



# Occurrence of the Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*) in the Melghat Tiger Reserve: A Second Locality Record for Maharashtra State, India

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The Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*), recently described by Mohapatra et al. (2016), is known to occur in Andhra Pradesh, eastern Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, southern Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and eastern Maharashtra (Lampe and Lindholm 1902; Edake 2011; Schulz 2013; Srivastava et al. 2013;

Kantimahanti et al. 2015; Chowdhury et al. 2018; Uetz et al. 2019). Herein we document a second locality in Maharashtra that also represents the western-most record for the species.

During a recent field visit to the Gawilghur (= Gawilgad) Fort (21.3830434°N, 77.3367602°E) in the Melghat Tiger Reserve, we encountered a snake constricting a Lesser



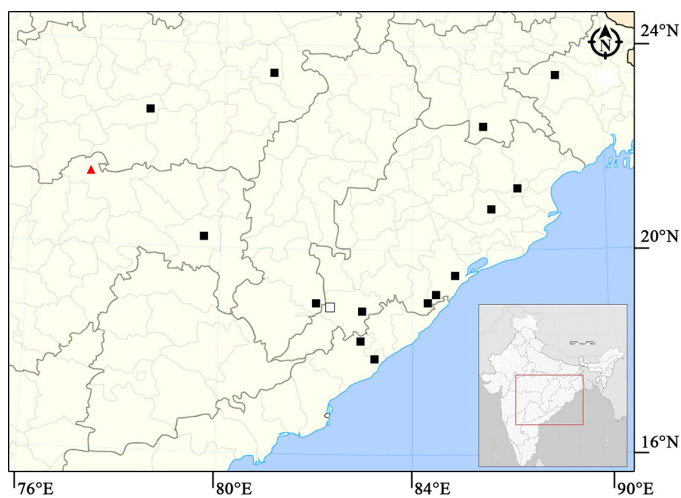
**Fig. 1.** An Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*) constricting a Lesser Bandicoot (*Bandicota bengalensis*). Photograph by Ankit Bibekar.

Bandicoot (*Bandicota bengalensis*; Fig. 1). Based on descriptions in Smith (1943) and Whitaker and Captain (2008), we quickly identified the snake as a ratsnake in the genus *Coelognathus* and subsequently as an Arrow-headed Trinket Snake, *Coelognathus helena nigriangularis* (Mohapatra et al. 2016). We photographed and videotaped the incident using a Nikon Coolpix P900™.

The present locality is a historical fort (Fig. 2) in the municipality of Chikhaldara at an elevation of 1,035 m asl. Chikhaldara and the Pachmari Hill Station are the only two localities in a wet zone characterized by moist deciduous forests in the otherwise dry deciduous landscape of the Satpura Hills. This second locality record for the species in Maharashtra is the first record for the Amravati District and the Melghat Tiger Reserve (Nande and Deshmukh 2007) and



**Fig. 2.** An aerial view of typical habitat at the Gawilghur Fort, Chikhaldara, in the Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, India. Photograph courtesy of Ahsan Sheikh.



**Fig. 3.** The type locality (white square) of the Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*), plus previously documented distribution records (black squares), and the new locality record from the Melghat Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, India (red triangle).

extends the range of the Arrow-headed Trinket Snake nearly 360 km to the west of the nearest known locality, Pachmari, Madhya Pradesh (Kumbhar et al. 2011; Fig. 3).

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