

Notes on mating behavior of Slender Wolf Snake



Image 1. A—A mating pair of *Lycodon anamallensis* observed in Madurai, Tamil Nadu (© P.R. Vishwanath) | B—Dorsal view of the mating pair portrayed herein for species confirmation (© J. Samson Krubakaran).

The Slender Wolf Snake *Lycodon anamallensis* is a non-venomous, oviparous colubrid snake native to southern Asia (Ganesh & Vogel 2018). It is often found in and around human habitat apart from natural habitat. The nomenclature, classification and distribution of this species were refined by Ganesh & Vogel (2018) before which work, this taxon was under the name *Lycodon*

osmanhilli or was considered a sub species of *Lycodon aulicus* (Das 2002; Das & DeSilva 2005). Not much information, especially published data exists on the reproduction of Indian snakes. Reproductive aspect of Slender Wolf Snakes has only been subjected to rather minimal study (Ganesh & Vogel 2018) as compared to other common snakes and many have mainly studied under

captive condition. In this note, we present our observation on mating of free-ranging Slender Wolf Snakes at Madurai (9.87472°N & 78.05806°E, 143m) in SRV Nagar, Harveypatti, Thirupparamkundram, Madurai District, Tamil Nadu, southern India.

On 26 April 2020 we received a rescue call in Madurai at 22.02h. Immediately we rushed to the spot and found a mating pair of Slender Wolf Snake at 22.15h intertwined on top of a garden fence at a height of 1.5m above the ground. The larger snake with a swollen cloaca (due to the insertion of the organ by the smaller snake) was determined as the female. The other, i.e., smaller snake was determined as a male, as it had inserted its organ into the other snake's cloaca. The

snakes were not captured and measured so as to not disturb their mating. They were photographed for documentation purposes.

On enquiry, the resident said that he found the snakes around 21.45h above the fence intertwined crawling from the nearby wall to the fence and immediately called for rescue.

A yellowish/olive yellow color fluid found surrounded the cloaca's exterior opening. The male often showed repeated, jerky movement of its tail which apparently correlates with the ejaculation process. Tail movement of female was not shown.

Mating duration lasted more than an hour and both naturally got separated by 23.35h

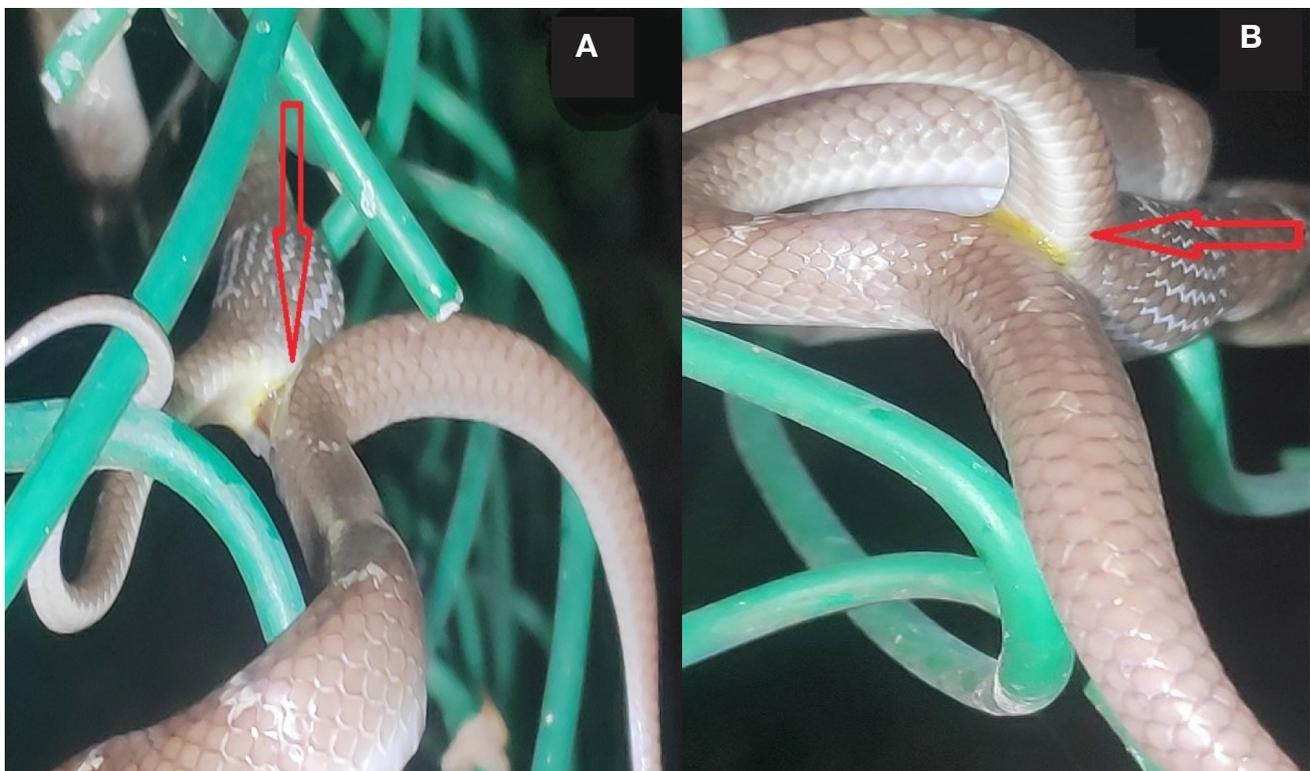


Image 2. A—Close-up of cloacal region showing intromission | B—A yellowish/olive yellow colour fluid found surrounded the cloaca's meeting exterior opening (stipulated by arrow marks). (© P.R. Vishwanath).



(21.45–23.35 hr). As it was a residential area, both were gently bagged and released close by in its natural habitat.

This note adds to the meager body of published literature is available on the reproductive behaviour of Indian snakes, even for rather common and widespread one like the Slender Wolf Snake.

Based on the present observation and available records, we infer that in mating pairs, female Indian Rock Pythons are usually larger than males in size (Reed & Rodda 2009; Ramesh 2012). Females appear to attain significantly larger body sizes than males in most python species (Shine & Slip 1990). The larger size of females might have evolved to increase reproductive success by increasing fecundity (Blueweiss et al. 1978; Keogh et al. 2000), egg size (Forsman & Shine 1995).

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