



#223
21 June 2022

Occurrences of Calamaria Reed Snake from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve.



Road-killed Calamaria Reed Snake in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India.

The Calamaria Reed Snake *Liopeltis calamaria* was originally described from Sri Lanka (Günther 1858) and subsequently reported from India (Smith 1943). It is a terrestrial, diurnal snake usually preferring dry mixed deciduous habitats near water bodies, and also mostly found underneath rotten logs on the forest floor covered with a thick layer of leaf litter (Amarasinghe et al. 2020). This species is insectivorous, having a preferred

diet of smooth-bodied caterpillars, crickets, grasshoppers, and spiders (Narayanan et al. 2020). It is known to inhabit mainly mountainous tracts including low 300 m (Karunarathna et al. 2004; Karunarathna & Perera 2010; Ganesh et al. 2018), mid 900 m (Chikane & Bhosale 2012) and high elevations 1600–2000 m (Ferguson 1902; Wall 1921; Malhotra & Davis 1991). In India, this species is found in the Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats



and Himalayan regions (Amarasinghe et al. 2020). In this note, we report a road killed Calamaria Reed Snake *Liopeltis calamaria* from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, India.

On 4 December 2021 at 14:30 hours, we photographed an adult road-killed Calamaria Reed Snake in dry deciduous forest (11.579 °N, 76.590 °E) at an elevation of 880 m in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Tamil Nadu, India. We took photographs for further confirmation of this species and the specimen was collected and preserved. The length of the individual was 280 mm. Dorsal scale rows were 15:15:15, ventrals and subcaudals 141 and 68, respectively, preocular 1, postoculars 2, undivided nasal, and the third and fourth of seven supralabials extended to the eye. The collected morphological data were used to compare with available information to confirm the identity (Smith 1943).

Boulenger (1894) first reported Calamaria Reed Snake from Kotagiri area of Nilgiris and Wall (1921) subsequently recorded this species from higher elevation areas of Nilgiris region. Recently Narayanan et al. (2020) rescued the snake from Sholur area in upper Nilgiris. The present record adds one more species of snake to the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve as well as the lower altitudinal record. Further records of this species are highly warranted to understand the distribution pattern and altitudinal preferences of the species in Nilgiris.

References

- Amarasinghe, A.A.T., S. Karunaratna, P.D. Campbell, S.R. Ganesh & G. Vogel (2020).** Taxonomy and distribution of *Liopeltis calamaria* (Günther, 1858) (Reptilia: Colubridae) including redescription of the syntypes. *Taprobanica* 09(01): 39–49.
- Boulenger, G.A. (1894).** *Catalogue of the Snakes in the British Museum (Natural History). Volume II, Containing the Conclusion of the Colubridæ Aglyphæ.* British Museum of Natural History, London, 382 pp.
- Chikane, S. & H. Bhosale (2012).** Reptiles of Kaas, northern Western Ghats, Maharashtra, India, with notes on habitat preferences, abundances and threats. *Sauria* 34(3): 3–15.
- Ferguson, H.S. (1902).** Travancore snakes. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 14(2): 386–387.
- Ganesh, S.R., A. Kalaimani, P. Karthik, N. Baskaran, R. Nagarajan & S.R. Chandramouli (2018).** Herpetofauna of southern Eastern Ghats, India – II; from Western Ghats to Coromandel Coast. *Asian Journal of Conservation Biology* 7(1): 28–45.
- Günther, A.C.L.G. (1858).** *Catalogue of Colubrine snakes of the British Museum.* British Museum (Natural History), London, 281 pp.
- Karunaratna, D.M.S.S., D.H.P.U. De Silva, H.T.A.P. Pelris, M.D.C. Asela, U.T.I. Abewardena, A.A.D.A. Udayakumara, D.G.R. Sirimanna & W.C.C. Soysa (2004).** Two new sightings of *Liopeltis calamaria*. *Journal of the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka* 23(5–6): 23–26.
- Karunaratna, D.M.S.S. & W.P.N. Perera (2010).** New Distribution Records for *Liopeltis calamaria* (Günther 1858) (Reptilia: Serpentes: Colubridae), with notes on its Bioecology and threats in Sri Lanka. *Sauria* 32(2): 49–55.
- Malhotra, A. & K. Davis (1991).** A report on the herpetological survey of the Srivilliputhur Reserve Forests, Tamil Nadu. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 88: 157–166.
- Narayanan, S., S. Somanna & P.P. Mohapatra (2020).** Araneophagic behaviour of the elusive snake *Liopeltis calamaria* (Günther 1858) (Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae). *Records of the Zoological Survey of India* 120(2): 171–174.
- Smith, M.A. (1943).** *The Fauna of British India, Ceylon and Burma, including the whole of the Indo-Chinese region. Reptilia and Amphibia Vol. III. Serpentes.* Taylor and Francis, London, 583 pp.
- Wall, F. (1921).** *Ophidia Taprobanica or the Snakes of Ceylon.* Colombo Museum, H.R. Cottle, Government Printer, 581 pp.

Arockianathan Samson¹, Palanisamy Santhoshkumar², Mahendran Palanisamy³ & Jabamalainathan Leona Princy⁴

^{1&4}Department of Zoology and Wildlife Biology, Government Arts College, Udthagamandalam, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu 643002, India.

^{2&3}Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu 643211, India.

¹kingvulture1786@gmail.com (corresponding author),

²santhopalani@gmail.com, ³palanimj@gmail.com,

⁴leonaprincymc@gmail.com.

Citation: Samson, A., P. Santhoshkumar, M. Palanisamy & J.L. Princy (2022). Occurrences of Calamaria Reed Snake from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. *Reptile Rap* #223, In: *Zoo's Print* 37(5): 04–05.