



# New Distribution Records of Castoe’s Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) from Dodamarg, Maharashtra, India

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Coralsnakes, characteristically small and venomous ground-dwelling snakes of the family *Elapidae*, are one of the least known groups of venomous snakes on the Indian Subcontinent (Deepak et al. 2010; Ganesh and Ramanujam 2014). All of the six species of coralsnakes (five in the genus *Calliophis* and one in the genus *Sinomicrurus*) known from India (Slowinski et al. 2001; Smith et al. 2012; Smart et al. 2021) were assigned to the tribe Calliophini, subfamily *Elapinae* (Castoe et al. 2007). Castoe’s Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) was described by Smith et al. (2012) from Amboli, Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra, and additional localities documented for the species are Karwar, Uttar Kannada District, Karnataka; South Goa District, Dicholi, Goa; Dicholi (Bicholim), North Goa District, Goa; and Madilge and Honewadi, Ajra, Kolhapur District, Maharashtra (Smith et al. 2012; Jadhav et al. 2021).

On 11 October 2021, the SARRP (Spreading Awareness on Reptiles and Rehabilitation Program) team of Sindhudurg District, Maharashtra, received a call for a snake rescue from Kasai, Dodamarg, Maharashtra (15.63416°N, 73.97222°E;

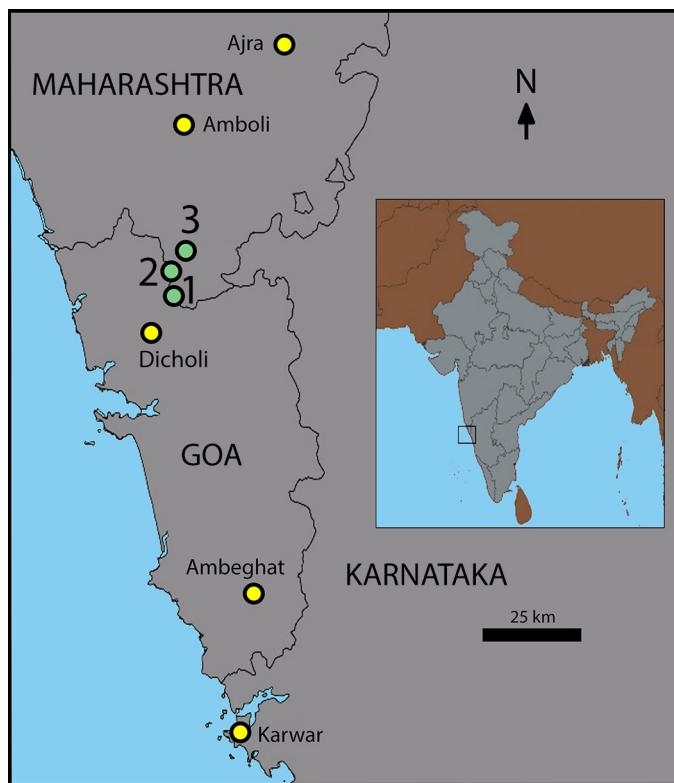
elev. 77 m asl). Upon arrival at the site (moist leaf litter in a garden), we tentatively identified the snake as *Calliophis castoe* based on the description in Smith et al. (2012) and released it into suitable habitat after taking photographs (Fig. 1). The identity of the species was confirmed from photographs by Ashok Captain and photographic vouchers were deposited in the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National University of Singapore (ZRC(IMG) 2.57a–b). We performed a second rescue of a *C. castoe* on 17 October 2021 from inside a mud house in Ambadgaon, Dodamarg, Maharashtra (15.68056°N, 73.96786°E; elev. 37 m asl), and a third on 20 October 2021 from moist leaf litter in a garden in Kudase, Dodamarg, Maharashtra (15.71892°N, 74.000891°E; elev. 32 m asl).

These three encounters with *C. castoe* in less than two weeks suggest that the species might be more common in the northern Western Ghats than the number of known records would indicate. Also, in addition to confirming the presence of the species in the Dodamarg region of southern Maharashtra, these new records bridge a gap in the known



**Fig. 1.** A Castoe’s Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) from Kasai, Dodamarg, Maharashtra, Maharashtra, India. Photograph by Vinayak Puranik.

range between the type locality at Amboli about 60 km to the north and Dicholi (Bicholim), Goa, about 14 km to the south (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** Records of Castoe's Coralsnake (*Calliophis castoe*) from northern Western Ghats, India. Previously published records are marked by yellow dots and the new locality records reported here are indicated by the green dots. Map created using the Free and Open Source QGIS.

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