

Eastern Indian Leopard Gecko from the plateau region of West Bengal, India



A juvenile *Eublepharis hardwickii* on leaf litter in mixed vegetation forest floor in Ajodhya Hills, West Bengal. © Supriya Samanta.

The Eastern Indian Leopard Gecko *Eublepharis hardwickii* Gray, 1827 is a nocturnal reptile belonging to the family Eublepharidae. It is a forest dwelling insectivorous species usually found on the leaf litter or crevices of rocks and stones (Ahmed et al. 2021). It has a reddish-brown to dark brown body with cream-coloured markings. The first U-shaped marking is extended to the snout from the nape. Second one is in the middle of the body and there are four to five markings in the tail (Smith 1935). It has a distinct black spot on the thigh (Prakash et al. 2014).

A juvenile Eastern Indian Leopard Gecko was opportunistically sighted once in the Belpahari, Jhargram district, West Bengal on 17 June 2017. Only one adult individual was there on leaf litter inside a sal plantation beside the road. Other two sightings were in Ajodhya Hills, Purulia district, West Bengal on 10 November 2020 and 21 July 2021. Both those instances, the juveniles were found on the leaf litter under mixed vegetation. Photographs were taken with Canon 750D camera with 18-55 lens.

It was described by Gray in 1827 on the basis of specimens from Chittagong, Bangladesh



Juvenile *Eublepharis hardwickii* in its natural habitat in Ajodhya Hills. © Supriya Samanta.

(Smith 1935). But no record can be found after that from Bangladesh. There is only one record from West Bengal. That is from Aushgram, Burdwan district (Chandra et al. 1997). Other records are from Barajamda and Hazaribagh of Jharkhand, Khurda, Jaypore, Similipal Biosphere Reserve and Tikarpada of Odisha, Simhachalam and RV Nagar of Andhra Pradesh & Gariyaband of Chhattisgarh (Singh 1984; Dutta et al. 2009; Mirza et al. 2014; Prakash et al 2014; Ahmed et al. 2021).

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