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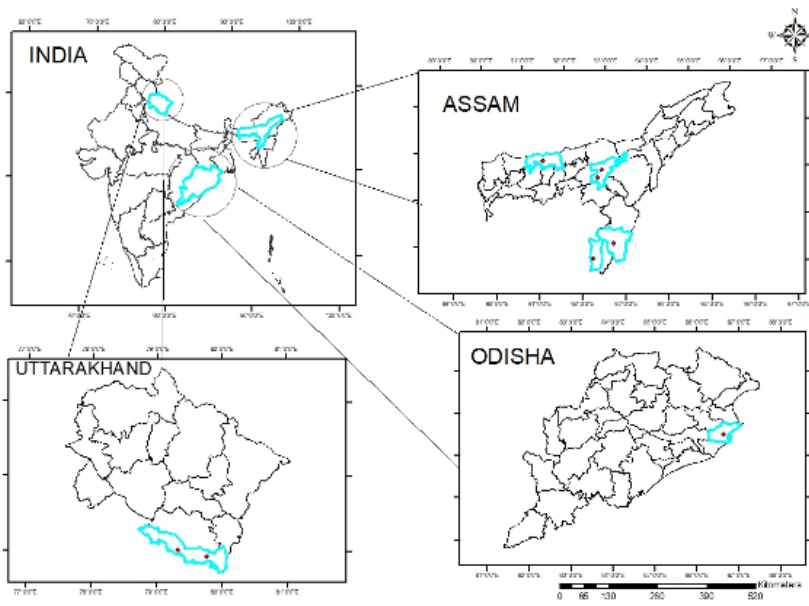
## Recent sightings of large Burmese Pythons in India, with a new size record from Assam

Snakes belonging to the families *Boidae* and *Pythonidae* represent some of the most remarkable reptiles, exhibiting an exceptional diversity of morphology, behaviour, and ecology. The Indian subcontinent is home to three species of pythons: the Indian Python *Python molurus* Linnaeus, 1758, the Burmese Python *P. bivittatus* Kuhl, 1820, and the Reticulated Python *Malayopython reticulatus* Schneider, 1801. Until recently, the Burmese Python was regarded as a subspecies of the Indian Python (Whitaker & Captain 2004); however, these two taxa are now recognized as distinct species.

The Burmese Python occurs in the Indo-Chinese subregion, southern China, Hong Kong, and Hainan. It inhabits a wide range of ecosystems, including marshes, swamps, grasslands, woodlands, mangroves, coastal plains, rainforests, and rocky foothills. In India, the species has been reported from Corbett and Rajaji National Parks in Uttarakhand; the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha; areas south of Kolkata; the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar; and the northeastern region along the



A ~5.2 m (17.2 ft) long Burmese Python rescued at Assam University, Silchar, and released into the Inner Line Reserve Forest, Assam. © Kaushik Dasgupta.



Map showing records of large-sized Burmese Pythons (greater than 4.2 m (14 ft)) from different parts of India.

Brahmaputra and Barak rivers. Additional records include the Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary and the Sumera Block of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. Bhupathy (1995) provided an overview of the distribution of the Burmese Python in India, indicating a broad distribution across northeastern India.

The species is listed as ‘Vulnerable’ on the IUCN Red List (Stuart et al. 2012), with habitat loss and poaching for meat, skins, traditional medicine, and the international live-animal trade identified as major threats. In nature, Burmese Pythons can reach lengths of up to 6 m, with an average size of approximately

3.5 m. These mostly nocturnal, generalist predators are sometimes described as semi-aquatic, as they are typically found near water sources, where they prey on mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians (Stuart et al. 2012).

Burmese pythons are relatively common in the Assam University, Silchar campus and in the adjoining forested areas, and are frequently observed in human settlements, including inside houses. In this report, we document an extraordinary case: a ~5.24 m (17.2 ft), over 100 kg Burmese Python captured by the first author on 5 December 2024 near Girls’ Hostel-1 (24.686°

N, 92.750° E) at Assam University, Silchar. The length of the python was measured using a measuring tape, and its weight was obtained using weighing equipment at a nearby hardware shop in Irongmara market by placing the snake inside a container. The individual was subsequently released into the Inner Line Reserve Forest, Assam. Reportedly, this is the largest living Burmese Python officially recorded in Assam to date.

Previously, the longest recorded individual in Assam measured ~4.25 m (14 ft) and was found in Nagaon District (Bora 2022). Another specimen recorded by us in Patharkandi of Sribhumi District measured ~4.54 m (15 ft). A third individual, measuring approximately ~4.5 m (14.9 ft), was rescued from the Hatizan–Daodhara area of Baksa District (NET 2022). In Borghat Chapanala of Nagaon District, another python measuring ~4.85 m (16 ft) was discovered (Jain 2020).

Larger individuals have also been documented from other parts of India. For instance,

Table. Burmese Pythons recorded at various sites in and around the Assam University, Silchar campus.

