

STOUT SAND SNAKE

Note on occurrence of Stout Sand Snake *Psammophis longifrons* Boulenger 1896 from Surat and Bharuch District, Gujarat



IUCN Red List:
Least Concern
(Srinivasulu et al.
2013)

Psammophis longifrons from Ankleshwar, Bharuch District

Reptilia
[Class of Reptiles]

Squamata
[Order of Scaled
Reptiles]

Psammophiidae
[Family of Psammophis
genus]

Psammophis longifrons
[Stout Sand Snake]

Species described by
Boulenger in 1890

India is having four species of reptiles belonging to genus *Psammophis* viz., , *Psammophis leithii* (Gunther, 1869), *Psammophis condanurus* (Merren, 1820), *Psammophis longifrons* (Boulenger 1896) and *Psammophis schokri* (Forsk. 1775). Out of this four species *P. longifrons* is known from very few localities (Visvanathan et al. 2017). Stout Sand Snake *P. longifrons* was described by Boulenger in 1896. These snakes have smooth scales, elongated head, and large eyes with round pupil. The head is broader than neck. Dorsal scales of this snakes are pale brown with black edges. While the ventral scales are white or cream.

In 2016 volunteers of Nature Club Surat (NGO working on wildlife rescue, rehabilitation & conservation) reported six specimens (Table 1) of Stout Sand Snake *Psammophis longifrons* from various localities of Surat and Bharuch. Four specimens were observed during day time between 10.00 to 16.00 hrs and



two specimens were observed in night time at 21.08 & 22.40 hrs, from various habitats. Two specimens were observed during field survey while rest of them were rescued. All snakes were released at the same place from where they were found after taking morphometric data and photographs (Table 2). Most of the specimens were observed defensive while rescue and biting the rescuer continuously. Specimens mentioned below were identified on the basis of available literature. (Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004).

Global Distribution:
Native: India (Daman, Gujarat, Maharashtra (Srinivasulu et al. 2013))

They are known to live in various habitat like agricultural field, coastal plain, scrub land, dry arid zone, human habitation etc. (indiansnakes.org). Recently tail autotomy behaviour was observed in this species (Vyas & Patel 2013). This snake comes under Schedule IV of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 & at lower risk to Near Threatened by IUCN (Molur & Walker, 1998).

As per current records it is reported from Thane, Damanganga, Bulsar, Panch Mahal (Smith, 1943); Kamrej of Surat District (Vyas, 1987); Thane, Damanganga, Nagpur, Valsad, Panchmahals (Whitaker & Captain, 2004); unknown locality from Madhya Pradesh (Chandra & Gajbe, 2005); Amravati & Melghat, Maharashtra (Nande & Deshmukh, 2007); Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh (Ingle, 2009); Buldhana, Maharashtra (Joshi, 2011); Hoshangabad (Kumbhar et al., 2012); Chikhli of Navsari District, Valsad (Vyas & Patel, 2013); Shikaripur of Shimoga District (Premkumar & Sharma, 2017); & *Boduppal & Hayathnagar, Telangana* (Visavanthan et al., 2017).

Table 1: Details of Stout Sand Snake *Psammophis longifrons* reported from Surat & Bharuch District

No.	Date	Location	Coordinates	Rescued by/ Observed by	Dominant Habitat	Remarks	Specimen examined
1	6 July, 2016	Kadakhia College, Ankleshwar, Bharuch	21°38'8.71"N 72°58'51.30"E	Hardipsinh Vansia	Human habitation	Rescued & Released	Yes
2	11 August, 2016	Asharma, Surat	21°27'22.81"N 73°3'54.25"E	Kaushal Mody	Scrub land	Snake in moulting stage found on high vegetation in night	No
3	27 August, 2016	Asharma, Surat	21°27'27.74"N 73°3'51.47"E	Virdattsinh Desai	Fallow field	Snake crossing road during night	No
4	15 September, 2016	Ankleshwar, Bharuch	21°37'34.75"N 73°0'53.42"E	Tarun Patel	Human habitation	Rescued & Released	Yes
5	19 September, 2016	Sai Vatika, Ankleshwar, Bharuch	21°35'27.97"N 73°2'3.80"E	Hardipsinh Vansia	Human habitation	Rescued & Released	Yes
6	18 November, 2016	Nilkanthnagar, Valia, Bharuh	21°34'31.53"N 73°9'8.27"E	Hardipsinh Vansia	Human habitation	Rescued & Released	Yes



Table 2: Scales & measurement (in cm) detail of 4 specimens of the Stout Sand Snake *Psammophis longifrons*

	Specimen 1	Specimen 4	Specimen 5	Specimen 6
Body Length =SVL+TL	60.6+17.3= 77.9	73+21.5 = 94.5	90.1+42.6=132.7	82.5+27.7=110.2
Supra labials (touching eye)	8 (4 th & 5 th)	8 (4 th & 5 th)	8 (4 th & 5 th)	8 (4 th & 5 th)
Preocular	1	1	1	1
Postocular	2	2	2	2
Temporals	2+3	2+3	2+3	2+3
Loreal	1 (long)	1 (long)	1 (long)	1 (long)
Lower Labials	10	9	9	9
Scale rows	17:17:13	17:17:13	17:17:13	17:17:13
Ventrals	166	163	168	166
Caudals (divided)	84*	87*	80*	91*
Anals	2	2	2	2
Sex	Not determined	Not determined	Not determined	Not determined

* Number of scales not counted accurately present on end/tip of tail because of small in size, SVL, snout to vent length; TL, total body length (snout to tip of tail length).

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