



Northernmost Record of the Nilgiri Keelback, *Hebius beddomei* (Günther 1864) (Squamata: Natricidae) from the Western Ghats of India

Anuj Shinde¹, Shubhankar Deshpande^{1,4}, Makarand Ketkar^{2,4}, and Swayam Thakkar³

¹Fergusson College, Shivajinagar, Pune, Maharashtra, 411004, India (shubhankarsdeshpande11@gmail.com)

²Insearch Outdoors, Ketan Heights, C-26, Anupam Park, Rahul Nagar, Kothrud, Pune, Maharashtra, 411038, India

³MIT World Peace University, Survey No. 124, Paud Road, Kothrud, Pune, Maharashtra, 411038, India

⁴Institute of Natural History Education and Research (INHER), C26/9 Ketan Heights, Kothrud, Pune, Maharashtra 411038, India

The Nilgiri Keelback (*Hebius beddomei*) is an endemic natricid (Chaitanya et al. 2018) with a known distribution in the Western Ghats of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra from south of Mahabaleshwar, Maharashtra, to the Bonacaud Estate in Kerala at elevations between 60 and 1,000 m asl (Srinivasulu et al. 2014). In the state of Maharashtra, this species is known to occur at the Mahabaleshwar Hill Station and Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary in Satara District (Srinivasulu et al. 2014), the Kaas Plateau in Satara District (Chikane and Bhosale 2012), Chandoli National Park in Sangli District (Amol Jadhav, pers. comm.), and Amboli (AS, SD, MK, pers. obs.).

At 1330 h on 6 October 2019, during a field survey in Adarwadi Devrai, Tamhini Ghat, Pune (18°25'51.00"N, 73°24'15.36"E), MK and ST encountered a single individual (Fig. 1) at an elevation of 578 m asl in tropical semi-evergreen type forest (Champion and Seth 1968). The snake was in thick leaf litter next to a rock on the forest floor and in the process of ingesting an endemic Ghate's Shrub Frog (*Raorchestes ghatei*) (Fig. 2). We photographed the snake and then released it at the site of capture.

The new locality of Adarwadi Devrai is about 62 km north of the previously documented northernmost record at South Mahabaleshwar (Whitaker and Captain 2004)



Fig. 1. A Nilgiri Keelback (*Hebius beddomei*) from Adarwadi Devrai, Tamhini Ghat, Pune, Maharashtra, India. Photograph by Swayam Thakkar.



Fig. 2. A Nilgiri Keelback (*Hebius beddomei*) from Adarwadi Devrai, Tamhini Ghat, Pune, Maharashtra, India, ingesting a Ghat's Shrub Frog (*Raorchestes ghatei*). Photograph by Swayam Thakkar.

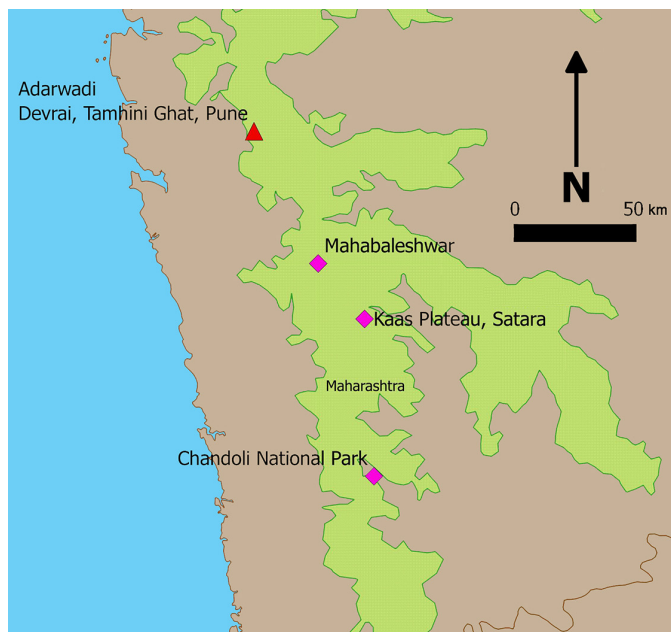


Fig. 3. Map of the northern Western Ghats of Maharashtra, India, showing the distribution of the Nilgiri Keelback (*Hebius beddomei*). The previously recorded distribution in Maharashtra is represented by pink squares and the new northernmost record is indicated by a red triangle.

and also the first record of the species from Pune District of Maharashtra.

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