



Record of colour aberrant Indian Flapshell Turtle from Pune, Maharashtra

The Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata* (Bonnaterre, 1789), is a soft-shell turtle belonging to the family Trionychidae of the order Testudines. It is seen in freshwater aquatic habitats across India. It is known to be an opportunistic omnivore and feeds primarily on aquatic vegetation, plant leaves, fruits, and aquatic animals (Bhupathy & Kurt 2010).



Colour aberrant Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata* from Pune, Maharashtra. © Shubham Pande.

On 10 June 2021, at 1500 h, Mr. Shubham Pande, a snake catcher, rescued a turtle near the Pavana River at Thergaon (18.6191N & 73.7806E). He closely observed the turtle and verbally informed the forest department, Pune division about the rescue. Being different in varying colours on the carapace, he took a photograph of the turtle for

record purposes and shared it with us for further study and immediately released the turtle into the nearby Pavana River. I examined the photographic record. Its carapace was depressed and oval in shape, like in adults. Flaps of plastron were present. Limbs and foreheads were

not scaled. Three-clawed fore and hind limbs (webbed) were seen. There were no scutes on the shell, and the carapace was covered with skin. The femoral flaps, nasal septal ridges, and shell closure mechanism are important species identification characteristics. Hence, we confirm the identity



of it as Indian Flapshell Turtle *Lissemys punctata* after referring to literature (Bhupathy & Kurt 2010). I observed that the turtle had fungal infection growth on its carapace and limbs.

Its body colour was partly yellowish-brown and partly dark brown in colour. Both eyes were normal in colour. It had a big, round, dark brown pigmentation spot surrounded by faded olive brown on the carapace and on the edge, a golden yellowish color; the limbs were muddy yellowish; the head and neck were faint rufus colours without any spots on them; and both left and right faces were completely white. It doesn't look like a case of albinism or leucism; it is partly hypomelanistic. Hence, this is a case of colour aberration.

Reference

Bhupathy, S. & B. Kurt (2010). *Lissemys punctata* (Bonnaterre, 1789), Indian Flapshell Turtle. *Chelonians* 18: 24–28.

Acknowledgements

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