

Largest record of Bibron's Coral Snake (*Calliophis bibroni* Jan, 1858) in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, India



Road kill adult male *Calliophis bibroni* in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. © J. Dalson Mani.

The Bibron's Coral Snake *Calliophis bibroni* Jan 1858 is a front-fanged venomous snake endemic to the Western Ghats of southern India (Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004). It is terrestrial in habit, inhabiting moist deciduous forests within an altitude range of 900–1000 m. The IUCN status of this species is Least Concern in view of its wide distribution and presumed large overall population (Srinivasulu et al. 2011).

Boulenger (1896) described scale count of four specimens collected by Beddome. Later on Wall (1919) reported on young specimen of this species and mentioned it as a rare species. Smith (1943) stated that the distribution range was known from

the Western Ghats as far north as Coorg. Gowrishankar and Ganesh (2009) reported that the range-extension of this species from Central Western Ghats. Recent new locality records from the Anamalai Hills and Agastiyar Hills have considerably extended the previously known range of this species (Deepak et al. 2010). Samson et al (2014) recorded the rediscovery of this species after 139 years from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, South India.

This note reports the largest specimen of Bibron's Coral Snake recorded till date. On 16th September 2016, we found a road killed adult male snake in Kargudi at NH 67 in the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (11.573°N & 76.561°E) at an elevation of

Table 1. Morphologic and metric details of the current record and the previous largest record (Deepak et al. 2010) of *Calliophis bibroni*.

Variables	Deepak et al. 2010 (Male)	Present Specimen (Male)
Snout to vent length (mm)	782	815
Total Length (mm)	880	913
Ventrals	229	227
Subcaudals	37	37
Dark Body Bands	40	38
Dark Tail Bands	9	9
Sex	Male	Male
Colour	Dark Purple	Dark Purple

894 m. Its measurements and scale details are provided in Table 1. According to Smith (1943) and Whitaker & Captain (2004), the snake was identified as Bibron's Coral Snake.

A total of 21 specimens of the species have been recorded from the Western Ghats so far (Deepak et al. 2010). Among these, the largest specimen was recorded at 880cm by Deepak et al (2010) from Anamalai Tiger Reserve. The present record is relatively larger than the earlier record.

Frequent records of the Bibron's Coral snake from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve show a healthy population of the species in the area. More scientific study is needed to predict the ecology of this snake in the region.

References

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