REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

First Record of an Indian Egg-eater (*Boiga westermanni*) from Rajkot, Gujarat, India

Aum Agravat[1], Shreya Pandey[2], and Aurobindo Samal[3]

[1]CB11PT, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK (ASA217@student.aru.ac.uk)
[2]Ecology and Genetics Research Unit, University of Oulu–90014, Finland (shreya.pandey@oulu.fi [corresponding author])
[3]Earth Crusaders Organisation (ECO), Bhubaneswar, Odisha–751019, India (aurobindo.cse@gmail.com)

The rare Indian Egg-eater, *Boiga westermanni* (Reinhardt 1863) (Colubridae), has recently been reassigned from the genus *Elachistodon* to the genus *Boiga* by Mohan et al. (2018). The species is listed as being of Least Concern (LC) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Srinivasulu et al. 2013), despite being included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022 (Ministry of Law and Justice 2022). Murty et al. (1993) stated that many herpetologists thought this species was extinct, and Sharma (1998) noted it is among the rarest snakes in southern Asia. Its distribution extends from Bangladesh (Reinhardt 1863) to Nepal (Fleming and Fleming 1974; Mitchell and Zug 1995) and India (Smith 1943).

This species has been reported from nine Indian states: Bihar (Blanford 1875), West Bengal (Wall 1913), Uttarakhand (Rosenberg and Gans 1976), Maharashtra (Captain et al. 2005; Dandge 2008; Nande and Deshmukh 2007; Narayanan 2012; Deshmukh et al. 2015), Rajasthan (Khandal et al. 2016), Madhya Pradesh (Thakur 2011), Punjab (Sharma 2014), Telangana (Visvanathan 2015), and Gujarat (Vyas 2006, 2010, 2013, 2016; Table 1). Most locality records are from the dry, arid regions of western India.

In the evening of 22 June 2023, while the first author was surveying habitat to record the presence of an Eagle Owl and a fox with cubs, he found a road-killed Indian Egg-eater (Fig. 1) about 1.2 m in total length on a road in Rajkot,

Table 1. Previous observations of the Indian Egg-eater (*Boiga westermanni*) from Gujarat, India.

Location in Gujarat (habitat)	Reference
Piplod, Surat (urban garden)	Vyas 2006
Vitoriya Park, Bhavnagar (thorny scrub forest)	Vyas 2006
Jesar Town, Amreli (thorny scrub and open degraded area)	Vyas 2010
Khetra Village, Junagarh (agricultural fields)	Vyas 2010
Sasan Village (near agricultural fields and dry deciduous forest)	Vyas 2010
Kharaghoda, Surendranagar (dry thorny scrub dominated by Mesquites, *Prosophis* sp.)	Vyas 2013
Hindorana Village, Amreli (degraded coastal forest, riverine habitat with agricultural fields)	Vyas 2013
Kangvai, Chikhali, Navsari District (on a road surrounded by agricultural fields)	Vyas 2016
Vadiya Village, Nr. Palitana, Bhavnagar District (hilly/rocky terrain with scrub vegetation)	Vyas 2016
Gujarada, Gariyadhar, Bhavanagar (agricultural fields)	Vyas 2016
Pratapnagar, Chikhali, Navsari (human habitation)	Vyas 2016
Netrang, Valia, Bharuch (mixed agriculture and scrub)	Vyas 2016
Bardoli, Surat (human habitation)	Vyas 2016
Talala Gir, Gir Somnath (dry deciduous forest, roadside plantation)	Vyas 2016
Agricultural College Campus Navsari, Navsari (agricultural field)	Vyas 2016

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Figure 1. A road-killed Indian Egg-eater (*Boiga westermanni*) from Rajkot, Gujarat, India. Photographs by Justin M. Bernstein.

Gujarat (22.3256882, 70.7680812). A photographic voucher has been deposited at the University of Kansas Biodiversity Institute (RAJ 00026). The identity of the species was confirmed by Dr. Niladri Bhusan Kar (Fakir Mohan University). This first of the species from Rajkot, Gujarat, India, highlights the need for heightened awareness and mitigation of roadkills to preserve lesser-known species in the region.

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