



New State Records of the Slender Coralsnake, *Calliophis melanurus* (Shaw 1802), and the Yellow-spotted Wolfsnake, *Lycodon flavomaculatus* Wall 1907, in Chhattisgarh, India

Rahul V. Deshmukh¹, Sagar A. Deshmukh², and Swapnil A. Badhekar³

¹H. No. 26, Teacher colony, Brahmani – Kalmeshwar, Nagpur, M.S. – 441501 (rahul30.snake@gmail.com)

²Behind Potdar Nursing Home, Kalmeshwar, Nagpur, M.S. – 441501 (sd.snakefriend@gmail.com)

³Tiwaskarwadi, Raipur, Hingana, Nagpur, M.S. – 441110 (swapnilbadhekar86@gmail.com)

Asian Coralsnakes of the genus *Calliophis* (Elapidae) are among the most poorly known venomous snakes in southeastern Asia (Deepak et al. 2010; Ganesh and Ramanujam 2014). The Slender Coralsnake (*C. melanurus*), a nocturnal, ground-dwelling, oviparous species, is known to occur in India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh (Whitaker and Captain 2004) and might be present in Bhutan (Lenz 2012). In India, the species has been recorded from Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal (D'Abrue 1913; Deshmukh et al. 2015; Lewis et al. 2010; Nande and Deshmukh 2007; Palot 2015; Shine and Nameer 2012; Srinivasulu et al. 2014; Vyas and Vyas 1981; Whitaker and Captain 2004). We herein present the first records from Chhattisgarh.

On 7 December 2017, an adult male (SVL 191.96 mm, tail length 18.42 mm; Fig. 1) captured by Abid Khan from beneath a water tank at Steel Colony, Nehru Nagar, Street No. 8, Durg (21°11'95.10"N, 81°18'27.87"E) regurgitated a young Brahminy Blindsnake (*Indotyphlops braminus*). A second Slender Coralsnake, a young male (SVL 130.09 mm,

tail length 12.60 mm; Fig. 1), was captured while crawling along a brick path in a house garden at about 0600 h on 9 December 2017 in the same area. A third individual, an adult female (SVL 168.01 mm, tail length 13.21 mm; Fig. 1) was in a drainage ditch lined with rocks at 0215 h on 12 December 2017. All were released into suitable habitat in the outskirts of Durg. These new records (Fig. 2) extend the distribution of this species about 242 km from the nearest known locality in Nagpur, Maharashtra, about 780 km from the nearest locality in Madhya Pradesh, about 1,000 km from that in West Bengal, 1,200 km that in Karnataka, and about 1,025 km from that in Andhra Pradesh.

The genus *Lycodon*, with 51 currently recognized species, is one of the most speciose genera in the Oriental Region (Uetz et al. 2018). The Yellow-spotted Wolfsnake (*L. flavomaculatus*), which Boulenger (1893) had considered a color variant of the Common Indian Wolfsnake (*L. aulicus*), is a rare Indian endemic (Whitaker and Captain 2004). It has been recorded with confidence from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu (Chikane



Fig. 1. Slender Coralsnakes (*Calliophis melanurus*) collected in the vicinity of Durg, Chhattisgarh, India: an adult male taken on 7 December 2017 (left), a juvenile male on 9 December 2017 (center), and an adult female on 12 December 2017 (right). These represent the first records of the species in Chhattisgarh. Photographs by Uddesh Hiwase (left), Rahul Deshmukh (center), and Sagar Deshmukh (right).



Fig. 2. Map of India showing states with records of Slender Coralsnakes (*Calliophis melanurus*) in dark gray. The site of the new Chhattisgarh state record in Durg is marked with the red dot.

