

Roadkill sightings of Madurai Shieldtail and Palani Mountain Burrowing Snake in Kodaikanal Hills

Kodaikanal is situated on a plateau above the southern escarpment of the upper Palani Hills, an eastward spur of the Western Ghats on the western side of south India. On 29 August 2019, a dead uropeltid snake was sighted and identified as Madurai Shieldtail *Platyplectrurus madurensis* based on the morphological characters given by Smith (1943), Murthy (1990), and Whitaker & Captain (2004).

It was 17.8 cm in length. The next day, another uropeltid snake was sighted and identified as Palni Mountain Burrowing Snake *Teretrurus rhodogaster*. It was 16.2 cm in length. Both the snakes were sighted near

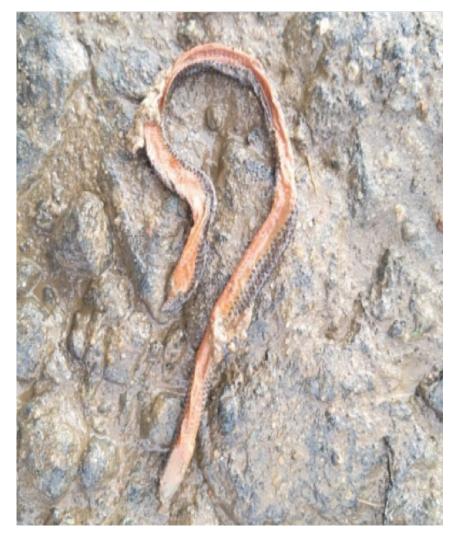




Platyplectrurus madurensis in Kodaikanal Hills, Tamil Nadu, India.







Teretrurus rhodogaster in Kodaikanal Hills, Tamil Nadu, India.

Kurinji Andavar Temple (10.242°N, 77.504°E, 1,963m) at Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, India.

Both the uropeltids were found dead on the road and assumed to have been killed by vehicular traffic.

Teretrurus rhodogaster, listed as Least Concern, is endemic to the Western Ghats with restricted distribution (Smith 1943; Bossuyt et al. 2004; Pyron et al. 2016).

It occurs at elevations of 1,350–1,900 m. *Platyplectrurus madurensis*, listed as Endangered, is also endemic to southern India with restricted distribution (Smith 1943; Das 2002).

As both the uropeltid snakes are known only from a few records and affected by urbanization (Santhoshkumar et al. 2016), any information on its distribution would be useful for assessing their status. Hence these observations are placed here on record.



References

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