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### Short Communication

## NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORDS OF *TYPHLOPS DIARDII* SCHLEGEL, 1839 AND *SIBYNOPHIS SUBPUNCTATUS* (DUM & BIBR 1854) IN HARYANA STATE

### INTRODUCTION

During an extensive faunistic survey of Kalesar National Park (District Yamuna Nagar, Haryana State), for a project approved by the Director ZSI, three examples of snakes were collected from a locality namely Paddal line (Alt 1292 ft, lat : N 30° 23' 12.2", long : E 077° 0' 44. 5"). After close examination of the specimens, two examples (figs 2) were identified as *Sibynophis subpunctatus* (Dum & Bibr, 1854), Dumeril's Black-headed Snake, while another example as *Typhlops diardii* Schlegel, 1839 (fig 1), Diard's worm snake. A perusal of the literature so far thus available (Dumeril and Bibron, 1854; Husain *et al.*, 1995, Schlegel, 1839; Sharma, 2003, Smith, 1943; Whitaker and Captain, 2004) revealed the interesting fact that both the species are the first records for the State of Haryana, thus extending the known range of the species considerably. Probably the on-going faunal survey of the Kalesar National Park, Haryana may throw up some more new and significant records of reptiles from the area.

#### Description of species examined

Phylum VERTEBRATA

Class REPTILIA

Order SQUAMATA

Suborder SERPENTES

I. Family TYPHLOPIDAE

#### 1. *Typhlops diardii* Schlegel, 1839

##### Diard's worm snake

The specimen examined (1 ex) had length of 180mm, subadult.

**Diagnostic features :** The species is one of the largest (adult 430 mm, young ones 100 mm ) and thickest worm snakes. Scales are smooth, shining and small. Head is not broader than neck. Snout is rounded and

has poorly developed eyes, visible as a tiny dark spot. It has a short tail ending in spine like projection. The ventral surface is whitish and paler and dorsal surface is dark brown (fig 1). According to Smith 1943 the upper portion of rostral is 1/3 rd to 3/5<sup>th</sup> breadth of the head, extending to the level of eye.

**Scalation :** Scales are 24-26 rows rarely 28 rows around the body; 260-300 transverse scale rows. Total length of snake is 26-32 times the diameter of body.

The present example has 28 scales round the body.

The snake was found under the decaying wood. It eats worms, soft-bodied insects and their larvae. It lays 4-14 eggs in March-June (Whitaker and Captain 2004 ).

**Distribution :** India : The species has been reported in Western Himalaya upto Dehra Dun, Eastern Himalaya to Arunachal Pradesh; West Bengal and Assam.

**Elsewhere :** Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar (Sharma, 2003., Whitaker and Captain, 2004).

Since Kalesar National Park in Siwalik range is situated about 70 km away from DehraDun, the present record reports extension of the distribution of the snake species upto Kalesar National Park in Haryana State.

II. Family COLUBRIDAE

#### 2. *Sibynophis subpunctatus* (Dum & Bibr 1854).

##### Dumeril's black headed Snake

Two examples of snakes collected from Paddal line in Kalesar National Park (District Yamuna Nagar, Haryana) were examined and identified as *Sibynophis subpunctatus* (Dum & Bibr, 1854). The species is a new record from Haryana State as its distribution so far has been reported from Peninsular India. It has been reported by Whitaker and Captain, 2004, that its extent



**Fig. 1 :** *Typhlops diardii* Schlegel, Diard's worm snake from Paddal line in Kalesar National Park (District Yamuna Nagar), Haryana (Photo by Mr. Rakesh Kumar Photographer, NRC ZSI).



**Fig. 2 :** *Sibynophis subpunctatus* (Dum & Bibr 1854) Dumeril's Black headed snake from Paddal line in Kalesar National Park (District Yamuna Nagar, Haryana State) (Photographs by Mr. Rakesh Kumar, photographer, NRC, ZSI).

of distribution is not precisely known. Other areas from where the species has been reported are south of Rajasthan and south of Ganges valley in India (Sharma, 2003., Whitaker and Captain, 2004).

*Elsewhere :* Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.

The species is non venomous and uncommon. Adult length is reported to be 250 mm.

*Diagnostic features :* Body is slender with smooth scales. Head is slightly broader than neck, eye with round pupil. Body is with black dots in a series with brown colour. Head is black with white or pale yellow markings. Neck has a white collar. Underside greenish yellow; belly scales has black dots on each side. Tail is long and tapering. Sides of the body gray, separated from brown back by a dark line (fig. 2).

*Scalation* : Scales in 17 :17 :17 rows, smooth. Ventrals 172-215 (India north of lat. 18). Supralabials 9 (4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> touching eye), rarely 8 (3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> touching eye); preocular 1; postocular 2; anterior temporals 2; parietal touches both postoculars.

Anal scales divided; subcaudals paired (males 60-76, females 54-63).

It is often confused with the venomous slender coral snake (which has a coral red belly and two distinct black rings on its short tail). This species is known to

be active by day and night. It lives in a leaf litter. It has been reported to be found under stones and logs. It preys on geckos, skinks and smaller snakes. It lays 2-5 eggs (Whitaker and Captain 2004).

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