



Notes on the Occurrence of the Bamboo Pitviper, *Trimeresurus gramineus* (Reptilia: Squamata: Viperidae), from Southwestern West Bengal, India

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The Bamboo Pitviper, *Trimeresurus gramineus* (Shaw 1802), is a nocturnally-active snake that usually is associated with hilly forests. Sawant et al. (2010) reported that it appeared to prefer the thick canopy of trees at an average

height of 3 to 5 m above the ground, but it also is known to inhabit low bushes and is frequently found near streams (Whitaker and Captain 2004). Many pitvipers are reportedly hygrophilic in nature (Daltry et al. 1998), which could

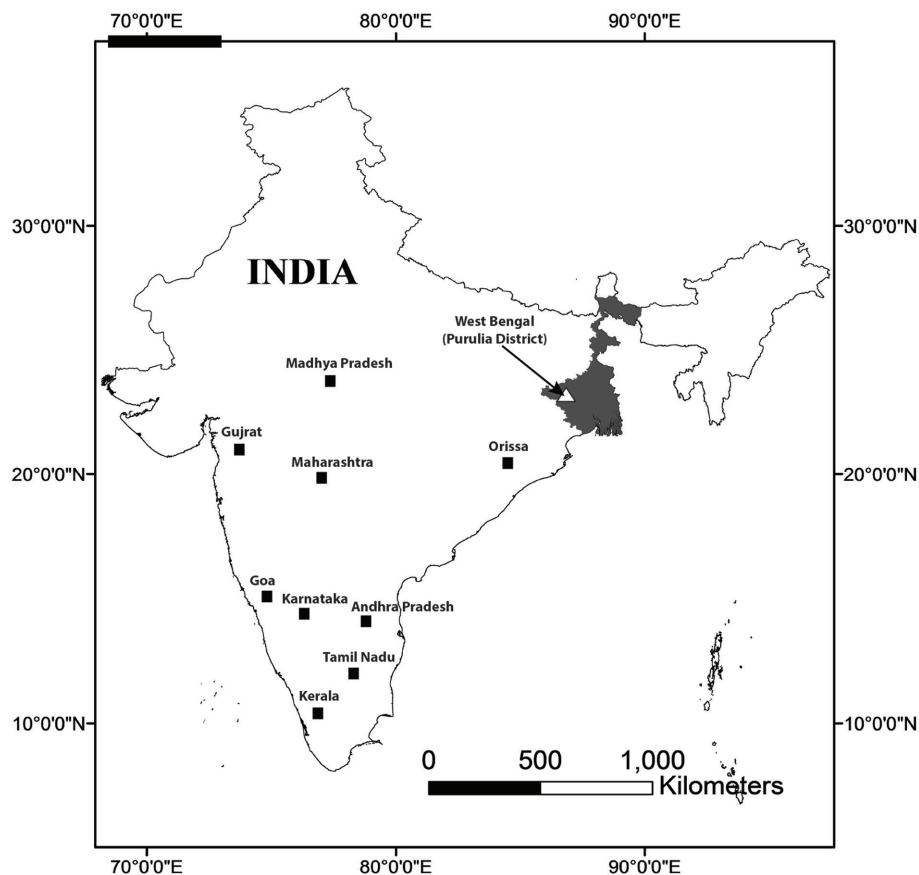


Fig. 1. Map of India showing previously reported localities (black squares) for the Bamboo Pitviper (*Trimeresurus gramineus*) and a new locality for *Trimeresurus* cf. *gramineus* from Purulia, West Bengal (white triangle).

explain the presence of *T. gramineus* near streams and in moist forest habitats.

Like some other green Asian pitvipers, the Bamboo Pitviper might constitute a species complex. Because the systematics of this species have not been investigated, we subsequently refer specimens from West Bengal to *Trimeresurus cf. gramineus*. Morphometric data for two live specimens (Table

1) fall within the range of that for *T. gramineus* as defined in the available literature.

