



First Records of Common Sandboas (*Eryx conicus*), from Papikonda National Park, Northern Eastern Ghats, India

Yogesh Pasul¹, Vikram Aditya¹, and Deyatima Ghosh^{2,3}

¹Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), 35/7, Yellappa Chetty Layout, Ulsoor Road, Bangalore, Karnataka 560064, India

²Centre for Urban Ecology, Biodiversity, Evolution and Climate Change (CUBEC), Jain University, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560078, India
(deyatima.ghosh@jainuniversity.ac.in)

³School of Natural Sciences and Engineering, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560054, India

Indian populations of Common Sandboas, *Eryx conicus* (Schneider 1801) (Squamata: Boidae: Erycinae), have been decreasing largely because of extensive habitat conversion and the illegal wildlife trade (Srinivasulu et al. 2021). This species is listed as Near-threatened (NT) on the IUCN Red List (Srinivasulu et al. 2021), included in CITES Appendix II (CITES 2025), and also is protected under Schedule II of India's Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 (Ministry of Law and Justice 2022).

In India, Common Sandboas are known to occur in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and



Figure 2. Road-killed Common Sandboas found in the buffer zone of Papikonda National Park, northern Eastern Ghats, Andhra Pradesh, India, during the breeding season in November 2023 (RAJ 0008) (top) and during a forest fire just outside the park in April 2024 (RAJ 0009) (bottom). Photographs by Yogesh Pasul.

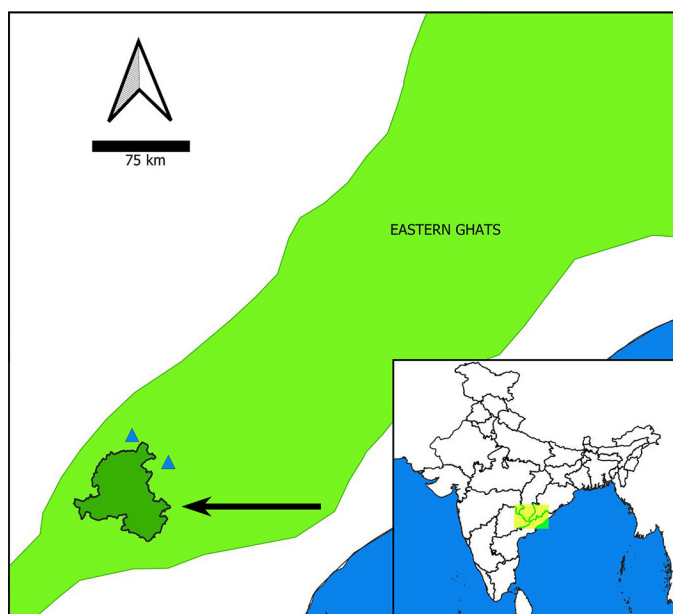


Figure 1. The location of Papikonda National Park (arrow) in the northern Eastern Ghats, Andhra Pradesh, India. Locations where two road-killed Common Sandboas (*Eryx conicus*) were found in the buffer zone of the park in November 2023 and April 2024 are indicated by blue triangles.

Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh (Uetz et al. 2025). Although many publications and data-

bases (e.g., iNaturalist 2025 and India Biodiversity Portal 2025) have documented geographic records of the species, no records of Common Sandboas, known as Matti Paamu in Telugu (the state language of Andhra Pradesh) exist for Papikonda National Park in Andhra Pradesh (Fig. 1).

Papikonda National Park is located in the northern Eastern Ghats, one of the world's oldest geological formations dating back 3.5 billion years and predominantly covered with moist deciduous forests (Champion and Seth 1968; Aditya and Ganesh 2017). At 1114 h on 4 November 2023, we encountered a road-killed Common Sandboa (Fig. 2; RAJ 0008) on a tar road passing through coffee plantations in the buffer zone of Papikonda National Park, Andhra Pradesh (17.60556 N, 81.68908 E; elev. 455 m asl). Warm and humid post-monsoon conditions typical of the region coincide with the breeding season, during which the frequency of reptilian roadkills often increases (Heigl et al. 2017). At 0755 h on 10 April 2024, we encountered another road-killed individual (Fig. 2; RAJ 0009) on a tar road that passes through dry deciduous forest (17.72330, 81.53636; elev. 138 m asl). A natural fire in the area (Fig. 3) might have been responsible for driving this snake onto the road during this time of the year.

The road-killed snakes were deposited in the *Reptiles & Amphibians* Journal Digital Repository (Nos. RAJ 0008–9) and the identity of the species was confirmed by Ms. Farida Tampal (WWF-Director, Hyderabad Office, India).

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Figure 3. A natural forest fire just outside Papikonda National Park, northern Eastern Ghats, Andhra Pradesh, India, in April 2024. Photographs by Yogesh Pasul.