



# First Record of the Southern Flying Lizard, *Draco dussumieri* (Duméril and Bibron 1837), from the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, India

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The flying lizards of the genus *Draco* (family Agamidae) are widely distributed in southeastern Asia and southwestern India (McGuire and Dudley 2011). *Draco dussumieri* was first described by Duméril and Bibron in 1837 based on specimens collected from Malabar (present day region of northern Kerala, India; Smith 1935). These are diurnally active, arboreal lizards endemic to the Western and Eastern Ghats of India. Records exist for the states of Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and southern Andhra Pradesh, where this species is widely distributed in protected areas and reserve

forests (Smith 1935; John 1962; Johnson 1983; Inger et al. 1984; Sugathan 1984; Das and Whitaker 1990; Zacharias 1997; Balachandran 1998; Kannan and Venkataraman 1998; Balachandran and Pittie 2000; Cherian et al. 2000; Ishwar et al. 2001; Ishwar et al. 2003; Sreedharan 2004; Krishnan 2008; Venugopal 2010).

At about 1230 h during a field survey on 28 May 2015 in the Tillari Forest Region of Maharashtra, India (15°41'N, 74°12'E; elevation 115 m asl), we encountered two lizards in a tree more than 2 m above the ground (Fig. 1). We identified



**Fig. 1.** Southern Flying Lizards (*Draco dussumieri*) in the Tillari Forest, Maharashtra, India. Photographs by Makarand Naik.

them as Southern Flying Lizards (*Draco dussumieri*) by the presence of the elongated, bright lemon-yellow dewlap, the patagium patterned beneath with black blotches, the horn-like conical tubercles behind and above the eyes, the rugose dorsum, and the irregular brown spots on the throat (Günther 1864; Boulenger 1890; Smith 1935; Daniels 2002). The forests in this area are semi-evergreen and moist deciduous (Jog 2009).

The Tillari Forest Region is located in the Dodamarg Taluka in the Sawantwadi Subdivision of the Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra, India. The previously recorded distribution of *D. dussumieri* in the Western Ghats was limited to the states of Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala (Daniels 2002). This observation extends the range of this species north by 25 km (aerial) and is a first record from the state of Maharashtra.

*Draco dussumieri* is listed as of Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (Srinivasulu et al. 2013) because it is widely distributed and fairly common throughout its range. However, the habitat of the locality described herein is affected by massive rubber and cashew nut plantations. Additional field surveys are necessary for delimiting the northernmost distribution of this species in the Western Ghats.

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