



#253  
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## New distribution record of Duméril's Black-headed Snake from northern Gujarat, India

The small diurnal non-venomous colubrid snake *Sibynophis subpunctatus* (Duméril, Bibron & Duméril, 1854) occurs in India and Sri Lanka (Smith 1943; Captain et al. 2004; Whitaker & Captain 2004). Originally the species described by Duméril et al. (1854), name *Oligodon subpunctatum* from “Malabar” in the Western Ghats (Smith 1943). In the Gujarat state the species reported from Saurashtra, Central Gujarat and South Gujarat (Patel & Vyas 2019).

On 21 October 2019, we found an adult *Sibynophis subpunctatus* from Polo Forest (23.9970 N & 73.2654 E), Abhapur, Vijaynagar Taluka, Sabarkantha District, Gujarat. The current report shows the occurrence of the species in



Head of *Sibynophis subpunctatus* from Polo Forest, northern Gujarat. © Bhargav Parmar.



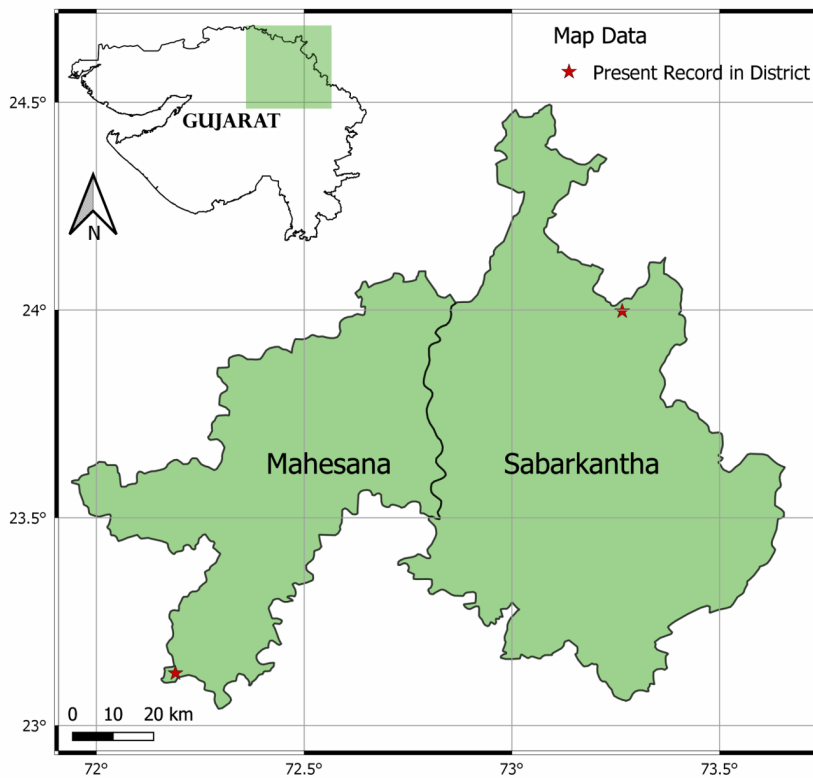
*Sibynophis subpunctatus* from Amreli, Gujarat. © Jaydeep Leuva.

northern Gujarat, the first report of the species from the Aravalis mountain range of

Gujarat State. The specimen was found in day time, the snake was tried to prey on



*Sibynophis subpunctatus* from Pavagadh (near check post), Halol, Gujarat (Road Kill). © Bhargav Parmar.



Two new locations of *Simbynophis subpunctatus* from Gujarat State.

*Riopa punctata* (Linnaeus, 1758). The specimen identified with help of literature (Smith 1943; Captain et al. 2004; Whitaker & Captain 2004).

