



# First Record of Bilateral Anophthalmia in a Juvenile Common Trinket Snake, *Coelognathus helena* (Daudin 1803), from Pune, Maharashtra, India

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The Common Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena*) is a non-venomous colubrid found in diverse habitats across the Indian Subcontinent (Whitaker and Captain 2004). It is an active forager that preys on rodents, lizards, and birds (Daniel 2002). Although color variations have been recorded (e.g., Sharma and Rathore 2014; Mohapatra et al. 2016), congenital anomalies like anophthalmia remain undocumented in wild populations.

We herein report the first documented case of congenital bilateral anophthalmia (Fig. 1) in a juvenile Common Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena*). The snake (~20 cm total length) was retrieved in response to a rescue call by AK from a parking area near PMC School, Sutarwadi, Pashan, Pune, Maharashtra at 0730 h on 19 December 2024. It lacked eyes, with smooth scales covering the ocular region, and its mouth was deformed with misaligned jaws and an irregular rostral structure, likely indicative of a congenital anomaly. Apart from these anomalies, the snake appeared healthy and was released into its natural habitat.

Anophthalmia, occurring either unilaterally or bilaterally, is a congenital condition characterized by the complete

absence of ocular tissue. It results from the failure of the primary optic vesicle to develop or its total regression during early embryonic stages (Millichamp et al. 1983). Although exact causes are uncertain, anophthalmia is believed to arise due to genetic factors or environmental influences (Da Silva et al. 2015).

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**Figure 1.** Lateral and dorsal views of an anophthalmic Common Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena*), clearly showing the complete absence of the eyes and associated orbital structures. Photographs by Anil Kanaskar.

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