



An Albino Indian Flap-shelled Turtle, *Lissemys punctata* (Bonnaterre 1789), from Telangana, India

Manoj Kumar Vittapu¹, Shraavan Kumar Poshetty¹, Gaini Sailu², and Buddi Laxmi Narayana³

¹HIG-18, Phase II, Ushodaya Enclave, Madinaguda, Hyderabad–500049, Telangana, India

²Krishna Brundavan Colony, House No: 5-100800, Bandamkommu, Ameenpur, BHEL, Hyderabad–502032, Telangana, India

³Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad–50006, Telangana, India (narayana.laxmi8@gmail.com)

The Indian Flap-shelled Turtle (*Lissemys punctata*) occurs in rivers and lakes in Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Myanmar (Uetz et al. 2021), and an introduced population has been found in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Lever 2003). This species is listed in Appendix I of CITES (2021), Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life Protection Act, 1972 (<https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A1972-530.pdf>), and as Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List (Rahman et al. 2021).

At 1630 h on 1 August 2021, MKV and SKP found an albino hatchling *Lissemys punctata* (carapace length 4 cm, width 3 cm, height 1.5 cm, weight 25 g; Fig. 1) near a freshwater pond in a forested area of Sirinepally, Nizamabad District, Telangana, India (18.464488°N, 78.273015°E). A photographic voucher has been catalogued as ZRC(IMG) 2.573 in the Zoological Reference Collections of the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum at the National

University of Singapore. The identity of the species was confirmed from the photograph by Sneha Dharadkar, co-founder of the Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises of India (FTTI).

Albinism is a complete lack of melanin, including the iris, which is red (Bechtel 1995; Mahabal and Thakur 2014). Albinos typically have low survival rates because the associated color defects have negative effects on fitness, feeding, and reproduction (Krecsák 2008).

This is the first report of an albino Indian Flap-shelled Turtle from Telangana, India. Other albino *Lissemys punctata* have been reported from Nagpur, Maharashtra (D’Abreu 1928); Himmatnagar, Gujarat (Vyas 1997); Kozhikode, Kerala (Palot and Radhakrishnan 2004); Chennai, Tamil Nadu (Cyril 2009); and Pune, Maharashtra (Vaghela and Kamble 2021). In addition, bright yellow turtles from Belasore, Odisha, and Burdwan, West Bengal (Jain 2020), appear to be albinos but the factor responsible for the yellow coloration is unknown.



Fig. 1. An albino Indian Flap-shelled Turtle (*Lissemys punctata*) from Sirinepally, Nizamabad District, Telangana State, India (ZRC(IMG) 2.573). Photographs by Manoj Kumar Vittapu.

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