



A Many-banded Catsnake, *Boiga multifasciata* (Blyth 1861), Preying on a Kashmir Rock Agama, *Laudakia tuberculata* (Gray 1827), in Himachal Pradesh, India

Rakeshwar Kapoor¹, Virender Kumar Bhardwaj², and Chetan S. Kashyap³

¹Department of Zoology and Environmental Sciences, Punjabi University, Patiala-147002, Punjab, India (rakeshwar Kapoor123@gmail.com)

²Department of Zoology, Mizoram University, Aizawl-796004, Mizoram, India

³Village & P.O.: Darlaghat, Solan-171102, Himachal Pradesh, India

The Many-banded Catsnake (*Boiga multifasciata*) occurs in India (Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, and Kashmir), Nepal, and Bhutan (Smith 1943; Whitaker and Captain 2008; Uetz et al. 2023). The species is considered to be of Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (Bhattarai et al. 2022). It is primarily nocturnal and arboreal, often found on bushes and shrubs in forested regions, and is known to feed on a variety of prey, including birds, small mammals, and lizards (Whitaker and Captain 2008).

Kashmir Rock Agamas (*Laudakia tuberculata*) range from northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan through northern India and Nepal into China (Tibet). The species also is considered to be of Least Concern on the IUCN Red List (Das et al. 2021). These lizards often bask on rocks, wooden logs, and even the thatched roofs of human habitations in the western Himalayan region (Baig et al. 2012).

At 0820 h on 15 April 2023, we observed a *B. multifasciata* preying on a Kashmir Rock Agama (Fig. 1) in the village of Darlaghat, Solan District, Himachal Pradesh, India (31.1415 N, 76.5610 E; elev. 1,506 m asl). Note that, despite the snake being largely nocturnal, we observed this event during the day. We did not disturb the snake to prevent it from regurgitating its prey. Consequently, we cannot confirm if it completely ingested the entire lizard.

Laudakia tuberculata is a robust species, quite capable of defending itself against predators. For example, the first author recently encountered a subadult Black-headed Royal Snake (*Spalerosophis atriceps*) that had attempted to kill and consume a Kashmir Rock Agama. Both individuals were dead. The snake had swallowed the anterior portion of the lizard, which had torn open the the snake’s neck with its forelimbs, resulting in the snake’s death.



Figure 1. A Many-banded Catsnake (*Boiga multifasciata*) preying on a Kashmir Rock Agama (*Laudakia tuberculata*). Photograph by Chetan S. Kashyap.

Literature Cited

Baig, K., P. Wagner, N. Ananjeva, and W. Böhme. 2012. A morphology-based taxonomic revision of *Laudakia* Gray, 1845 (Squamata: Agamidae). *Vertebrate Zoology* 62: 213–260. <https://doi.org/10.3897/vz.62.e31388>.

- Bhattarai, S., A. Ghosh, and K. Limbu. 2022. *Boiga multifasciata* (amended version of 2021 assessment). *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T176622A219116159. [https://dx.doi.org/10.2305.IUCN.UK.2022-2.RLTS.T176622A219116159.en](https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2022-2.RLTS.T176622A219116159.en).
- Das, A., S. Huang, and L. Shi. 2021. *Laudakia tuberculata*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2021: e.T47751975A47751989. [https://dx.doi.org/10.2305.IUCN.UK.2021-3.RLTS.T47751975A47751989.en](https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-3.RLTS.T47751975A47751989.en).
- Smith, M.A. 1943. *The Fauna of British India, Ceylon and Burma, Including the Whole of the Indo-Chinese Sub-region. Reptilia and Amphibia. Volume III – Serpentes*. Taylor and Francis, London, UK.
- Uetz, P., P. Freed, R. Aguilar, F. Reyes, and J. Hošek (eds.). 2023. *The Reptile Database*. <<http://reptile-database.org>>.
- Whitaker, R. and A. Captain. 2008. *Snakes of India. The Field Guide*. Draco Books, Chennai, India.