



# An Unusually Pale Morph of the Common Indian Krait, *Bungarus caeruleus* (Schneider 1801)

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The Common Indian Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) is a medically important snake that is widely distributed in southern Asia (Uetz et al. 2021). The dorsal ground color is generally blackish blue in color, but occasionally dark brown (Whitaker and Captain 2008).

At 2130 h on 20 January 2011, we received a snake rescue call from Girvi Naka, Phaltan, Maharashtra, India (17.9783°N, 74.4305°E; elev. 563 m asl). Based on coloration, at first glance the snake resembled a Common Wolfsnake (*Lycodon aulicus*). However, after a closer examination of hexagonal dorsal scales and the banding pattern, we identified it as a Common Indian Krait. After taking photographs, we released the snake into nearby natural habitat. Photographs were sent to Akshay Khandekar, who confirmed the identity of the species.

Dark colors depend primarily on the presence and amount of melanin, with multiple alleles apparently affecting the quantity of melanin and sometimes resulting in decreased amounts of diffused melanin (Bechtel 1978). We believe this to be the case in this unusually pale Common Indian Krait.

### Acknowledgements

Akshay Khandekar confirmed the identity of the species and Amar Waghela assisted in the field.

### Literature Cited

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- Whitaker, R. and A. Captain. 2008. *Snakes of India. The Field Guide*. Draco Books, Chennai, India.



Fig. 1. An unusually pale morph of the Common Indian Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*). Photograph by Rohit Ghadge.