

New Distributional Record of Indian Sand Snake *Psammophis condanarus* (Merrem, 1820) (Reptilia: Lamprophiidae) from Telangana, India

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ABSTRACT: Indian Sand Snake *Psammophis condanarus* is found in dry low country zones of Indian peninsula. There are no records found in Telangana State, here we are presenting new distributional record to the Telangana State.

Keywords: *Psammophis condanarus*, distribution, Telangana State.

Snakes are the most fascinating creeping creatures found everywhere except Antarctica, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, Hawaii, and New Zealand (Bauchot, 1994). There are 3,509 extant species of snakes around the world (Wallach *et al.*, 2014). There are 270 different species of snakes found in India (Whitaker and Captain, 2008). Reptiles, particularly snakes, have faced serious threats to their existence and survival as their habitats have deteriorated and changed, forcing them to adapt to an urban environment. (Husain and Prohit, 2019). For many wild animals, roads are a barrier. Snakes can be killed by fast-moving vehicles due to their lethargic movement on highways (Bhandarkar S., and Paliwal, 2021). In India *Psammophis* genus represented by four species: *Psammophis condanarus* Merrem, 1820, *Psammophis leithii* Günther, 1869, *Psammophis schokari* Forskal, 1775 and *Psammophis longifrons* Boulenger, 1896. The Indian Sand Snake (*P. condanarus*) is distributed in eastern, northern and central India covering of the Himalayan foothills, Bengal, Indo-gangetic plains, north-western arid desert

zones including Pakistan and northern parts of the Deccan plateau (Stoliczka 1872; Murray 1886; Wall 1908; Minton 1966; Whitaker & Captain 2004; Chandra & Gajbe 2005), making it the most common species of the genus in the Indian subcontinent (Ganesh *et al.*, 2017). *Psammophis condanarus* is found in dry low country zones of Indian peninsula is a fast-moving, diurnal, terrestrial species and lives in stony outcrops and rocks. In India, the species has been recorded from the states of Uttarakhand, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh (Ali 1943; Prasad 1992; Ingle 2002; Whitaker and Captain 2004; Chandra and Gajbe 2005; Saikia *et al.*, 2007; Ganesh *et al.*, 2017 and Varma *et al.*, 2020). The standard literature revealed that there is no previous record of *Psammophis condanarus* from Telangana State, so here we are presenting new distribution locality from Telangana State.



Fig. 1. Indian Sand Snake (*Psammophis condanarus*) road kill, (A) Dorsal view, (B) Ventral view.

We were conducting regular field work on biodiversity documentation in different parts of Telangana state, On 15th December, 2020 while exploring Allpur urban conservation block we encountered a fresh dead snake (road kill) on the road (Fig. 1) which passes through the Allpur urban conservation block Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district 17.208097°N 78.824166°E at 15.54 hrs (Fig. 2). After keen observation, it was identified as Indian Sand Snake *Psammophis condanarus*. Morphological scrutiny and protocols followed by Whitaker & Captain (2004). Ventral scale counting was done following Dowling (1951) and hemipenal description was done following Dowling & Savage (1960). With a standard measuring tape body length was measured (L.C 1mm) while other smaller

measurements were taken using vernier callipers (L.C 0.1mm). Scale counts were done using a magnifying hand lens (10 X optical zoom). Scalation and distribution data were compared with literature. Photographs were taken using digital camera.

Specimen: Male, measuring 610mm, snout to vent length 550mm, tail length 112mm. Dorsal scales (counted one head-length behind the head, at mid-body and at one head length anterior to the vent) were in rows of 17:17:13; ventrals 158; subcaudals 40 (tail incomplete, paired); supralabials 8, with 4th and 5th in contact with the eye; postoculars 2; preocular 1 (grooved); loreal 1(elongated, horizontally grooved); nasal scales divided into one anterior and two posterior nasals; temporals 1+2; anal scale divided (Table 1).

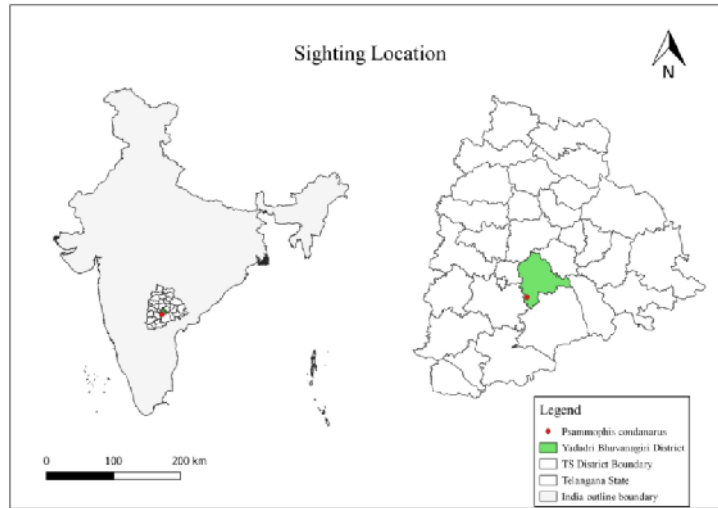


Fig. 2. Map showing the sighting location of *Psammophis condanarus*.

Table 1: Morphological data of *Psammophis condanarus*, compared with the literature (Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004).

Character	Telangana	Smith 1943; Whitaker & Captain 2004
S	Male	-
ToL	610 mm	1,075 mm (max)
SVL	550 mm	-
TL	112 mm	-
PV	3	-
V	158	165-179
SC	40+ scales damaged	85-93 (M), 75-85 (F)
A	2	2
D	17:17:13	17:17:15/13
N	United above	United above
SL	8	8
SLE	04-May	04-May
L	1	1
Pre-O	1	1
PF	0	0
PO	2	2
T	1+2	1+2
IL	6+damaged	-
ILG	damaged	-
ST	5	5
TS	03-May	05-Mar

Abbreviations used are: S - Sex, ToL-Total length, SVL - Snout-ventral length, TL - Tail length, PV - Preventral, V - Ventral, SC - Subcaudal, A - Anal, D, Dorsal, N - Nature of suture of nasal, SL - Supralabial, SLE - Supralabial in contact with eyes, L - Loreal, PF - Preocular-Frontal contact, Pre-O - Preocular, PO - Postocular, T - Temporal, IL - Infralabial, ILG - Infralabial in contact with anterior genials, ST-Number of dorsal scales covered by vertebral stripe, TS - Total number of dark stripes.

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Conflict of Interest. Nil.

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