



A Two-colored Forestsnake, *Smithophis bicolor* (Blyth 1855) (Reptilia: Natricidae), from the Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, India

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The recently described natricid genus *Smithophis* Giri, Gower, Das, Lalremsanga, Lalronunga, Captain, and Deepak 2019 comprises four currently recognized species, three of which (*S. atemporalis*, *S. bicolor*, and *S. arunachalensis*) are known from the northeastern Indian states of Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh, and one (*S. linearis*) from adjacent Myanmar and southwestern China (Das et al. 2020; Vogel et al. 2020). Little is known about these snakes. Three of the four species were described within the past two years, but even the fourth species, *S. bicolor*, which was described by Blyth (1855), is relatively poorly known.

During a biodiversity inventory of the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, one of us (PK) collected a fresh road-killed specimen of *Smithophis* from the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Campus in Shillong (25.615°N, 91.900°E; 1,400 m asl). It was collected and preserved in ethanol and deposited in the collection of the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) as SACON VR194 (Fig. 1). The adult male measured 413 mm SVL with a 120-mm long tail; head short (HL/SVL = 0.03), much longer than broad (HL/HW = 1.65) with a bluntly rounded snout; eyes relatively small (ED:HL = 0.08) and nostrils located slightly



Fig. 1. An adult male Two-colored Forestsnake, *Smithophis bicolor* (SACON VR194), from near the North-Eastern Hill University Campus, Shillong, in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, India. Photographs by S.R. Chandramouli.

closer to the tip of the snout than to the eyes (EN:ES = 0.53); rostral barely visible from above; internasal and prefrontal single; frontal pentagonal, nearly as broad as high,

Table 1. Meristic and morphometric characters of an adult male Two-colored Forestsnake, *Smithophis bicolor* (SACON VR194), from near the North-Eastern Hill University Campus, Shillong, in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, India, compared to data for males and females in Das et al. (2020). All measurements are in mm. Note that SVL and tail length values were interchanged for a female specimen (BNHS 1732) in Table 2 of Das et al. (2020).

Character	SACON VR 194	Males	Females
SVL	413	228–593	431–521
Tail length	120	58–159	132–142
Tail/total length	0.225	0.20–0.24	0.19–0.21
Head length	12.63	—	—
Head width	7.65	—	—
Eye diameter	1.09	—	—
Supralabials	6	5–6	5–6
Infralabials	7	7–8	7–8
Dorsal scale rows	17:17:17	17	17
Ventrals	195	197–213	186–196
Subcaudals	73	67–85	61–71

bordered by two small supraoculars; parietals large; preocular 1; postoculars 2, the first nearly subocular; elongated slender anterior temporal followed by a smaller posterior temporal; supralabials 6, 5th longest; infralabials 6; dorsal scales smooth, in 17:17:17 rows; ventrals 195; cloacal divided; subcaudals 73, divided; relative tail length (TaL/TL = 0.22). Dorsal coloration was uniformly olivaceous brown, sharply demarcated flanks bright lemon-yellow, venter creamy white. These characters correspond closely to the original description by Blyth (1855) and the tabulated data and figures in Das et al. (2020) (Table 1).

Further studies on geographic distribution and natural history are needed for a better understanding of the biology and ecology of this species. The present observation of a road-killed individual suggests that this species might face anthropogenic threats and an assessment of its conservation status is needed.

Literature Cited

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