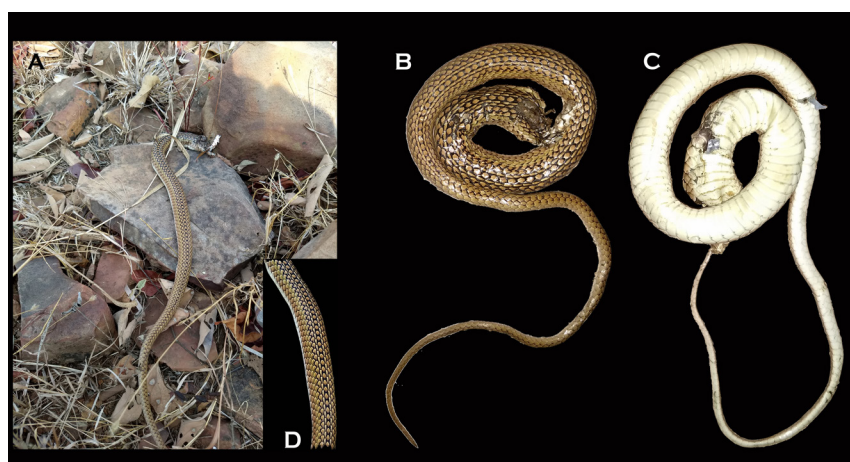




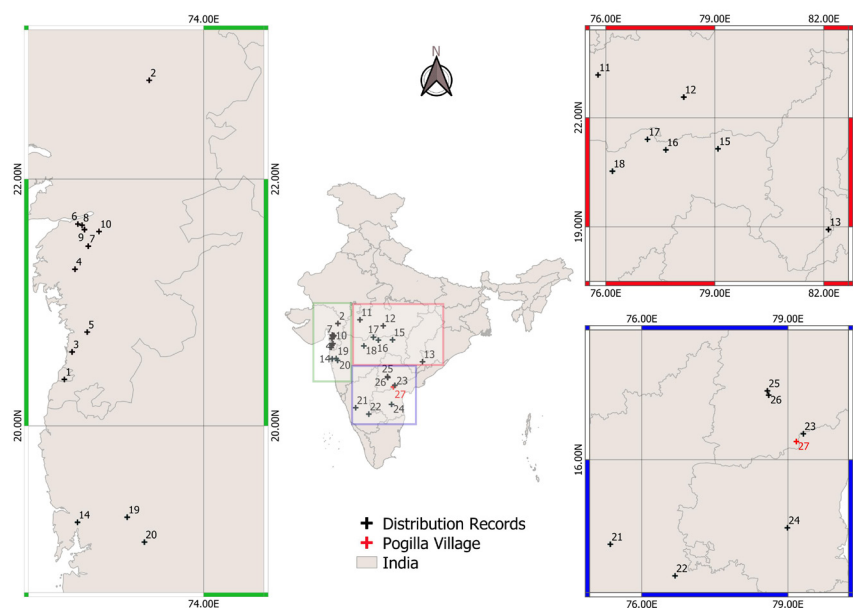
## Report of the Stout Sand Snake in Amarabad Range of Telangana, India

The snake genus *Psammophis* comprises of four species in India (Whitaker & Captain, 2004) viz., *P. leithii* (Gunther, 1869), *P. condanurus* (Merren, 1820), *P. longifrons* (Boulenger, 1890), and *P. schokri* (Forskal, 1775). The Stout Sand Snake *Psammophis longifrons*, originally described by Boulenger in 1890 is a rarely encountered endemic snake from peninsular India. The type locality of the species is 'Cuddapah Hills', Andhra Pradesh (Smith 1943; Sharma 2000).

On 29 January 2018, during a tiger estimation survey in Pogilla Village, in the Eastern Ghats of Telangana (16.3656N & 79.1731E, 213 m), we observed a mongoose feeding on a snake in the forest area. The anterior part of the specimen was chewed and



A kill of *Psammophis longifrons* from Pogilla Village, Amarabad range of Telangana, India. © Ch.M.D. Tarun.



Published distribution records of *Psammophis longifrons* from the Indian sub-continent. The numbering corresponds to the numbers in the first column of Table 1.

Table 1. Documented records of *Psammophis longifrons* from India.

