



A New Record of the Calamaria Reedsnake, *Liopeltis calamaria* (Günther 1858), from the Western Himalayan Region of Himachal Pradesh, India

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The genus *Liopeltis* (Colubridae) comprises eight species, of which the Calamaria Reedsnake (*Liopeltis calamaria*) has been recorded in Sri Lanka, India, and Nepal (Uetz et al. 2021). However, the northern Indian and Nepalese popula-

tions, which are separated from the peninsular Indian and Sri Lankan populations by the Indo-Gangetic Plains, might be distinct and need to be examined using molecular tools (Amarasinghe et al. 2020).

At 1200 h on 5 October 2021, Chetan Kashayap encountered a snake on a Wild Sour Pomegranate Tree (*Punica granatum*) in Dalraghat Village, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh, India (31.237013°N, 76.936949°E; elev. 1,504 m asl) (Fig. 1). This site is within the Solan Forest Division, part of a hill region that extends from the outer Shivalik Hills to the middle Himalayas at elevations of 500–2,500 m asl. Forests in this division range from scrub and bamboo at lower elevations to coniferous forest where Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii*) dominates at higher elevations (Bharti et al. 2020).

The total length of the snake was 360 mm, SVL 260 mm, relative tail length 27.7%, and weight 8 g. Using characters described in Günther (1858), Smith (1943), Chuneekar and Alekar (2015), Bhattarai et al. (2018), Amarasinghe et al. (2020), and Narayanan et al. (2020), and with help from Rakeshwar Kapoor and Siddharth Singh, we tentatively identified the snake as a Calamaria Reedsnake. Photographs (Fig. 2) were taken by Forest Guard Akshay Kumar before the



Fig. 1. Map of northern India showing the location of the new record of the Calamaria Reedsnake (*Liopeltis calamaria*) at Dalraghat Village, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh, India.



Fig. 2. A Calamaria Reedsnake (*Liopeltis calamaria*) from the western Himalayan Region at Dalraghat Village, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh, India. Photographs by Bhardwaj Akshay.

snake was released away from human settlements in the nearest forested area. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first record of the species in Himachal Pradesh. Photographic vouchers have been deposited in the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM VZP1039a–b). The identity of the species was confirmed from photographs by Raju Vyas.

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