

Further additions to the checklist of reptiles of Kerala, India

For the state of Kerala, the last updated checklist for the reptiles was published during 2015 by Palot (2015) with 173 species classified under 24 families under three orders. Since then, many new species of reptiles were recorded from the geographical boundaries of Kerala and some taxonomic revisions also occurred in a few groups of reptiles from the region.

In the present communication, another 32 species are included for the state reptilian checklist including 13 species of geckos, 12 species of snakes, four species of agamid lizards, and three species of skinks. Most of the species included in the state list were described during the last five-year period (2015–2020) and some of the species are confirmed through the collections of recent field surveys or the taxonomic revisions happened during the last five years. All the available records till 20 December 2020 have been considered for this publication.

Recently, the genus *Dravidogecko* of the region has been reviewed with an addition of six new species from Western Ghats, including three new species for the State (Chaithanya et al. 2019). Similarly, the genus *Ahaetulla* underwent a thorough revision by adding many new changes from the region (Mallick et al. 2020). Certain taxonomic revisions also invalidated the

existence of species such as Brook's House Gecko *Hemidactylus brookii*, Spotted Leaf-toed Gecko *H. maculatus*, Fan-throated Lizard *Sitana ponticeriana*, and Green Vine Snake *Ahaetulla nasuta*, Brown-speckled Whipsnake *A. pulverulenta* from the state list. The historic records of Estuarine crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* and Earless Skink *Chalcides pentadactyla* were removed from the current list. With this updation, the total number of confirmed species of reptile from the State has become 199 species classified under 24 families belonging to three orders.

Now the updated list consists of one species of crocodile, 12 species of turtles and tortoises, 72 species of lizards and 112 species of snakes. The detailed list of additional species of reptiles recorded during the period is given below with their taxonomic details, distribution, conservation status and the recorded localities from Kerala (Table 1).

Class Reptilia

Order Squamata

Suborder Sauria

Family Agamidae

1. *Microauris aurantolabium* Krishnan, 2008

Orange-lipped Forest Lizard

Distribution: Endemic to southernmost

region of Western Ghats in Agasthyamalai part of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Remarks: Reported from the higher reaches of Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary, Thiruvananthapuram District.

2. *Monilesaurus acanthocephalus* Pal, Vijayakumar, Shanker, Jayarajan & Deepak, 2018

Spiny-headed Forest Lizard

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats. Known only from the type locality, higher reaches of Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki District, Kerala and Meghamalai Hills of Tamil Nadu.

Remarks: A high montane shola forest species. Recorded from the shola forests of Eramangalar, Vellimala and Upper Manalar areas in Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki District.

3. *Monilesaurus montanus* Pal, Vijayakumar, Shanker, Jayarajan & Deepak, 2018

Montane Forest Lizard

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats. Known only from the high elevation evergreen or shola forests of southern Western Ghats from Kudremukh NP to Nilgiris.

Remarks: Recorded from the foothills of Vellarimala in Wayanad District.

4. *Sitana attenboroughii* Sadashivan, Ramesh, Palot, Ambedkar & Mirza, 2018

Attenborough's Fan-throated Lizard
Distribution: Known only from the type locality in the southernmost beaches of Thiruvananthapuram District.

Family Gekkonidae

1. *Cnemaspis maculicollis* Cyriac, Johny, Umesh & Palot, 2018

Agasthyamalai Day Gecko

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats. Known only from a type locality in Shendurney WS, Kollam District, Kerala.

Remarks: Recorded from the type locality in Pandimotta area of Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary, Kollam District.

2. *Cnemaspis anamudiensis* Cyriac, Johny, Umesh & Palot, 2018.

Anamudi Day Gecko

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats. Known only from a type locality in Munnar Hills, Idukki District, Kerala.

Remarks: Recently reported from Mannavanshola area of Anaimudishola National Park, Idukki District.