Date	Place	GPS Co-ordinates	
		Latitude	Longitude
27.x.2022	MPHH+77V, Choto Jalenga Pt I, Assam 788117	24.67963° N	92.72834° E
17.xi.2022	Hmarkhawlien, Near Fulertal, Lakhipur, Assam	24.79017° N	93.01900° E
27.xi.2022	MQ82+4HC Barjalenga Pt I, Assam 788113	24.66531° N	92.75139° E
21.xii.2022	Choto Jalenga pt 1, Assam,788011	24.68181° N	92.73989° E
24.iii.2023	Banglaghat, Srikona	24.82737° N	92.73459° E
15.v.2023	Teliatilla, Irongmara, 788011	24.68039° N	92.74156° E
08.vi.2023	Dorgakona,Chatla road, Silcoorie grant, Silchar, 788011	24.70267° N	92.76606° E
11.vi.2023	MPHH+77V, Choto Jalenga Pt I, Assam 788117	24.67963° N	92.72834° E
23.vi.2023	Near Gas Agency, Irongmara, Cachar, 788011	24.68234° N	92.74169° E
26.vi.2023	Near Chatla Janata College, Baghmara, Cachar, Assam 788117	24.71219° N	92.74577° E
12.vii.2023	Near Boys Hostel 2, AUS, 788011	24.68723° N	92.74812° E
14.vii.2023	From MLA Gully, Irongmara, AUS, 788011	24.68891° N	92.74345° E
08.viii.2023	Somewhere Dorgakona, Cachar, Assam 788011	24.70041° N	92.75042° E
09.viii.2023	S-cube, Assam University, Silchar, 788011	24.68847° N	92.75036° E
10.x.2023	Near Girls hstotel 5, AUS, 788011	24.68681° N	92.74928° E
13.x.2023	Near Dorgakona, Cachar, 788011	24.69747° N	92.75742° E
23.xii.2023	Borjalenga, 788117	24.67578° N	92.75438° E
23.xii.2023	Chirukandi, Silchar, Cachar, Assam 788026	24.82478° N	92.75547° E
03.iii.2024	Borjalenga, 788117	24.67631° N	92.72627° E
09.v.2024	Damcherra Tripur, Rajarampur, Kalinagar T.E, Karimganj, 788166	24.56464° N	92.48378° E
03.vi.2024	Near Dorgakona Bazar, Cachar, 788011	24.69899° N	92.76197° E
03.vii.2024	Near Durgatilla, Irongmara, Silchar, Assam 788011	24.68944° N	92.73912° E
12.vii.2024	Choto Jalenga pt 1, Assam 788011	24.66404° N	92.71434° E
14.vii.2024	Professors colony, Assam University, Silchar, 788011	24.69601° N	92.74623° E
12.viii.2024	Teliatilla, Irongmara, 788011	24.68513° N	92.73862° E
05.ix.2024	Dorgakona, Near Assam University, 788011	24.69193° N	92.75232° E
03.x.2024	Teliatilla, Irongmara, 788011	24.68716° N	92.73809° E
09.x.2024	Somewhere at Barik Nagar, Cachar	24.75154° N	92.79574° E
18.x.2024	Somewhere at Itkhola, Silchar, 788003	24.84226° N	92.80361° E
05.xi.2024	Hatitilla, Irongmara, 788011 (Raju da)	24.68797° N	92.73921° E



Date	Place	GPS Co-ordinates	
		Latitude	Longitude
19.xii.2024	GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68707° N	92.75001° E
26.xii.2024	GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68706° N	92.74992° E
26.xii.2024	GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68679° N	92.75006° E
29.xii.2024	Near by patharkand bypass, Karimganj, 788724	24.59132° N	92.32027° E
30.xii.2024	GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68670° N	92.75004° E
06.i.2025	Near, GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68711° N	92.74994° E
27.i.2025	Near GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68598° N	92.74979° E
27.i.2025	NearGH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68637° N	92.74994° E
06.ii.2025	Near Amul point, AUS, Assam 788011	24.68444° N	92.749234° E
06.ii.2025	Near GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68581° N	92.74971° E
06.ii.2025	Near GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68591° N	92.74976° E
07.ii.2025	Near GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68678° N	92.74940° E
18.xii.2024	GH-1, AUS, Silchar, Assam University, 788011	24.68701° N	92.75010° E

a ~4.85 m Burmese Python was rescued near Bhitarkanika National Park in Odisha (NDTV 2018). A separate report from Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar District, Uttarakhand, also documented a ~4.85 m individual in 2020 (Hindustan Times 2020). Globally, the longest known Burmese Python was discovered in Kashipur, Uttarakhand, in 2025, measuring 6.06 m (20 ft) and weighing approximately 170 kg (Sethi 2025). This surpassed the previous world record of a 5.75 m (19 ft) individual recorded in southern Florida (Jones 2023).

The present python was found near a girls' hostel at Assam University, inside a drainage channel close to the gymnasium, causing panic among students and university staff. With prompt action from a wildlife expert at Assam University, forest officials, and residents,

the snake was safely rescued. Its weight and length were recorded, and it was subsequently released back into its natural habitat.

Based on surveys and rescue records, the surrounding area appears to provide suitable habitat for the Burmese Python. Records of python breeding in Assam University premises during pandemic days are there, where four young ones reported in 2022. Numerous individuals have been recorded from the same location and nearby areas. To date, we have documented 43 individuals from various sites in and around the Assam University, Silchar Campus. Most sightings have occurred near the university hostels, which are bordered by forested terrain. Pythons are frequently observed resting on trees or hunting animals in the vicinity of the hostel area. The surrounding



landscape, characterized by dense forest cover, small water channels, and an abundant supply of prey such as small mammals and cattle, offers ideal foraging conditions for the species (Joshi & Singh 2015).

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