



First Record of an Albino Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) from Uttar Pradesh, India

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Albinism is the absence of integumentary and retinal pigmentation, resulting in a pale yellowish-pink skin and red eyes (Bechtel 1995). Albinos are rare in nature because they rarely survive and reproduce (e.g., Bechtel and Bechtel 1982; Krecsák 2008). Albino Spectacled Cobras (*Naja naja*) have been documented in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Uttarakhand (Fellows 2018; Thakur and Trivedi 2018; Maurya et al. 2020; Dutta et al. 2021).

We herein document an albino Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) (Fig. 1) encountered on 7 April 2023, near Daulatpur, Jagatpur Block of the Raebareli District, Uttar Pradesh, India (26.049300, 81.302790). The scrutinized specimen was identified as a fully matured adult albino Spectacled Cobra, measuring approximately 2.5 feet (~75 cm) in length. It exhibited a distinctive creamy white pigmentation, emblematic of albinism, along with a conspicuous U-shaped marking adorning

its hood. The observation of an albino Spectacled Cobra in this region holds substantial significance, given the rarity of such occurrences, particularly within the context of snakes. The findings contribute to the understanding of herpetofaunal diversity and the ecological dynamics of albinism in this species. After examination, the snake was released into nearby forest. An informative presentation was delivered by the rescue team to the local populace who witnessed the event, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding and exhibiting due respect for snakes and their natural habitat. To the best of our knowledge, this was the first observation of an albino Spectacled Cobra in Uttar Pradesh, India.

Acknowledgements

We thank the rescue team for their role in capturing, documenting, and ensuring the safe release of the snake, and the local community for their active participation and receptivity to the educational outreach.

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Figure 1. An albino Spectacled Cobra (*Naja naja*) from Uttar Pradesh, India. Photographs by Rahul Nishad.