cephalic** and **posterior shield**.
- **Hermaphroditic nature.**
 - Hermaphroditism is a condition where an organism has **both male and female reproductive organs** and can perform both parts of reproduction.
- Maximum length up to 7 mm.
- Brownish black with a unique **ruby red spot** in the hind end.
- **Shell inside the body.**

Habitat and Behavior:

- Typically found in the **intertidal zone**, leaving **crawl marks on sandy beaches**.
- **Reproduction period** observed between November and January.

Distribution:

- The **Melanochlamys** genus is generally present in the **temperate regions of the Indo-Pacific**

Oceanic realm.

- Noteworthy **tropical species** include **Melanochlamys papillata** from the Gulf of **Thailand**, **Melanochlamys Bengalensis** (from West Bengal and Odisha coast), and the newly discovered **Melanochlamys Droupadi**.

Scientific Insights:

- Live *Melanochlamys Droupadi* **secretes transparent mucus**, forming a protective sheath against sand grains.
- Unique behavior of **crawling beneath smooth sand**, creating a moving capsule where the body is rarely visible.