The Indian bullfrog, a recent arrival from the mainland, is steadily occupying the islands' ecosystems and threatening the local economy.

Mohit M. Rao reports on the bizarre man-bullfrog conflict brewing in the islands.

Since then, at least 53 villages have reported killing bullfrogs in the islands, a situation that has led to the formation of a “bullfrog vigilante” group.

The Andaman bullfrog is just among the scores of villages in the Andamans where bullfrogs had been seen in the last two years. As early as 2001, the Andaman and Nicobar Wildlife Department had recorded the Andaman bullfrog in the islands. Now it is feared that the bullfrog is spreading rapidly through the islands and could pose a threat to the local ecosystem.

In the Andamans, it can rain for anywhere from 25 to 40 days in May. This is the signal for the bullfrogs to come into action. The temperature rises and the islands are transformed into a verdant, lush paradise. The bullfrogs emerge from their muddy habitats, ready to mate and lay eggs. The bullfrog’s life cycle is completed within a few hours, and the eggs are laid in ponds. The eggs hatch after a few days, and the tadpoles emerge to feed on the island’s aquatic plants. The tadpoles grow into adult bullfrogs, which then mate and lay eggs in the same pond. This cycle continues year after year, with the bullfrogs virtually invisible to the human eye.

The bullfrog is a large amphibian, growing to about 30 cm in length. It is a voracious predator, preying on a wide range of aquatic animals, including fish, crabs, and snails. The bullfrog is also an important source of food for the local community. The Andaman and Nicobar Wildlife Department has reported that the bullfrog is one of the most important species in the islands’ ecosystems. It is a keystone species, playing a crucial role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. The bullfrog has also been found to be a significant food source for the local community, who harvest it for consumption.

The bullfrog’s invasion has also led to the displacement of the local species. The Andaman bullfrog, which is native to the islands, is smaller in size and has a different coloration than the Indian bullfrog. The bullfrog’s larger size and stronger musculature give it a distinct advantage over the Andaman bullfrog, making it difficult for the local species to compete.

The invasion of the Indian bullfrog has also led to the spread of other invasive species, including the Giant African Snail, which carries a deadly disease called Planorbid Mucor. The bullfrog’s presence has also led to a decrease in the population of the Andaman bullfrog, which is considered an endangered species.

The Andaman and Nicobar Wildlife Department has launched a campaign to control the bullfrog population, including the use of chemicals and the establishment of Bullfrog Watch Committees. The department has also launched an e-newsletter to keep the local community informed about the bullfrog problem.

The bullfrog’s invasion is a clear example of the impact of invasive species on the local ecosystem. It highlights the importance of conservation efforts to protect the unique biodiversity of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Andaman bullfrog’s survival is at stake, and the local community must take action to protect this keystone species.

In conclusion, the invasion of the Indian bullfrog is a threat to the unique biodiversity of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Andaman and Nicobar Wildlife Department is working to control the bullfrog population, but the situation requires immediate action to protect the local ecosystem and the Andaman bullfrog.

**Sources:**
- Andaman and Nicobar Wildlife Department.
- Tarun Coomar, “The Andaman bullfrog: A new threat to the Andamans’ biodiversity.”