



New Distribution Record of the Assam Hill Wormsnake, *Trachischium monticola* (Cantor 1839) (Natricidae) from Arunachal Pradesh, India

Kirty Prosad Nath^{1,2}, Temjenmongla¹, Yomto Mayi¹, Britijoy Khersa¹

¹Zoological Survey of India, Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre, Senki Valley, Itangar-791113, Arunachal Pradesh, India (kirtynth.hp@gmail.com)

²Developmental Biology and Herpetology Laboratory, Department of Zoology, Mizoram University, Aizawl-796004, Mizoram, India

Studies on the ophidian fauna of the eastern Himalayan state, Arunachal Pradesh, are limited. Notable contributions are those of Sanyal and Gayen (1987), Captain and Bhatt (2000), Bhatt (2004), Borang and Bhatt (2001), Borang (2003), Sanyal and Gayen (2006), and Agarwal et al. (2010). The genus *Trachischium* has seven species and is distributed in the Indian Himalayans, Bhutan, Nepal, and China (Uetz et al. 2022). Of these, *T. apteii* Bhosale, Gowande, and Mirza 2019; *T. fuscum* (Blyth 1854); and *T. sushantai* Raha et al. 2018 are endemic to India. *Trachischium monticola* (Cantor 1839) is distributed in Bangladesh, China, and the states of Assam, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh in India (Sharma 2003; Uetz et al. 2022). In Arunachal Pradesh, *T. monticola* is reported from the Papum Pare District (Borang et al. 2005); East Siang and Lohit Districts (Sanyal and Gayen 2006); and Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, West Kameng District (Agarwal et al. 2010). Herein, we report a new district record of *T. monticola* from the Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh.

On 23 September 2021, the second author and her team collected a juvenile Assam Hill Wormsnake (SVL 173.98 mm, TL 26.53 mm) (Fig. 1) from the bank of the Pas River, Pistana, Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh (27.507 N, 93.637 E; elev. 1,152 m asl) (Fig. 2). The speci-

men was euthanized using ethyl acetate, fixed in a buffered 8% formalin solution, and then transferred to 70% ethyl alcohol. The specimen was deposited and cataloged in the National Zoological Collection (NZC) of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre (APRC), Itanagar, bearing the catalog number APRC/R-185. Some of the diagnostic characteristics of this specimen are: scales in 15 rows round the body; dorsally brownish with

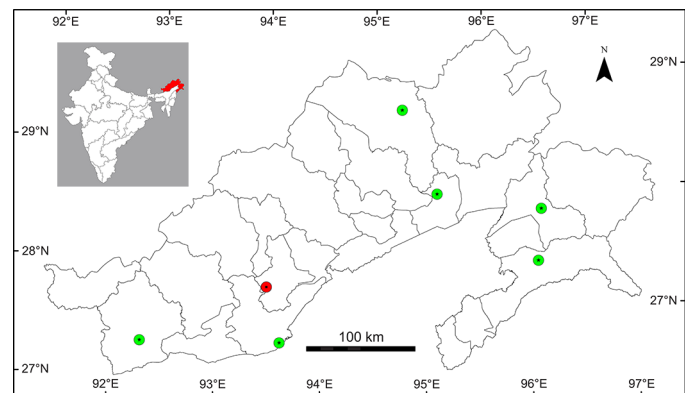


Figure 2. Map of Arunachal Pradesh, India, showing historical records of the Assam Hill Wormsnake (*Trachischium monticola*) (green dots) and the new district record in the Lower Subansiri District (red dot).



Figure 1. An Assam Hill Wormsnake (*Trachischium monticola*) (APRC/R-185): Dorsal (A) and ventral (B) views and dorsal view of the head showing the yellowish band (C). Photographs by Temjenmongla (A) and Kirty Prosad Nath (B–C).

two longitudinal lines, light yellowish dorsolateral lines present on either side, prominent yellowish spots present either side of the neck; 121 gastrosteges, and 29 subcaudals. Based on these morphological characters, the specimen was identified as *T. monticola* (Sharma 2002, 2003; Sanyal and Gayen 2006). This report documents the first occurrence record of *T. monticola* in the Lower Subansiri District of Arunachal Pradesh, India.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, and the Officer-in-Charge, Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre, ZSI, Itanagar, for providing the necessary facilities for carrying out our research. Temjenmongla acknowledges the Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department for granting the necessary permits to carry out the survey and collect specimens in Lower Subansiri District, Arunachal Pradesh. We also are thankful to Prof. H.T. Lalremsanga, Department of Zoology, Mizoram University, for confirming the identity of the specimen.

Literature Cited

- Agarwal, I., V.K. Mistry, and R. Arthreya. 2010. A preliminary checklist of the reptiles of Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh, India. *Russian Journal of Herpetology* 17: 81–93.
- Bhatt, B.B. 2004. Present status of ophidian fauna with habitat ecology of certain species of ophidians in Arunachal Pradesh. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam, India.
- Borang, A. 2003. Checklist of reptilian fauna of Dihang Dibang Biosphere Reserve in Northeast India. *Himalayan Biosphere Reserve* 5: 61–68.
- Borang, A. and B.B. Bhatt. 2001. Checklist of reptiles of Arunachal Pradesh (North East India). *Arunachal Forest News (Biodiversity Special Issue)* 19(1 & 2): 132–148.
- Borang, A., B.B. Bhatt, S.B. Chaudhury, A. Borkotoki, and P.T. Bhutia. 2005. Checklist of the snakes of Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 102: 19–26.
- Captain, A. and B.B. Bhatt. 2000. An interim checklist of the snakes of Arunachal Pradesh. *The RFNEI Newsletter* 3: 10–13.
- Sanyal, D.P. and N.C. Gayen. 1987. Fauna of Namdapha, Biosphere Reserve, (Part- Reptilia). *Records of the Zoological Survey of India* 85: 297–302.
- Sanyal, D.P. and N.C. Gayen. 2006. Reptilia, pp. 247–284. In: J.R.B. Alfred (ed.), *Fauna of Arunachal Pradesh (Part-1)*. State Fauna Series 13, Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, India.
- Sharma, R.C. 2002. *Fauna of India and the Adjacent Countries. Reptilia. Volume-III (Serpentes)*. Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, India.
- Sharma, R.C. 2003. *Handbook. Indian Snakes*. Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, India.
- Uetz, P., P. Freed, R. Aguilar, and J. Hošek (eds.). 2022. *The Reptile Database*. <<http://www.reptile-database.org>>.