**Morphology of the specimen:** Small-sized slender snake (snout to vent length 230 mm); head black; posteriorly yellow-cream ring; nearby few black

spots present; yellow-cream stout line from neck to edge of parietal; angulate downward to 9th supralabial with off-white color both side; head slightly broader than neck; yellowish-cream to off-white blotches create mask on front head; from rostral to supraocular; divert on frontal; make section; speckled on prefrontal disunite it; supralabials- 9; white to off-white blotched; lower edges brownish-yellow; 4–6 touching eye; 1st subtriangular; 9th largest; nostrils small; between nasals; 1st bigger; in contact with 1st supralabial ventrally; a small loreal; touching 2–3 supralabial ventrally; a preocular; towards dorsal apex; not touching frontal, frontal subhexagonal; supraocular in contact with prefrontal; postoculars- 2; subequal; both in contact with parietals; 1st reaching dorsal surface; from postocular to edge of parietal, irregular cream to yellow marking on both side; anterior temporals- 2; the upper touching 7th supralabial; the lower wedged in between 7–8 supralabial (not in contact with postocular); posterior temporals 2; elongated; rostral broader than higher; large eye; larger than internasal; pupil



round; mental small; triangular; infralabial 10; 5th largest; bigger than mental; chin scales dark brownish-yellow with off-white blotches; chin shields elongated; subequal; 1–4 infralabials touching anterior chin shields; 4–5 infralabials touching anterior chin shields; body and tail brown dorsally; tiny black spots running on dorsal apex body from neck to tail; flanked grayish; separated by dorso-laterally dotted lines; dorsal smooth scale in row 17:17:17; ventrals 211; yellowish; single spot on edges; anal divided; tail damaged; single spot on edges of subcaudals.

Previously, *S. subpunctatus* was erroneously reported as *S. sagittarius* (Cantor, 1829) in Gujarat state (Vyas 2007). Here we are considering our specimen as *S. subpunctatus* on basis on supralabials- 9 (vs supralabials- 7 or 8 in *S. sagittarius*), 4–6 supralabials touching eye (vs 3–4 or 3–5 supralabials touching eye), anterior temporals- 2 and the lower wedged in between 7–8 supralabial (vs 1 large anterior temporal, wedged in between 6–7 supralabial) (Smith 1943). *S. sagittarius* found in Madhya Pradesh, central India (Sanyal & Sur 1995) and Himalayan range (Smith 1943; Saikia et al. 2007).

Previous observation of *S. subpunctatus* by Daniel & Shull (1963) from Dang district (Vyas 1993). The species found from Vadodara to Dang (Vyas 1993, 2004, 2007; Sharma 2000; Patel et al. 2018), Bhavnagar (Vyas 1987), Jamnagar (Vyas 1993), Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, Porbandar (Vyas 1987; Bhalodia et al. 2002), Rajkot (Ardesana et al. 2018), Junagadh (Vyas & Singh 1999; Patel et al. 2019).

Recently, *S. subpunctatus* observed in Kalyanpura, Mahesana district in the northern part of Gujarat (nearest city Viramgam, rescue and released). We found the species from Hingolghadh Nature Education Sanctuary (previously not reported; Vyas 2000) (nearest reported location: Khirasara Vidi in the same district- Rajkot), Mdhavpur Ghed (nearest reported location: Barda Wildlife Sanctuary and Gir protected area), Amreli (nearest reported location: Girnar, Junagadh), Manipur Village, Ahmedabad (nearest reported location: Vadodara), Anand (nearest reported location: Vadodara), Pavagadh (nearest reported location: Vadodara) and Model Farm Road, Dabhoi (nearest reported location: Vadodara). Recently *S. subpunctatus* was rescued by rescuers in Bhadakhmora, Vapi district. All specimens are found during day time, nearby agricultural land (except Hingolghadh, Pavagadh.) and with nine supralabials, two anterior temporals, 2nd anterior temporals is wedged between 7–8 supralabial, ventrals count (India north of 18°N) and sub-caudals count matches with literature (Smith 1943; Captain et al. 2004; Whitaker & Captain 2004).

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