



# An Additional Record of the Sri Lankan Flying Snake, *Chrysopelea* cf. *taprobanica* Smith 1943, from the Agasthyamalai Region in the Southern Western Ghats, India

R. Sankaranarayanan<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Academy for Conservation Science and Sustainability Studies, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Royal Enclave, Srirampura, Jakkur Post, Bangalore, Karnataka, India (sankaranarayanan.r@atree.org)

<sup>2</sup>The University of Trans-disciplinary Health Sciences and Technology, Jarakabande Kaval, Yelahanka, Bangalore, Karnataka, India

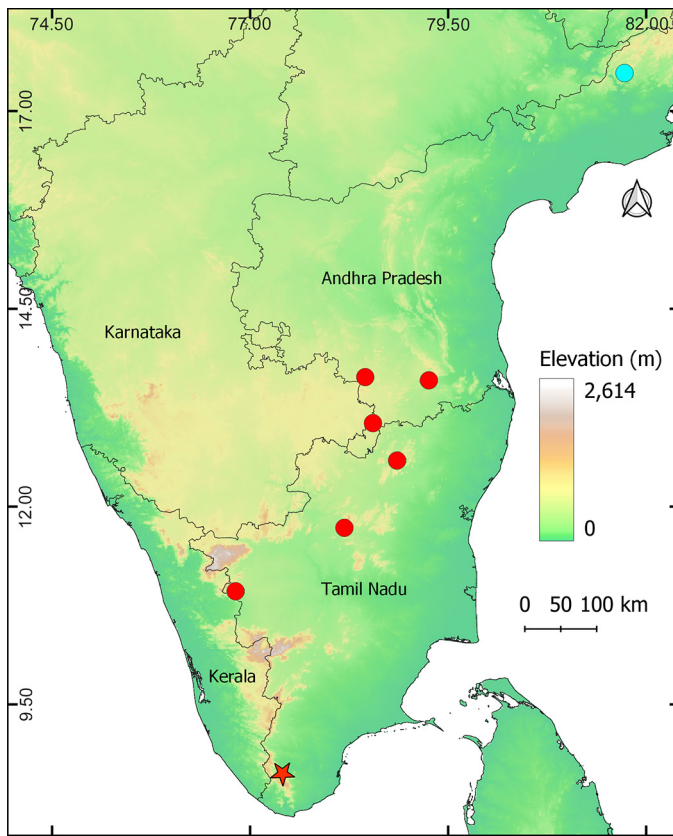
Flying snakes of the genus *Chrysopelea* Boie 1826 comprise five known species (Uetz et al. 2022). Two species of *Chrysopelea* are found in mainland India: the Golden Flying Snake, *Chrysopelea ornata* (Shaw 1802), and the Sri Lankan Flying Snake, *Chrysopelea taprobanica* Smith 1943. *Chrysopelea ornata* is a widespread species found across southern and southeastern Asia. *Chrysopelea taprobanica* initially was thought to be endemic to Sri Lanka (Smith 1943; Taylor 1950), but subsequent studies reported it from the Eastern Ghats of India (Constable 1949; Guptha et al. 2015; see also Somaweera et al. 2015). Later, Narayanan et al. (2017) reported *C. cf. taprobanica* from the Western Ghats of India. More recently, Kalaimani et al. (2023) reported five new distributional records of *C. taprobanica* from Tamil Nadu (Table 1). In this work, I report the occurrence of *C. cf. taprobanica* from the Agasthyamalai region of the southern Western Ghats.

At 1410 h on 22 Oct 2022, I encountered a roadkilled snake at Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), Tamil Nadu, India (8.62595 N, 77.40957 E; elev. 144 m asl; Fig. 1). I compared photographs of the snake (Fig. 2) with literature data for the two species of *Chrysopelea* known from peninsular India and, based on the similarity of the dorsal color pattern, referred the snake to *Chrysopelea* cf. *taprobanica* since no morphological data was collected.

This study records the first distributional record of *Chrysopelea taprobanica* from the southern Western Ghats and is 103 km south of Srivilliputhur where it was recently reported by Kalaimani et al. (2023). A photographic voucher has been deposited in the University of Kansas Digital Archive (KUDA 13941). Based on the currently available data, *C. taprobanica* apparently is widespread in the forested regions of peninsular India. More surveys are required to understand the extent of its true distributional range.

**Table 1.** Known records of the Sri Lankan Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea taprobanica*) from the Indian Subcontinent.

Location	Source
Chamba, Sesachalam Biosphere Reserve, Andhra Pradesh (13.590019 N, 79.25778 E)	Guptha et al. 2015
Kalampalayam, Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, Tamil Nadu (10.928512 N, 76.82129 E)	Narayanan et al. 2017
Javadhu Hills, Tamil Nadu (12.581463 N, 78.861228 E)	Narayanan et al. 2017
Shervaroys, Tamil Nadu (11.747706 N, 78.171574 E)	S. Narayanan, pers. comm.
Nagamalai Hill, Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu (12.498044 N, 78.348877 E)	Kalaimani et al. 2023
Muniyappan Hill, Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu (12.38213 N, 78.20088 E)	Kalaimani et al. 2023
Parvathamalai Hill, Thiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu (12.424809 N, 78.968296 E)	Kalaimani et al. 2023
Shenbagathoppu, Srivilliputhur, Tamil Nadu (9.546014 N, 77.554188 E)	Kalaimani et al. 2023
Alagarkovil Hill, Madurai, Tamil Nadu (10.076526 N, 78.212172 E)	Kalaimani et al. 2023
Manimuthar, KMTR, Tamil Nadu (8.62595 N, 77.40957 E)	This study



**Figure 1.** Map showing the distribution of the Sri Lankan Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea taprobanica*) in peninsular India. Red circles mark literature records; the red star indicates the new record reported herein.

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**Figure 2.** A road-killed Sri Lankan Flying Snake (*Chrysopelea* cf. *taprobanica*) from the Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), Tamil Nadu, India. Photographs by R. Sankaranarayanan.