3. *Cnemaspis aaronbaueri* Sayyed, Grismer, Campbell & Dileepkumar, 2019

Aaronbauer's Day Gecko

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats. Known only from a type locality in Agasthyamalai part of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Remarks: Fairly common in the Shendurney WS and Thenmala areas of Kollam District.

4. *Cnemaspis chengodumalensis* Cyriac, Palot, Deuti & Umesh, 2020

Chengodumala Day Gecko

Distribution: Known from the Kozhikode District of Kerala.

Remarks: Recorded from the midlands of Chengodumala and the foot hills of Malabar WS, Kozhikode District, Kerala.

5. *Cnemaspis zacharyi* Cyriac, Palot, Deuti & Umesh, 2020

Zacharia's Day Gecko

Distribution: Known only from the southernmost part of the Wayanad Hills.

Remarks: Recorded from Lakkidi, Thollayiram areas of southern part of Wayanad Forest Division, Wayanad District, Kerala.

6. *Cnemaspis mysoriensis* (Jerdon, 1854)

Mysore Day Gecko

Distribution: Mainly distributed in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka. Recently introduced to Pune, Maharashtra (Khandekar et al. 2020).

Remarks: A single specimen was collected from the Muthanga area of Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.

7. *Cnemaspis palakkadensis* Sayyed, Cyriac & Dileepkumar, 2020

Palakkad Day Gecko

Distribution: Known only from the type locality in Palakkad Hills, Kerala.

Remarks: The species was discovered from the type locality Anakkal, Palakkad District, Kerala.

8. *Dravidogecko septentrionalis* Chaithanya, Giri, Deepak, Roy, Murthy & Karanth, 2019.

Wayanad Dravidogecko.

Distribution: Known from the type locality in Wayanad, Kerala.

Remarks: Widely distributed at the foothills of Chembra Peak and surrounding hill ranges in southern Wayanad.

9. *Dravidogecko smithi* Chaithanya, Giri, Deepak, Roy, Murthy & Karanth, 2019.

Smith's Dravidogecko.

Distribution: Known from the type locality, in Ponmudi Hills, Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala.

Remarks: Known only from the Ponmudi Hills, Thiruvananthapuram District.

10. *Dravidogecko janakiae* Chaithanya, Giri, Deepak, Roy, Murthy & Karanth, 2019.

Janaki's Dravidogecko

Distribution: Known from the type locality, Munnar town, and surrounding hills, Idukki District.

Remarks: A common species in and around Munnar Hills, observed from Kanthallur town, Anaimudishola NP and Pambadumshola NP of Idukki District.

11. *Hemidactylus parvimaclatus* Deraniyagala, 1953

Common Spotted Gecko

Distribution: India: Kerala; elsewhere: Sri Lanka, Reunion, Mauritius and Rodrigues, Moheli (Comoro Islands), Maldives, Mascarene Islands.

Remarks: Probably an introduced species. Many recent reports from the coastal tracts of the southern part of the State.

12. *Hemidactylus paaragowli* Srikanthan, Swamy, Mohan & Pal, 2018

Travancore Rock Gecko

Distribution: Recently described from the Agasthyamalai Hill part of Kollam District, Kerala.

Table 1. Additions to the checklist of reptiles of Kerala.

