



# First Locality Record of the Ladakh Cliff Racer, *Platyceps ladacensis* (Anderson 1871), from the Spiti Valley, Lahaul and Spiti, India

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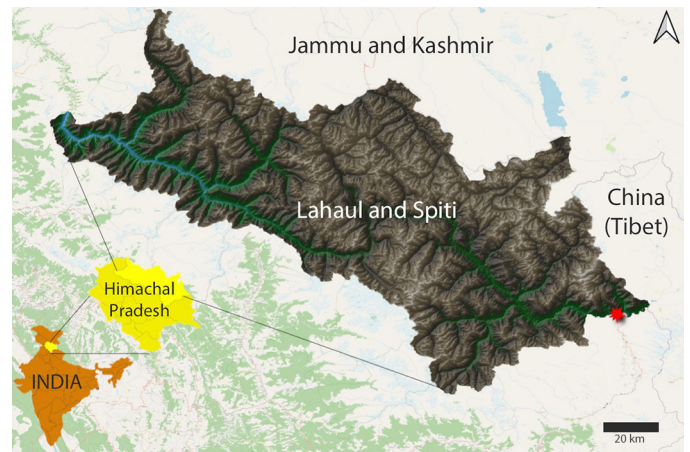
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Cliff racers in the genus *Platyceps* are primarily diurnal, especially at higher elevations; however, they can also be seen during the evening and under cooler weather conditions at higher elevations (Schätti et al. 2014). The Ladakh Cliff Racer (*P. ladacensis*) is distributed from western India through eastern Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan (Ananjeva 2006; Uetz et al. 2023). This snake inhabits extremely barren and rocky environments (Amr and Disi 2011) and its elevational range is 350–3,700 m asl (Whitaker and Captain 2004).

Herein, we report the first record of *P. ladacensis* from Lahaul and Spiti District, Himachal Pradesh, India (Fig. 1). On 9 July 2022, we encountered an individual under a rock cut on a dry steep slope between Hurling Village and the Sumdo Check-post in the Spiti Valley 60 m above the Spiti River (32.060269 N, 78.567322 E) (Fig. 2). Earlier records document *P. ladacensis* in Khalsi, Leh District, Ladakh (Sahi 1979; Murthy and Sharma 1976), and in the Doda (Manhas et al. 2018) and Kargil (Hussain and Tantarapale 2021) Districts of Jammu and Kashmir. Photographic vouchers were accessioned in the digital archives of the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History (KUDA 18983) and the identity of the species was confirmed by Bitupan Boruah.

### Literature Cited

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**Figure 2.** Map of Lahaul and Spiti District, Himachal Pradesh, India, showing the location (red symbol) where the Ladakh Cliff Racer (*Platyceps ladacensis*) was seen.

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**Figure 1.** A Ladakh Cliff Racer (*Platyceps ladacensis*) in natural habitat in the Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh, India (KUDA 18983). Photographs by Kalzung Targe.

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