



New Records of Castoe’s Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) from Kolhapur District, Maharashtra, India

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The Family Elapidae comprises a large and diverse group of terrestrial and marine species of highly venomous snakes, with over 60 genera and nearly 400 currently recognized species (Uetz et al. 2020). More than one-third of the taxonomic diversity in the family is comprised of coralsnakes, six genera of which are distributed in Asia and the Americas (Golay et al. 1993). The genus *Calliophis* is among the least known venomous snakes in Asia (Deepak et al. 2010; Ganesh and Ramanujam 2014). *Calliophis castoe* was recently described by Smith et al. (2012) from Amboli, Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra, India (15.958790°N, 73.994686°E; 715 m asl). The other known localities for this species are Ambe Ghat, South Goa District, Goa, Dicholi, Goa and Karwar, Uttar Kannada District, Karnataka. This species inhabits areas like those at the type locality with tropical wet evergreen forest as well as locations like Goa, which have high human population densities. Herein

we provide new records of *Calliophis castoe* from Madilge and Honewadi, Ajra, Kolhapur District, Maharashtra, India.

At 1700 h on 23 January 2021, we received a call for a snake rescue from Madilge (16.16878°N, 74.22730°E; 685 m asl). We identified the snake as *C. castoe* and released it in natural habitat after taking photographs. Photographs were sent to Varad Giri, who confirmed the identity of the snake. We deposited a photographic voucher (Fig. 1) in the Zoological Reference Collection in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore (ZRC(IMG) 2.564). At 1100 h on 28 August 2020, we collected a dead specimen of the same species near the residential area of Honewadi (16.11712°N, 74.24222°E; 706 m asl). We extracted tissue for molecular analysis from the tip of the tail before fixing the specimen in 4% formalin and preserving it in 70% alcohol. These records extend the range of *C. castoe* by about 35 km



Fig. 1. A Castoe’s Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) from Madilge, Ajra, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India. Photograph by Mayur Jadhav.

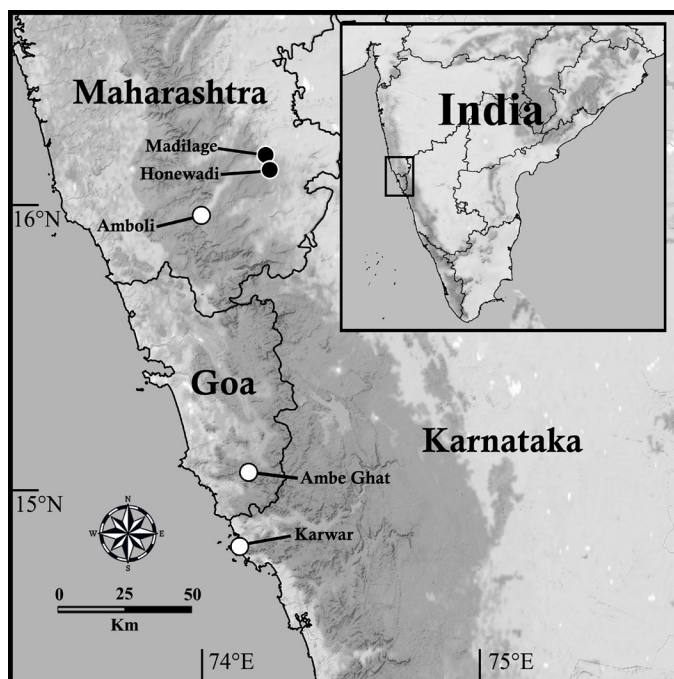


Fig. 2. Records of Castoe’s Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) in Peninsular India. Previously published records are marked by white dots and the new locality records reported herein are indicated by black dots.

to the northeast of the closest known locality in Amboli Ghat, Sindhudurg (Fig. 2), suggesting that this species could occur in other parts of the northern Western Ghats.

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