Trimeresurus gramineus is endemic to India, where it is known from the peninsular regions of the Western Ghats, including the states of Gujrat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, and the state of Andhra Pradesh (including Shevaroy, Javadi, Seshachalam, Nallamala Hills,

Table 1. Two specimens of *Trimeresurus cf. gramineus* from West Bengal compared with descriptions in Smith (1943) and Whitaker and Captain (2004).

Character	Specimen 1 (sex unknown)	Specimen 2 (female)	Smith (1943)	Whitaker and Captain (2004)
Dorsal scale rows	21:21:15	21:21:15	21:21:15	21:21:15
Ventrals	168	172	145–175 (males) 164–177 (females)	145–175 (males) 164–177 (females)
Subcaudals	61	59	55–71 (males) 57–62 (females)	55–71 (males) 57–62 (females)
Cloacal	single	single	single	single
SVL (mm)	650	721	630 (male) 800 (female)	Adult total lengths 400–1135
Tail length (mm)	121	128	115 (male) 135 (female)	—
Supralabials	11/11 1st not in contact with nasal; 3rd largest	11/12 1st not in contact with nasal; 3rd largest	10–12 1st not in contact with nasal; 3rd largest	10–12 1st not in contact with nasal
Scales between internasals	1	1	1 or 2	1 or 2
Scale rows between supralabials and suboculars	2	2	2	2
Scale rows between supraoculars	10	11	8–11	8–11
Supraocular	narrow, entire	narrow, entire	narrow, entire	narrow, entire
Subocular	elongate	elongate	elongate	elongate
Head scales	small, subequal, subimbricate, smooth	small, subequal, subimbricate, smooth	small, subequal, subimbricate, smooth	small, more or less equal, subimbricate, smooth
Temporals	small, smooth	small, smooth	small, smooth	small, smooth
Preoculars	2/2	3/2	—	3
Postoculars	2/2	2/2	—	2
Coloration	dorsum yellow with irregular blackish- brown markings, labials light yellow, postocular black streak present, venter yellow	dorsum olive-green with irregular blackish- olive markings, labials yellowish-white, postocular black streak present, venter whitish	dorsum green with small dark brown spots, supralabials whitish, dark postocular streak present or absent, venter whitish	dorsum grass-green/ yellow/olive, faint irregular blackish- brown markings, labials and venter yellow/white/pale green, dark postocular streak may be present



Fig. 2. *Trimeresurus* cf. *gramineus* (sex unknown) at 0149 h on 13 November 2007 in a low-lying bush 2 m above the ground in Garpanchkot (Purulia District), West Bengal, India (23.383836 N, 86.454108 E; elevation 157 m asl). Photograph by Sudip Ghosh.



Fig. 3. Adult female *Trimeresurus* cf. *gramineus* at 1710 h on 01 February 2015 foraging on the ground in Garpanchkot (Purulia District), West Bengal, India (23.383836 N, 86.454108 E; elevation 157 m asl). Photograph by Arpita Dutta.

and Adilabad) in the Eastern Ghats (Srinivasulu 2003; Whitaker and Captain 2004; Nande and Deshmukh 2007; Srinivasulu and Das 2008). Records of this species from the state of Orissa (Dutta et al. 2009) are not based on voucher specimens and detailed descriptions are not available. D'Abreu (1928) also recorded this species in the Pachmarhi Region, Hosangabad District in the state Madhya Pradesh.

We recorded this species on two occasions in Garpanchkot (Purulia District), West Bengal, India (23.383836°N, 86.454108°E; elevation 157 m asl; Fig. 1). We encountered the first snake (Fig. 2) at 0149 h on 13 November 2007 in a low-lying bush 2 m above the ground and the second snake (Fig. 3) at 1710 h on 01 February 2015 foraging on the ground near the base of a tree. These new records of *T. gramineus* extend the northeastern-most distribution approximately 230 km from the nearest previously recorded location in Orissa, India. More fieldwork will be necessary to determine the actual range of the species.

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