



Range Extension of the Calamaria Reed Snake, *Liopeltis calamaria* (Günther 1858) from the Western Ghats, Maharashtra, India

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Photographs by the senior author.

Günther (1858) described *Cyclophis calamaria*, Boulenger (1890) assigned the species to the genus *Ablabes*, and Wall (1921) referred it to *Liopeltis*. The Calamaria Reed Snake (*Liopeltis calamaria*) has been reported in Sri Lanka and India. In India, this species is found in the Western Ghats as far north as Matheran, the Tirunelveli Hills, Mysore Plateau, Bangalore, Chhota Nagpur (Surguja), and the Almora District (Smith 1943). These snakes are light brown, grayish-brown, or greenish in dorsal coloration, often with two more-or-less distinct black longitudinal lines, and a uniformly yellowish venter (Boulenger 1890; Smith 1943).

At approximately 1100 h on 3 January 2015, during a trek to the hill Fort Ratangad (19°30'N, 73°41'E; elevation 1,297 m), we observed a snake (Fig. 1) basking on a rock near a dry streambed. The snake appeared unusual for this particular region, prompting us to photograph it from several angles with a Canon SX50 HS and collect the snake to confirm identification. The approximate length of the individual was 230 mm. After counting scales, we identified the snake as *Liopeltis calamaria*. Dorsal scale rows were 15:15:15, ventrals and subcaudals 141 and 68, respectively; preoculars 1; and postoculars 2. The nasal was not divided, and the third and fourth of seven supralabials extended to the eye. All scalation characters corresponded to those in Smith (1943). After confirming identification, we released the snake at the exact location where it had been collected. A photographic voucher was deposited in the Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA (MPM P775).

De Silva (1990) noted that *Liopeltis calamaria* lives close to permanent water sources, but Karunarantha et al. (2004)

recorded the species from the drier part of Ritigala in Sri Lanka. Fort Ratangad is situated on the Nagar-Nashik border in Maharashtra, India. Ratangad is generally dry except in June through August during the SW Monsoon. The location where we observed the snake was about 500 m from a pond, which is the only (albeit inconsistent) source of water at the fort. The individual was a juvenile, suggesting that the species is native to and reproducing in this area of Nashik, approximately 200 km north of its previously known range.

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Fig. 1. Calamaria Reed Snake (*Liopeltis calamaria*) collected at Fort Ratangad on the Nagar-Nashik border in Maharashtra, India (19°30'N, 73°41'E; elevation 1,297 m).