



#178
21 May 2025

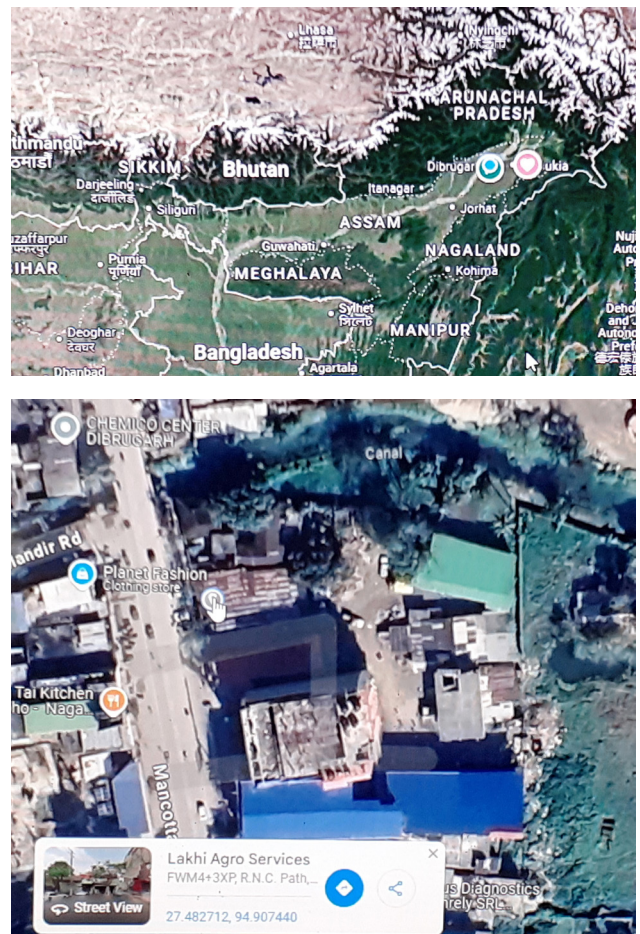
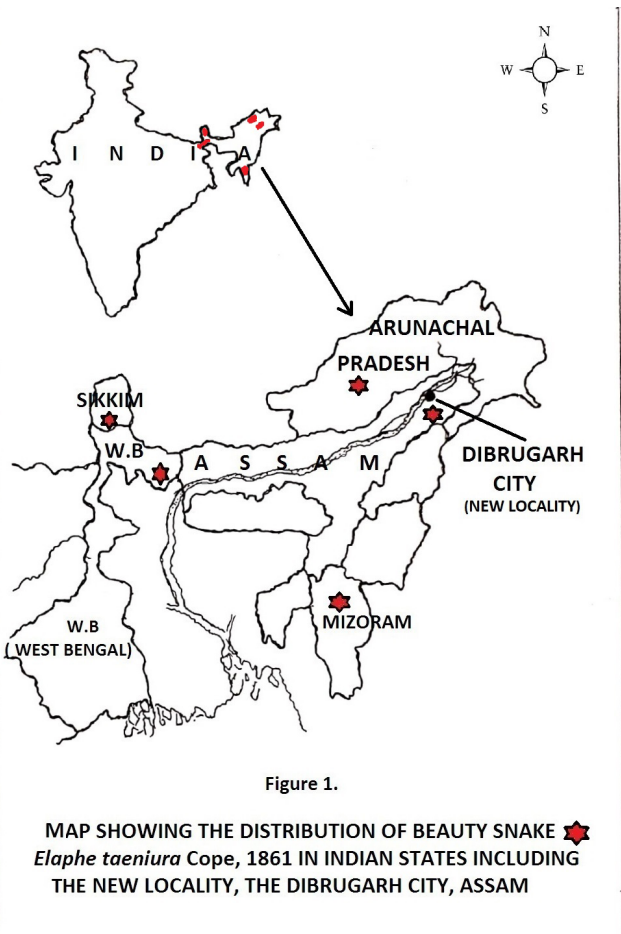
Beauty Snake *Elaphe taeniura* recorded from Dibrugarh, Assam