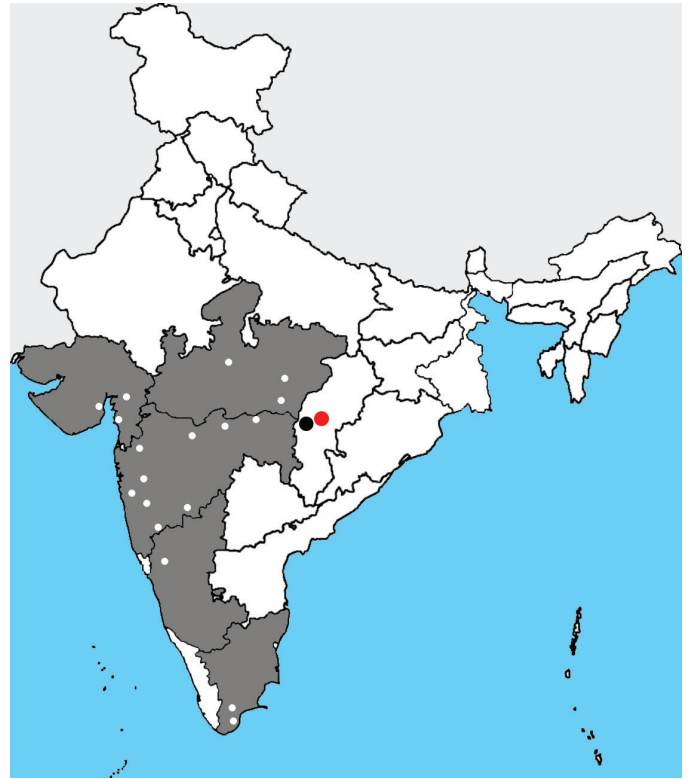


Fig. 4. Map of India showing states with records of Yellow-spotted Wolfsnake (*Lycodon flavomaculatus*) in dark gray and approximate localities of previous records as small white dots. The site of the new Chhattisgarh state record in Khairagarh is marked with the black dot and the new easternmost record of the species in Durg is marked with the red dot.

and Bhosale 2012; Deshmukh et al. 2015; Melvinselvan et al. 2016; Nande and Deshmukh 2007; Narayanan et al. 2017; Sharma et al. 2015; Srinivasulu et al. 2014; Trivedi and Shah 2017; Vyas and Upadhaya 2008; Wall 1907; Walmiki et al. 2011). Srinivasulu et al. (2014; in a personal communication from Sanjay Thakur on p. 28) listed a locality for the species from Ambikapur, Surguja, Chhattisgarh. However, in another part of the document (pp. 54–55), the same species was treated as endemic to the Western Ghats and the central Indian locality was described as unconfirmed. Sharma et al. (2015) expressed doubt regarding the validity of that

record. We herein present the first documented records from Chhattisgarh.

At 2150 h on 20 October 2017, the second author (SAD) encountered a young male (SVL 299.75 mm, tail length 49.30 mm; Fig. 3) while crossing the road into the campus of Indira Kala Sangit University in Khairagarh, Rajnandgaon District (21°42'15.93»N, 80°97'85.06»E). After collecting morphological and meristic data and photographing the snake, he released it at the site of capture. At 2320 h on 22



Fig. 3. A young Yellow-spotted Wolfsnake (*Lycodon flavomaculatus*) collected on 20 October 2017 in Khairagarh, Chhattisgarh, India (left) and a road-killed, unsexed individual found on 22 October 2017 in Durg, Chhattisgarh, India. These represent the first confirmed records of the species in Chhattisgarh. Durg is the easternmost recorded locality for the species in India. Photographs by Sagar Deshmukh.

October 2017, SAD observed another young unsexed individual (Fig. 2) road-killed on the Balod Road near Bandha Talab in Durg (21°18'12.18"N, 81°26'35.91"E). The distance between these two localities (Fig. 4) was about 50 km. Rajnandgaon is about 1,200 km from Dharwad, Karnataka (the type locality) for the Yellow-spotted Wolfsnake, 190 km east of the nearest known locality at Nagpur, Maharashtra, 738 km from a known locality in Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, and 1,800 km from another locality in Nagalapuram, Tamil Nadu. Durg is the easternmost record for this species.

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