

ON A COLLECTION OF REPTILES FROM THE ANNA AND MADURAI
DISTRICTS, TAMILNADU

T. S. N. MURTHY* and S. V. A. CHANDRASEKHAR

*Southern Regional Station,
Zoological Survey of India,
Madras 600 028.*

INTRODUCTION

This account is based on a lot of collections made in the Anna and Madurai Districts during 1986-1987 as part of the ongoing project on the mopping survey of the State of Tamilnadu taken up by the Southern Regional Station (SRS) of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).

The paper deals with 9 species of lizards and 5 species of snakes collected both from the plains and the forested tracts of the districts mentioned.

The entire material worked out has been incorporated in the reptile collections of the SRS, ZSI.

Key to the abbreviations : VRL/VRS : V—Vertebrate, R—Reptilia, L—Lizard, S—Snake ; coll.—Collection ; Ex./Exs.—Example/Examples. The number following the abbreviation indicates the entry number pertaining to the taxon in the Register of National Collections.

Key to the identification of reptiles of the Anna and Madurai districts

Special Notes : A workable key, based upon characters that can be easily determined in the field, is given below. It, however, covers only the species that are discussed in the paper.

* H/20E Tiruvaniyar,
Madras 600 041,

LIZARDS

1.	Top of head with symmetrical shields...	...	...	2
	Top of head without symmetrical shields...		...	6
2.	Body covered with osteodermal plates ; femoral pores absent		...	3
	Body covered with osteodermal plates ; femoral pores present	...	<i>Ophisops jerdoni</i>	
3.	Limbs well developed	...	...	4
	Limbs short, vestigial	...	...	5
4.	Dark bronze above, with an yellowish lateral band on each flank...		<i>Mabuya carinata</i>	
	Greyish-brown above, with 3 broad, black-edged, white (yellow in life) longitudinal stripes	...	...	<i>Mabuya trivittata</i>
5.	No supranasals : lower eyelid with a transparent disc	...	<i>Sciacella travancoricum</i>	
	Supranasals present ; lower eyelid scaly or with disc...	...	<i>Lygosoma punctata</i>	
6.	Eyes without movable eyelids ; digits clawed		<i>Hemidactylus reticulatus</i>	
	Eyes with movable eyelids : digits free	...	...	7
7.	Hind foot with of four toes only	...	<i>Sitana ponticeriana</i>	
	Hind foot with five toes	...	...	8
8.	Body depressed ; back without a dorsal crest	...	<i>Psammophilus blanfordanus</i>	
	Body not depressed ; back with a dorsal crest	...	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>	

SNAKES

1.	Eyes vestigial	...	...	<i>Ramphotyphlops braminus</i>
	Eyes exposed	...	...	2
2.	Tail short, truncated and the truncated portion covered with thickened scales	...	...	<i>Uropeltis pulneyensis</i>
	Tail not so	...	...	3
3.	Head triangular; covered with small scales		<i>Echis carinatus</i>	
	Head not triangular, covered with distinct shields	...	...	4

4. Vertebral scales distinctly enlarged ; fangs in front of the month ... *Bungarus caeruleus*
 Vertebral scales not as above ; no fangs in front of the mouth ... 5
5. Head and nape black, with distinctive dark chevrons ; scales round the body in
 17 rows *Oligodon arnensis*
 Head and naps neither black nor with chevrons ; scales round the body in 25 to
 27 rows. *Elaphe helena*

ACCOUNT OF SPECIES

The taxonomic arrangement adopted here follows broadly the lines laid down by Malcolm Smith (1935, 1943) but with nomenclatural modifications as suggested by Mittlemen (1952) and Stimson et al. (1977).

LIZARDS

Family : GEKKONIDAE

1. *Hemidactylus reticulatus* Beddome

Material : 3 exs., VRL 283, Vaigai dam, 17. III. 1917. K. V. Lakshminarayana coll.

Size : Snout to vent 32 mm-42 mm ; tail 27 mm-37 mm.

Distribution : Records from Madurai and Shevaroy, Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Palakonda Hills, Andhra.

Elsewhere : Also recorded from Palnis, Tamilnadu. Endemic to India.

Family : AGAMIDAE

2. *Sitana ponticeriana* Cuvier
Fan-throated Lizard

Material : 1 ex., VRL 256, Vaigai Dam, 8. II. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll ; 1 ex., VRL 257, Vaigai Dam—Vaigai River Road, 12. XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll. ; 1 ex. VRL 277, Kueyamgalon, 6. III. 1987, K. V. Lakshminarayana coll. ; 1 ex. VRL 281, Vaigai Dam—Vaigai River Road, 10. III. 1987, K. V. Lakshminarayana coll.

