



Notes on the Distribution of the Rare Indian Egg-eating Snake, *Boiga westermanni* (Reinhardt 1863)

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The precise distribution of the Indian Egg-eating Snake (*Boiga westermanni*) is poorly known due to irregular sightings. Until Smith (1943), the species was thought to be limited to only a few proximate sites (Purnea, Bihar, and Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India) in the general vicinity of the type locality at Rangpoor (now Rangpur), Bangladesh (Reinhardt 1863; Blanford 1875; Wall 1913). Since then, a substantial number of additional localities, many of them far from the type locality, have been documented (Table 1; Fig. 1). The dramatic increase in the number of records in recent years led to the species' listing as being of Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Srinivasulu et al. 2013).

Based on opportunistic sightings of roadkills in areas of dry deciduous and scrub forest dominated by agricultural land in Madhya Pradesh, I herein add three new distributional records for *B. westermanni* (Fig. 1). The first sighting (Figs. 2B & E) was a subadult male (total length 508 mm) found on 25 August 2021 on the Maksudangarh-Suthaliya Road near Maksudangarh, Guna District (24°3'27.08"N, 77°13'43.02"E) (Fig. 3), 5 km from the district border with

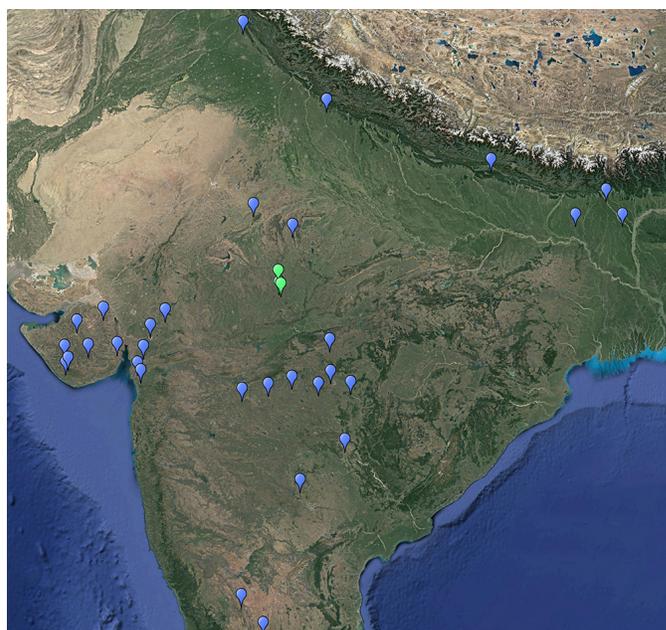


Fig. 1. Map showing previously documented localities of the Indian Egg-eating Snake (*Boiga westermanni*) marked with blue symbols and new records indicated by green symbols.

Table 1. Locality records of the Indian Egg-eating Snake (*Boiga westermanni*).

Locality	Source
Rangpur, Bangladesh (type locality)	Reinhardt 1863
Purnea, Bihar, India	Blanford 1875
Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India	Wall 1913
Rapti Dun, Chitwan, Nepal	Rosenberg and Gans 1976
Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand, India	Lamba 1987
Wardha, Maharashtra, India	Captain et al. 2005
Amrawati, Maharashtra, India	Nande and Deshmukh 2007
Akola, Maharashtra, India	Dandge 2008
Buldhana, Maharashtra, India	Narayanan 2012
Nagpur, Maharashtra, India	Deshmukh et al. 2015

(continued)

Locality	Source
Gondia, Jalgaon, Nagpur, Pauni, Vidarbha, and Yavatmal, Maharashtra, India	Dandge and Tiple 2016
Amreli, Bhavnagar, Panchmahal, Surendranagar, Sasan, Junagarh, Rajkot, Surat, and Vadodara, Gujarat, India	Vyas 2006; 2010; 2013; 2016
Hoshiarpur, Punjab, India	Sharma 2014
Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, India	Sharma 2014
Medak District, Telangana, India	Visvanathan 2015
Bellampalli City, Telangana, India	Dandge and Tiple 2016
Navsari and Bharuch, Gujarat, India	Vyas et al. 2017
Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan, India	Khandal et al. 2016
Chhindawara, Madhya Pradesh, India	Deshmukh et al. 2020
Bukkatpatna, Tumkur District, Karnataka, India	Bilaskar et al. 2018
Gonur, Chitradurga District Karnataka, India	Kalki and Gowda 2021
Maksundangarh, Guna, Madhya Pradesh, India	Present study
Runaha Jod and Bhamora Village, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India	Present study



Fig. 2. Road-killed Indian Egg-eating Snakes (*Boiga westermanni*): Full Body view (A) (Runaha Jod, Bhopal District), ventral view (B) (Maksundangarh, Guna District), lateral view of head (C) (Runaha Jod, Bhopal District), vertebral scales (D) (Runaha Jod, Bhopal District), dorsal view of head (E) (Maksundangarh, Guna District), and full body view (F) (Bhamora Village, Bhopal District). Photographs by Amit Manhas.



Fig. 3. Habitat where road-killed Indian Egg-eating Snakes (*Boiga westermanni*) were found at Maksudangarh, Guna (left), Runaha Jod, Bhopal (center), and Bhamora Village, Bhopal (right), in Madhya Pradesh, India. Photographs by Amit Manhas.

Rajgarh. This record is approximately 180 km to the south and 386 km to the north of the records of Sharma (2014) and Deshmukh et al. (2020), respectively. The second sighting (Figs. 2A, C, & D) was an unsexed juvenile (total length 330 mm) encountered on 28 August 2021 on the Guna-Bhopal Road to Nazirabad near Runaha Jod, Bhopal District (23°43'14.99", N 77°15'44.69"E) (Fig. 3), about 42.9 km from the first sighting. This record is approximately 225 km to the south and 344 km to the north of the records of Sharma (2014) and Deshmukh et al. (2020), respectively. The third sighting (Fig. 2F) was an unsexed subadult (total length 609 mm) encountered on 7 September 2021 on the Guna-Bhopal Road to Beraisa near Bhamora Village, Bhopal District (23°40'00.28"N, 77°19'22.75"E) (Fig. 3), about 10 km from second sighting. This record is approximately 235 km to the south and 354 km to the north of the records of Sharma (2014) and Deshmukh et al. (2020), respectively. Photographic vouchers have been deposited in the Museum of Science Lab (Department of Zoology), Govt. College Suthaliya, Rajgarh, Madhya Pradesh, India (IMG-GCS-21-G.01, IMG-GCS-21-B.01-2). The identity of the species was confirmed by Dr. Pratyush P. Mohapatra, Zoological Survey of India, Central Zone Regional Centre, Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Although sporadically encountered, *Boiga westermanni* appears to have a wider distribution than previously thought (e.g., Sharma 2014). Most of the new locality records were recorded within the past decade, suggesting that the known range of the species will continue to grow. Once thought to be extinct (e.g., Murty et al. (1993), now over 100 published and unpublished locality records exist (e.g., Mohan et al. 2018). Dandge and Tiple (2016) indicated that roadkills were a major threat and, although the species is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act (1972) and does not appear to be as rare as once thought, populations need to be monitored or the “rarity” of the species will become a reality.

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