



# A Range Extension of the Karnataka Bronzeback, *Dendrelaphis chairecacos* (Boie 1827), from the Northern Western Ghats, India

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The ahaetuliid genus *Dendrelaphis* contains 45 currently recognized species (Uetz et al. 2019), 11 of which occur in India (Aengals et al. 2018). The taxonomy of these species was unresolved until clarified by Van Rooijen and Vogel (2009) and Vogel and Van Rooijen (2011a, 2011b), the former resurrecting *D. chairecacos* from the synonymy of *D. tristis*.

Little is known about *Dendrelaphis chairecacos*, which is assessed on the IUCN Red List as Data Deficient (Deepak et al. 2019). During a herpetofaunal survey conducted between November 2016 and July 2017 in the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve (17°04'00"–17°19'54"N, 73°40'43"–73°53'09"E), northern Western Ghats, India, we encountered an adult female at about 1130 h on 26 February 2017 (Figs. 1 & 2). We recorded environmental and morphometric data and released the snake at the site of capture.

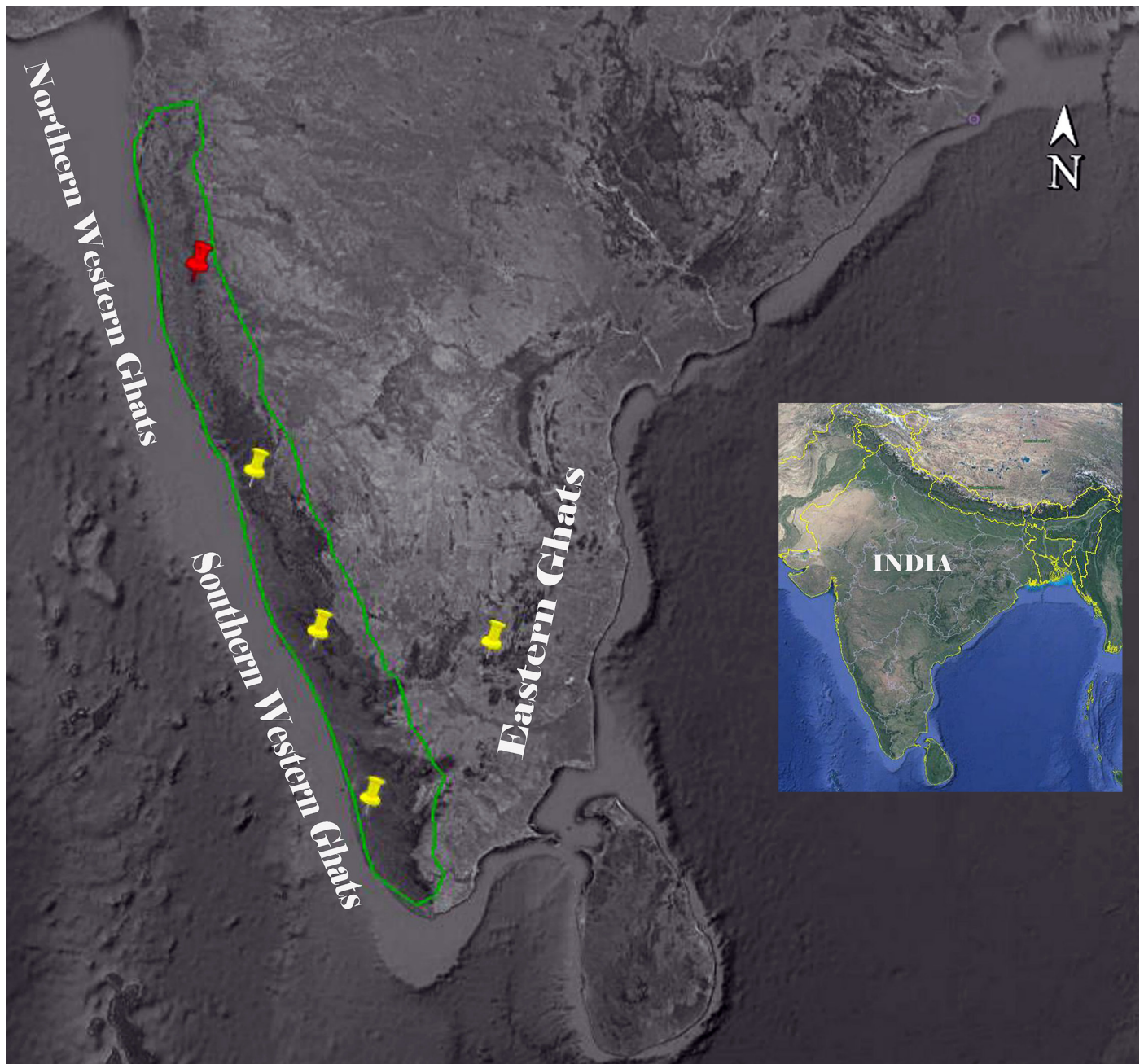
We confirmed the identity of the species using information in Van Rooijen and Vogel (2009) and Chandramouli and Ganesh (2012). The snake was at a height of ~1.8 m in a tree in tropical deciduous forest habitat (Karthik et al.



**Fig. 1.** An adult female Karnataka Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis chairecacos*) from the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, northern Western Ghats, India. Photograph by P. Karthik.



**Fig. 2.** Lateral, dorsal, and ventral views of the head of an adult female Karnataka Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis chairecacos*) from the Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, northern Western Ghats, India. Photographs by P. Karthik.



**Fig. 3.** Reported localities for the Karnataka Bronzeback (*Dendrelaphis chairecacos*) in peninsular India. The new locality reported herein is indicated by the red symbol; previously reported sites are marked by yellow symbols, including the only locality in the Eastern Ghats (Ganesh and Arumugam 2015). The Western Ghats are indicated by the green outline.

2019) at an elevation of 850 m asl. This location, 378 km north-northwest of the nearest previous location recorded by Chandramouli and Ganesh (2012), is only the fifth reported locality for the species and the first from the Northern Western Ghats (Fig. 2). Noteworthy is that this female had a snout-vent length of 830 mm, exceeding the previous maxima of 480 mm reported by Van Rooijen and Vogel (2009) and 780 mm recorded by Chandramouli and Ganesh (2012). In addition, the elevation where this snake was encountered (850 m asl) dramatically exceeds the maximum elevation (400 m asl) listed by Deepak et al. (2019).

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