	Family	English Name	Species Name	Authority	Vernacular name	IUCN	EN	WLPA
Order Squamata								
1	Agamidae (lizards)	Montane Forest Lizard	<i>Moniliisaurus montanus</i>	Pai, Vijayakumar, Shanker, Jayarajan & Deepak, 2018	Mala Ōnt	NE	WG	
2		Spiny-headed Forest Lizard	<i>Moniliisaurus acanthocephalus</i>	Pai, Vijayakumar, Shanker, Jayarajan & Deepak, 2018	Mullōnt	NE	WG	
3		Orange-lipped Forest Lizard	<i>Microauris aurantolabium</i>	Krishnan, 2008	Chenchundanonth	NE	WG	
4		Attenborough's Fan-throated Lizard	<i>Sitana attenboroughii</i>	Sadashivan, Ramesh, Palot, Ambeekar, & Mirza, 2018	Attenboroughyude Changanont	NE		
5	Gekkonidae (geckoes)	Aaronbauer's Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis aaronbaueri</i>	Sayed, Grismer, Campbell & Dileepkumar, 2019	Aaronbauerinte Marapalli	NE	WG	
6		Anamudi Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis anamudiensis</i>	Cyriac, Johny, Umesh & Palot, 2018	Anamudi Marapalli	NE	WG	
7		Chengodumala Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis chengodumalensis</i>	Cyriac, Palot, Deuti & Umesh, 2020	Chengodumala Marapalli	NE		
8		Agasthyamalai Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis maculicollis</i>	Cyriac, Johny, Umesh & Palot, 2018	Agasthyamala Marapalli	NE	WG	
9		Mysore Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis mysoriensis</i>	(Jerdon, 1854)	Maisūr Marappalli	LC	WG	
10		Palakkad Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis palakkadensis</i>	Sayed, Cyriac & Dileepkumar, 2020	Palakkadan Marapalli	NE		
11		Zacharia's Day Gecko	<i>Cnemaspis zacharyi</i>	Cyriac, Palot, Deuti & Umesh, 2020	Zachariyayude Marapalli	NE	WG	
12	Janaki's Dravidogecko	<i>Dravidogecko janakiae</i>	Chaitanya, Giri, Deepak, Roy, Murthy & Karanth, 2019	Janakiyude Malapalli	NE	WG		
13	Smith's Dravidogecko	<i>Dravidogecko smithi</i>	Chaitanya, Giri, Deepak, Roy, Murthy & Karanth, 2019	Smithinte Malapalli	NE	WG		
14	Wayanad Dravidogecko	<i>Dravidogecko septentrionalis</i>	Chaitanya, Giri, Deepak, Roy, Murthy & Karanth, 2019	Waynadan Malapalli	NE	WG		
15	Murray's Day Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus murrayi</i>	Gleadow, 1887	Murrayi Palli	NE			
16	Common Spotted Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus parvimaculatus</i>	Deraniyagala, 1953	Sriankan Pulli Palli	NE			
17	Travancore Rock Gecko	<i>Hemidactylus paaragowli</i>	Srikanthan, Swamy, Mohan & Pai, 2018	Travancore Palli	NE	WG		

	Family	English Name	Species Name	Authority	Vernacular name	IUCN	EN	WLPA
18	Scincidae (skinks)	Allapalli Grass Skink	<i>Eutropis allapallensis</i>	(Schmidt, 1926)	Allapalli Arana	LC		
19		Gunther's Grass Skink	<i>Eutropis brevis</i>	(Gunther, 1875)	Guntherinte Arana	NE	WG	
20		Dawson's Grass Skink	<i>Eutropis dawsoni</i>	(Annandale, 1909)	Dawsonte Arana	NE	WG	
21	Uropeltidae (shieldtails)	Lakkidi Shieldtail	<i>Rhinophis melanoleucus</i>	Cyriac, Narayanan, Sampaio, Umesh & Gower, 2020	Lakkidi Manpamp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
22		Karinthandan Shieldtail	<i>Rhinophis karinthandani</i>	Sampaio, Narayanan, Cyriac, Venu & Gower, 2020	Karinthandan Manpamp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
23		Colombo Wolf Snake	<i>Lycodon anamallensis</i>	Gunther, 1864	Poo Vellivaryan	NE		Sch. IV
24		Yellow Green Cat Snake	<i>Boiga flaviviridis</i>	Vogel & Ganesh, 2013	Manha Pachha Poochakannipamp	NE		Sch. IV
25		Long-nosed Vine Snake	<i>Ahaetulla oxyrhyncha</i>	(Bell, 1825)	Mookkan Pacchola Pāmp	NE		Sch. IV
26	Colubridae (colubrid snakes)	Brown Vine Snake (Brown-speckled Vine Snake)	<i>Ahaetulla sahyadrensis</i>	Mallik, Srikanthan, Pal, D'Souza, Shanker & Ganesh, 2020	Taviṭṭola Pāmp	LC	WG	Sch. IV
27		Isabelline/ Wall's Vine Snake	<i>Ahaetulla isabellina</i>	Wall, 1910	Pacchola Pāmp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
28		Malabar Vine Snake	<i>Ahaetulla malabarica</i>	Mallik, Srikanthan, Pal, D'Souza, Shanker & Ganesh, 2020	Vadackan Pacchola Pāmp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
29		Travancore Vine Snake	<i>Ahaetulla travancorica</i>	Mallik, Srikanthan, Pal, D'Souza, Shanker & Ganesh, 2020	Theckan Pacchola Pāmp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
30		Antique Vine Snake	<i>Proahaetulla antiqua</i>	Mallik, Achyuthan, Ganesh, Pal, Vijayak & Shanker, 2019	Agasthyamala Pachchola Pāmp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
31	Pareidae (narrow-headed snakes)	Anamalai Wood Snake	<i>Xylophis mosaicus</i>	Deepak, Narayanan, Das, Rajkumar, Easa, Sreejith & Gower, 2020	Anamala Kunhithalyan Pamp	NE	WG	Sch. IV
32	Elapidae (elapid snakes)	Yellow Sea Snake	<i>Hydrophis spiralis</i>	(Shaw, 1802)	Mannha Kadal Pāmp	LC		Sch. IV

