

STRIPED NARROW-HEADED SNAKE

Diet of the endemic *Xylophis perroteti* in Nilgiris



IUCN Red List:

Global – LC
(Srinivasulu et al.
2014)



Xylophis perroteti feedings
on earthworm

Reptilia
[Class of Reptiles]

Squamata
[Order of Scaled reptiles]

Xenodermatidae
[Family of wood snakes
or narrow-headed
snakes]

Xylophis perroteti
[Striped Narrow-headed
Snake]

Species described
by Dumeril, Bibron &
Dumeril in 1854

The caenophidian snake genus *Xylophis* Beddome, 1878 is endemic to the southern Western Ghats region of peninsular India (Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004). Within the genus *Xylophis*, three species are currently recognized *Xylophis perroteti* (Dumeril, Bibron & Dumeril, 1854), *Xylophis stenorhynchus* (Gunther, 1875) and *Xylophis captaini* (Gower & Winkler, 2007). Among this genus, the striped narrow-headed snake *X. perroteti* have restricted distribution in Nilgiris and adjacent regions (Santhoshkumar & Kannan 2016). The species can be identified based on the field guide (Whitaker & Captain 2004). A few studies have been conducted on general biology of this species (Wall 1919 & 1923; Wallach 1998; Santhoshkumar & Kannan 2016). Almost nothing is known about the diet of



X. perroteti. We report feeding habit of *X. perroteti* based on our observation on gut content of road killed specimens and a live observation in Emerald, Nilgiris.

During, 25 May 2015 at 07:35hr, at Emerald area (11°19'25.60"N & 76°37'15.03"E), Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, we observed *X. perroteti* (Total length 580mm) feeding on an live earthworm, the entire prey was ingested in 35:05 minutes. We also studied gut content of road killed specimens of *X. perroteti* from Avalanche (11°18'56.85"N & 76°37'30.56"E), Emerald (11°19'24.17"N, 76°37'37.40"E) and Ithalar (11°20'41.62"N & 76°38'24.34"E). We found that majority of the food item of the snake species consists of earthworm of the genus Drawida (Chandran et al. 2012). Our field observations conform to earlier observation by Wall (1919, 1923). However, long term study is warranted to gather further knowledge on the feeding ecology of *X. perroteti* in Nilgiris.

Global Distribution :
Endemic to southern
Western Ghats (Nilgiris
and adjacent regions)

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