



# Record Clutch Size for an Indian Cobra, *Naja naja* (Linnaeus 1758)

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On 18 February 2021, in response to a rescue call from a homestead area of Puthanangadi, Alappuzha District, Kerala, India, SK encountered an adult Indian Cobra (*Naja naja*) (total length ~1.5 m) curled on top of an unusually large clutch of eggs under a pile of old bricks near a house. Three of the 45 eggs (Fig. 1) were badly damaged and infertile. The snake and eggs were transferred to Ranni by the Rapid Response Team (RRT) of the Ranni Forest Division, Pathanamthitta District.

Reported clutch sizes of Indian Cobras range from 10 to 32 (Wall 1905; Smith 1943; Das 2002; Daniel 2004; Sharma 2007; Whitaker and Captain 2008). Local snake rescuers of the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department indicated that the typical clutch size of an Indian Cobra is 10–24 eggs. In February 2021, a clutch of 16 eggs from Parassinikadavu

Snake Park of Kannur District was successfully incubated and all hatchlings were released (Riyas Mangad, pers. comm.). The Peruvannamuzhi Animal Rehabilitation Centre of the Forest Department, Kozhikode District, received a clutch of 24 eggs in January 2019 (Surendran, pers. comm.).

Knierim et al. (2019) documented two nesting female Banded Kraits (*Bungarus fasciatus*) sharing a burrow but communal nesting has not been demonstrated in any other elapid. Although we cannot rule out that possibility altogether, the clutch size of 45 eggs reported herein appears to be a record for the Indian Cobra.

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**Fig. 1.** A clutch of 42 eggs of an Indian Cobra (*Naja naja*) at Puthanangadi, Alappuzha District, Kerala, India. Photograph by Santhosh K.