



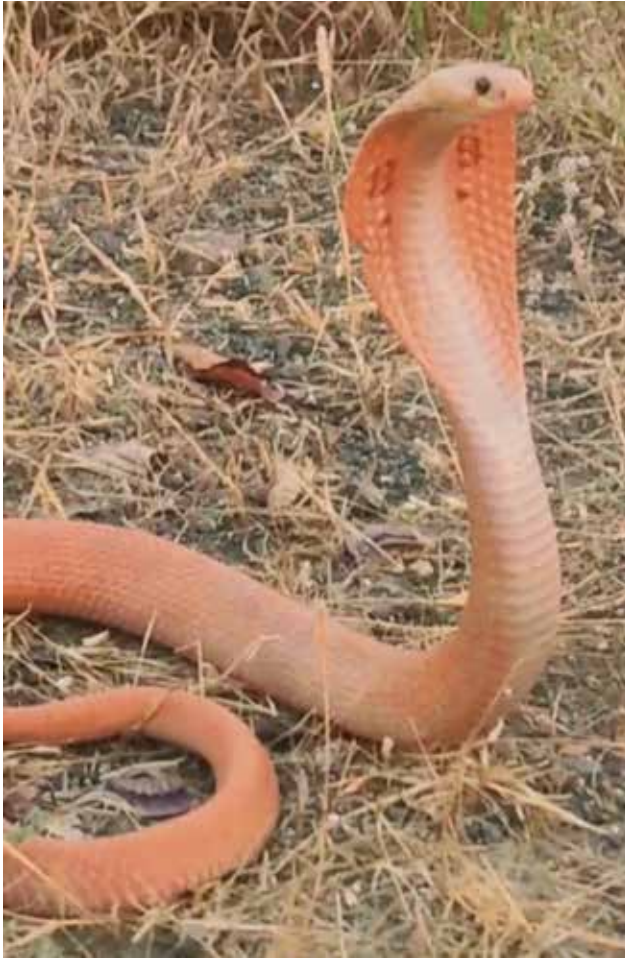
Report of a hypomelanistic Spectacled Cobra from Gujarat

The Indian Cobra *Naja naja* (Linnaeus, 1758), also known commonly as the Spectacled Cobra is a venomous snake in the family Elapidae (Whitaker & Captain 2004). The species is native to the Indian subcontinent and is a member of the big four species that are responsible for the most snake bite cases reported from India (Mukherjee 2012). The Indian Cobra is a moderately-sized, heavy-bodied species.

Abnormal colouration in animals is considered a hypopigmentary congenital condition that may reflect low levels of genetic diversity (Bensch et al. 2000). Other chromatic aberrations, such as leucism, have also been reported in Indian snakes (Patel et al. 2022).

During a camera trapping survey at Rail Loco Colony, Rajkot (22.323°N, 70.785°E), on 20 October 2022, a Cobra was observed between the rocks. On closer observation, it was noted to show hypomelanistic trait. The individual was approximately 0.75 m (2.5 ft) long. When it raised its hood, a slight node on its skin was visible, indicating either a defensive posture or a minor injury. The snake was initially





discovered concealed between the rocks. Upon closer observation, it was seen exhibiting a defensive posture, raising its hood slightly. With careful handling, the cobra was moved out from its position, and detailed photographs were taken for documentation.

Acknowledgements

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References

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