	State	Location	Reference
1	Gujarat	Daman Ganga	Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004
2		Panch Mahals	Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004
3		Valsad	Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004; Vyas & Patel 2013
4		Kamrej, Surat District	Vyas 1987
5		Chikhli, Navsari District	Vyas & Patel 2013
6		Kadakhia College	Trivedi & Mody 2018
7		Asharma, Surat	Trivedi & Mody 2018
8		Ankleshwar, Bharuch	Trivedi & Mody 2018
9		Sai Vatika, Bharuch	Trivedi & Mody 2018
10		Nilkanthnagar, Valia, Bharuch	Trivedi & Mody 2018
11	Madhya Pradesh	Ujjain	Ingle 2009
12		Suplai, Hoshangabad	Manna 2022
13	Chhattisgarh	Bastar District	Naidu 2022
14	Maharashtra	Thane	Dreckmann 1892
15		Nagpur	Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004
16		Amravati	Nande & Deshmukh 2007; Pal & Mirza 2009; Joshi 2011
17		Melghat	Nande & Deshmukh 2007; Joshi 2011
18		Buldhana	Nande & Deshmukh 2007; Pal & Mirza 2009; Joshi 2011
19		Murbad	Vishe 2013
20		Bhimashankar	Mane 2017
21	Karnataka	Shikaripur, Shimoga District	Premkumar & Sharma 2017
22		Chinkara Wildlife Sanctuary, Bukkapatna, Tumkur District	Kalki & Gowda 2021
23	Andhra Pradesh	Bhramandapuram tanda (Jogutanda), Vijayapuri south, Macherla Mandal, Guntur District Vijayapuri south, Macherla Mandal	Hussain et al. 2020; Ganesh & Guptha 2021
24		Cuddapah Hills, Kadapa (type locality)	Boulenger 1890
25	Telangana	Buddha Nagar, Boduppal	Visvanathan et al. 2017
26		Hayathnagar	Visvanathan et al. 2017
27		Pogilla Village	Present report 2023

taken away by the mongoose. We took photographs of the remaining posterior portion of the snake specimen for identification of the species. Judging by the presence of black edges on the dorsal scales, this specimen was initially identified as Stout Sand Snake *Psammophis*

*longifrons*. Scale counts of posterior part of the specimen were carried out. The ventral scales were rounded and anal plate paired. Sub caudal 91; paired. Dorsal scales were counted on middle and posterior part with 17:13 rows. The individual was a male, thus identified



based on the presence of hemipenis. All the key diagnostic characters agreed with those given in Smith (1943). The species identity was also confirmed from the photograph by an expert biologist Zeeshan A. Mirza.

The immediate habitat in which the snake specimen predated by mongoose was sighted was dry deciduous forest with rocky patches near the river Dindi. This species is found mainly in dry forest, agricultural field, and rocky terrain (indiabiodiversity.org). As per the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, this species comes under Schedule II and IUCN Red List status of the species is 'Least Concern'.

Within India, the distribution of this *Psammophiidae* snakes is known from seven states, viz., Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana (Table 1). This record at Pogilla Village, Nalgonda District is the third record for Telangana State. This village is located in the Eastern Ghats. The nearest record from Vijayapuri south, Macherla (No. 23 in Table 1) is located approximately 20 km to the east, which comes under Andhra Pradesh State. Previous two records from the Telangana State were from Boduppall and Hayathnagar (Nos. 25 and 26, respectively, in Table 1) situated 164 km and 150 km away from the present record (Visvanathan et al. 2017).

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**Ch.M. Deepak Tarun<sup>1</sup>, Mahesh Bilaskar<sup>2</sup>, Anuj Raina<sup>3</sup> & Ginkuntla Saikiran<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> 9-109/7, Gayatrinagar Colony, Boduppal, Hyderabad, Telangana 500092, India.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Environmental Sciences, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Ganeshkhind Road, Pune, Maharashtra, 411007, India.

<sup>3</sup> M-1203, Godrej Tivoli, Godrej Garden city, Jagatpur, Ahmedabad, Gujarat 382470, India.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Plant Science, Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod, Kerala 671316, India.

Email: <sup>2</sup>rishi08sep@gmail.com (corresponding author)

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