

## Short Communication

Rec. zool. Surv. India, 96 (1-4) : 243, 1997

### RECENT RECORD OF THE RED-NECKED KEELBACK, *RHABDOPHIS SUBMINIATUS* (SCHIEGEL) FROM ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Recently the senior author was pleasantly surprised to sight a medium-sized Red-necked Keelback (plate I) in the Premises of the residential quarters in Itanagar. Although we could identify it as a freshwater keelback of the Family Colubridae, we did, out of curiosity, take a few snaps of snake and sent them to Shri T. S. N. Murthy, former Scientist-in-charge of Herpetology, Zoological Survey of India, for confirmation of its identity. Mr. Murthy has identified the snake as *Rhabdophis subminiatus* (Schiegel) (Serpentes : Colubridae). Although, the colubrid snakes in general, are considered harmless excepting a few back-fanged snakes with venom that produces haematological symptoms, it is interesting to know that the bites of the rear-fanged *Rhabdophis miniatus* have been reported to cause systemic poisoning or even death in a few cases according to Murthy (pers. comm.). This is the first authentic report of the occurrence of genus *Rhabdophis* in Arunachal Pradesh and the other species of the genus *Rhabdophis* known from this part of the state is the Himalayan Keelback *R. himalayana* (Gunther) from Namdapha Biosphere Reserve (Sanyal and Gayen, 1985). The Red-necked Keelback mainly feeds on frogs and toads. The range of this species included North-eastern India, Bangladesh and Nepal.

The authors are grateful to the Director, Zoological Survey of India for the facilities provided. The help of Shri T. S.N. Murthy, Scientist 'SE' (Rtd.) Southern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Madras in confirming the identity and improving the manuscript is gratefully acknowledge. Thanks are due to Mrs. Borah for secretarial assistance.

#### REFERENCES

- SANYAL, D.P. AND GAYEN, N. C. 1985. *Fauna of Namdapha, Arunachal Pradesh* "A proposed Biosphere Reserve", *Reptilia, Rec. zool. Surv. India*, 82 (1-4) : 297 - 302.
- SMITH, M. A. 1943. *The fauna of British India, Ceylon and Burma. Reptilia and Amphibia*, III. Serpentes. 538 pp.

Zoological Survey of India  
Arunachal Pradesh Field Station  
Itanagar

G. THIRUMALAI  
AND  
P.T. BHUTIA