Size : Snout to vent 30 mm-45 mm ; tail length : 100 mm-126 mm.

Distribution : The whole of India and Sri Lanka.

3. Calotes versicolor (Daudin)
Indian Garden Lizard

Material : 1 ex., VRL 278, Madhavakulam, 7. III. 1987, K. V. Lakshminarayana coll.

Size : Snout to vent 75 mm ; tail 192 mm.

Distribution : The commonest lizard of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Also found in Sumatra, Hainan, Hong Kong, Afganistan, Indo-Ehine, South China, northern Malay Peninsula.

4. Psammophilus blanfordanus (Stoliczka)
Dwarf Rock Lizard

Material : 1 ex., VRL 279, Palani-Kodai Road, 25. III. 1987, K. V. Lakshminarayana coll.

Size : Snout to vent 62 mm ; tail 121 mm.

Distribution : Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Eastern Ghats and Kerala. Not so common in the plains of South India but is often met with in the hills.

Family : SCINCIDAE

5, Mabuya carinata (Schneider)
Common Skink

Material : 1 ex., VRL 286, Alagar Hills, 6. XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : Snout to vent 42 mm ; tail damaged.

Distribution : The whole of India excepting the north-west and Sri Lanka.

6. Mabuya trivittata Hardwicke & Gray

Material : 1 ex., VRL 280, Vaigai Dam—Vaigai River Road, 18. III. 1987, K. V. Lakshminarayana coll.

Size : Snout to vent 57 mm ; tail 60 mm.

Distribution : Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamiladu and Bihar.

7. **Lygosoma punctata** (Gmelin)
Dotted Garden Skink

Material : 1 ex., VRL 259, Chatrapatti, 21.XI.1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : Snout to vent 68 mm ; tail 715 mm.

Distribution : India and Sri Lanka.

8. **Scincella travancoricum** (Beddome)
Travancore Ground Skink

Material : 3 exs., VRL 285, Berijam Lake, Kodaikanal, 15.XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Distribution : Anaimalais, Palnis and Hills of South Kerala Western Ghats.

Family : LACERTIDAE

10. **Ophisops jerdoni** Blyth
Snake-eyed Lacerta

Material : 1 ex., VRL 258, Vaigai Dam, 8. XI. 1986. Koshy Mathew coll. ;
1 ex., VRL 282, Rajagopalanpatti, 12. XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : Snout to vent 30 mm-45 mm ; tail 66 mm-95 mm.

Distribution : Recorded with certainty from Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka in India and Pakistan. The specimen under study is an additional and interesting record for Tamilnadu.

SNAKES

Family : TYPHLOPIDAE

11. **Ramphotyphlops braminus** (Daudin)
Common Blind Snake

Material : 1 ex., VRS 155, Sathija Annai, 8. III. 1987, K. V. Lakshmi-narayana coll.

Size : 145 mm.

Distribution : Widely distributed in Asia, Indo-Malaysia and New Guinea.

Family : UROPELTIDAE

11. *Uropeltis puleyensis* (Beddome)
Palnis Uropelt

Material : 1 ex., VRS 150, Silver Cascade, Kodaikanal, 8. III. 1987, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : 380 mm.

Distribution : Palnis and Alagar Hills, Tamilnadu ; Munnar Hills, Kerala.

Family : COLUBRIDAE

12. *Elaphe helena* (Daudin)
Trinket Snake

Material : 2 exs., VRS 222, 245, Ayyalur Forest RH. 24 XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : 1200 mm-1225 mm.

Distribution : All over India. Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

13. *Oligodon arnensis* (Shaw)
Banded Kukri Snake

Material : 1 ex., VRS 149, Ayyalur Forest RH., 24. XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : 555 mm.

Distribution : The whole of Asia including the Malay States and in Egypt.

Family : ELAPIDAE

14. *Bungarus caeruleus* (Daudin)
Common Krait

Material : 1 ex., VRS 148, Ayyalur Forest RH., 24. XI. 1986, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : 1 m.

Distribution : Fairly common in most of India but seems to be rare in Bengal and Assam.

Family : VIPERIDAE

15. *Echis carinatus* (Schneider)
Saw-scaled Viper

Material : 2 exs., VRS 149, 176, Vaigai Dam, 8. XI. 1986 and 17. III. 1987, Koshy Mathew coll.

Size : 70 cm-72.5 cm.

Distribution : Common throughout India but plentiful in parts of Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamilnadu.

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