IUCN: Red List categories. LC – Least Concern; NE – Not Evaluated
EN: Endemic Status. WG – Endemic to Western Ghats
WLPA: Sch. Schedules as per the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

Remarks: Known only from the type locality in Ambanad tea estate, Thenmala Hills, Kollam District.

**13. *Hemidactylus murrayi* Gleadow, 1887
Murray's House Gecko**

Distribution: Known from Western part of India, Myanmar, Peninsular Malaysia (and Borneo).

Remarks: Recently reported from Palakkad District (Lajmi et al. 2016).

Family Scincidae (skinks)

1. *Eutropis allapallensis* (Schmidt, 1926)

Allapalli Grass Skink

Distribution: India (Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and West Bengal).

Remarks: Many reports from Kerala. Collected from Peruvannamuzhi area of Malabar WS, Kozhikode District, Kerala. Also reported from a few localities in the forested tracts of the State (Thomas et al. 1998).

2. *Eutropis brevis* (Gunther, 1875)

Gunther's Grass Skink

Distribution: Endemic to Western Ghats from the southernmost range of Ashambu Hills to Parambikulam Hills in Palakkad District (Deuti et al. 2020).

3. *Eutropis dawsoni* (Annandale, 1909)

Dawson's Grass Skink

Distribution: Endemic to southernmost part of Western Ghats.

Remarks: Reported from Peppara WS,

Thiruvananthapuram District; Shendurney WS, Kollam District; Pamba, Pathanamthitta District; Parambikulam Tiger Reserve and Kanjirapuzha areas of Palakkad District; Olagara, Thrissur District; Karimpuzha WS, Malappuram District; Kannavam RF, Kannur District of Kerala State (Deuti et al. 2020).

Suborder Serpentes

Family Uropeltidae

1. *Rhinophis melanoleucus* Cyriac, Narayanan, Sampaio, Umesh & Gower, 2020

Lakkidi Shieldtail

Distribution: Recorded only from the Wayanad region of Kerala.

Remarks: The species is known only from the vicinity of Lakkidi region of Wayanad District (Cyriac et al. 2020).

2. *Rhinophis karinthandani* Sampaio, Narayanan, Cyriac, Venu & Gower, 2020
Karinthandan Shieldtail

Distribution: Known only from the Wayanad region of Kerala.

Remarks: Recorded from Lakkidi, Vythiri, Mananthavady, Chandanthode areas of the Wayanad District (Sampaio et al. 2020).

Family Colubridae

3. *Lycodon anamallensis* Gunther, 1864
Colombo Wolf Snake

Distribution: Peninsular India, Sri Lanka.