Beauty Snake (Beauty Rat Snake / Striped Trinket Snake) *Elaphe taeniura* (Cope, 1861), Syn. *Orthriophis taeniurus*, was described as *Elaphe taenurus* by E.D. Cope (Cope 1861; Schulz et al. 2015; Basfore et al. 2024; Uetz et al. 2025). It is one of the three species of *Elaphe* recorded from India (Mohapatra et al. 2024). Its range of distribution include southeastern Russia, China, Japan, northeastern India, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, northern Laos, northern Vietnam, eastern Malaysia, western Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and Indonesia (Wallach et.al. 2014).

In India, there are reports of this species from Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Sikkim, and West Bengal (Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2008; Ahmed et al. 2009; Lalremsanga 2022; Basfore et al. 2024, Uetz et al. 2025). In Arunachal Pradesh it is recorded from seven districts including five protected areas (Nath & Sinha 2021): Lohit District, upper Siang District, upper Subansiri District, lower Subansiri District, Namdapha National Park (Changlang District), Kamlang Tiger Reserve, Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary (Athreya 2006), Dihang Dibang Biosphere Reserve (Upper Dibang Vally District), and Itanagar Wildlife Sanctuary (Papumpare District).



Elaphe taeniura (Cope, 1861). Dibrugarh, Assam, India (27.482711 N. - 94.907438 E.) © Tikendrajit Gogai



Although Assam is included in its distribution range (Sharma 2007; Uetz et al. 2025), there is no specific locality record of this species so far (Gayen et al. 2023, Basfore et al. 2024, Uetz et al. 2025). In this communication a specific locality of its distribution in Assam is presented.

A snake of the species *Elaphe taeniura* was recorded in Dibrugarh City (on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra), Assam, India on 24 September 2024. The location was a shop named Lakhi Agro Services (27.4827 N, 94.9074 E; 108 m (354 ft) above MSL) on Mankotta road between Thana Chariali and Assam Police Reserve area of the city. The elevation record is perhaps one of the lowest for this species. The owner of the shop communicated me to rescue a snake from the shop. He sent me a

video of the uncommon snake species recorded in his shop not encountered by me earlier. The agro services shop was with some stored grains besides other articles and evidence of rodents. It is connected to some vegetation in its east and north side near the city's main drain.

The snake was rescued and identified as *Elaphe taeniura yunnanensis* (Anderson, 1879) based





on some identifying characters as outlined in literature (Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2008; Schulz et al. 2015). These include: broad black stripes behind eyes, neck region without any pattern, butterfly-shaped dorsal markings and elongated diamond shaped markings (with light center) on sides of the anterior region. Hind body with a mid-dorsal pale stripe bordered on each side by broad black stripe.

The lateral black stripes have pale vertical lines in equal distances. Total length of the snake was 920 mm, body 740 mm, tail 180 mm, head 11.5 mm, and neck region without pattern 21 mm. Number of ventral scales 247 and dorsal scales in mid body 25. Number of scales in the hind vertebral stripe is 3. Anal and sub-caudals divided.

Beauty Snake is a 'Vulnerable' species under IUCN Red List. It is also a schedule II species in Indian Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022 (Mohapatra et al. 2024).

The snake was handed over to the forest range officer, Dibrugarh and it was later released in a suitable place.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Forest Range Officer, other forest personnel and the shopkeeper for cooperation. Thanks also due to Dr. Abhijit Das, Scientist E, WII, for suggestion and encouragement.

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Citation: Tikendrajit, G. (2025). Beauty Snake *Elaphe taeniura* recorded from Dibrugarh, Assam. *Reptile Rap* #178, In: *Zoo's Print* 40(5): 24–26.