

Occurrence of Brown Vine Snake in Pachamalai Hills, India



Roadkill of Brown Vine Snake found in Pachamalai, Tamil Nadu, India.

Tropical Asian vine snakes *Ahaetulla* spp. are widely distributed in the Asian mainland, peninsular India, parts of the Sundaic region and their surrounding islands (Mallik et al. 2020). They further reported that there are 17 lineages in *Ahaetulla* within its distribution range. Pachamalai Hills are located (11.303° N & 78.654° E) in

north-east of Tamil Nadu, India covering an area of 14,122 km² at an altitude ranging from 500–1,000 m.

On 25 January 2021, a dead snake was found on the road (11.303° N & 78.654° E around 680m) leading to Pachamalai Hills. It was assumed to have been killed by vehicular traffic and was identified as

Brown Vine Snake *Ahaetulla sahyadrensis* based on the morphological characters given by Mallik et al. (2020).

As the Western Ghats population of *A. pulverulenta sensu lato* is diagnosed to be distinct at species rank from the Sri Lankan population, Mallik et al (2020) recently provided a new replacement



name *Ahaetulla sahyadrensis*. Thus, *A. pulverulenta* is considered endemic to Sri Lanka. The length of the snake was 138 cm. The dorsal side of the body was light brown in colour with dark brownish anteriorly converging bars from nape to midbody. The head had dark brownish rhomboid markings with a deep eye-stripe from the nostril to nape. Venkatraman et al. (1997) reported this species in Siruvani foot hills of Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu. However, it was not included in the list published by Daniels (1994) for the Eastern Ghats of Tamil Nadu. Hence, it is a new addition to Pachamalai Hills.

References

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Citation: Muthukrishnan, V. & V. Gokula (2021). Occurrence of Brown Vine Snake in Pachamalai Hills, India. *Reptile Rap* #211, In: *Zoo's Print* 36(9): 14–15.