Remarks: Commonly found in and around human inhabitation. Ganesh & Vogel (2018) revalidated the species in their recent work.

4. *Boiga flaviviridis* Vogel & Ganesh, 2013
Yellow-Green Cat Snake

Distribution: India (Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa).

Remarks: Recently reported from Chinnar WS, Idukki District.

5. *Ahaetulla oxyrhyncha* (Bell, 1825)
Long-nosed Vine Snake

Distribution: It is distributed throughout Peninsular India excluding the wet forest habitats of the Western Ghats.

6. *Ahaetulla sahyadrensis* Mallik, Srikanthan, Pal, D'Souza, Shanker & Ganesh, 2020

Brown Vine Snake (Brown-speckled Vine Snake)

Distribution: It is recorded from the central Western Ghats. However, the actual distribution range will stretch across the Western Ghats.

Remarks: Neoparatypes are collected from the Nelliampathy Hills, Palakkad District, Kerala. Many reports from other parts of Kerala.

7. *Ahaetulla isabellina* Wall, 1910
Isabelline/Wall's Vine Snake

Distribution: It is recorded from southern Western Ghats, south of the Palghat Gap, from an elevation of 550m to 1475m.

Remarks: Reported from Orukomban, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve, Goodrikkal Range of Periyar Tiger Reserve, Achankovil Forests of Agasthyamalai Hills, and also from Idukki WS.

8. *Ahaetulla malabarica* Mallik, Srikanthan, Pal, D'Souza, Shanker & Ganesh, 2020
Malabar Vine Snake

Distribution: Distributed to the north of Palakkad Gap to Tadiyendamol in Karnataka, in mid-elevation evergreen forests from ~650–1400 msl.

Remarks: Widely distributed in Wayanad Hills and Silent Valley National Park, Palakkad District.

9. *Ahaetulla travancorica* Mallik, Srikanthan, Pal, D'Souza, Shanker & Ganesh, 2020

Travancore Vine Snake

Distribution: Known only from the Agasthyamalai Hills south of Shencotta gap.

Remarks: At present, this species is known from only a single locality in the Agasthyamalai Hills of the southern Western Ghats. It was recorded from high elevation montane shola forests (above 1000 msl) near Chemunji in Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary, Thiruvananthapuram District.

10. *Proahaetulla antiqua* Mallik, Achyuthan, Ganesh, Pal, Vijayakumar & Shanker, 2019

Antique Vine Snake

Distribution: Known only from the type localities in Agasthyamalai Hills of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Remarks: Recorded from the Pandimotta area of Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary, Kollam District.

Family Pareidae

11. *Xylophis mosaicus* Deepak, Narayanan,



Das, Rajkumar, Easa, Sreejith & Gower, 2020

Anamalai Wood Snake

Distribution: Known only from the type localities in Anamalai Hills of Kerala (From Eravikulam National Park and Meesapulimala Hills of Idukki District)

Remarks: Fairly well distributed in the higher reaches of Eravikulam National Park and adjoining habitats.

Family Elapidae

12. *Hydrophis spiralis* (Shaw, 1802)

Yellow Sea Snake

Distribution: Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, New Caledonia/ Loyalty Islands, southeast Asia. In India, it is distributed along both the coasts, but not common on the west coast

Remarks: A Yellow Sea Snake *Hydrophis spiralis* was caught as bycatch in the fish trawl operated at 33.3m depth off Kochi Ernakulam District on 20.10.2015 (Jeyabaskaran et al. 2015).

Of the 32 species, 15 species were described as new species from the Western Ghats areas of the State. Most of them were snakes or gekkonid lizards and confined to the higher reaches of Western Ghats. Among them, six species were from Agasthyamalai Hills, five from Wayanad Hills, three species from the montane shola grassland ecosystems of Anamalai Hills, and a single species from the higher reaches of Periyar Tiger Reserve (Highway mountains). The discovery of new species of lizards and snakes exemplify the need for continued systematic field work and

the conservation of the forest ecosystems of Western Ghats, especially higher reaches of this endangered mountain system.

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