



## First report of distribution range extension of *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus* (Cantor, 1839) (Reptilia: Colubridae) in Mizoram, North East India

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### Abstract

Snakes are one of the wonderful gifts of nature, having serpentine body, mostly without limbs. There are around 300 species of snakes reported from India. Every snake has its own distribution range, depending on its feeding habits, reproductive behaviour and suitability to environmental conditions. Some are endemic to some particular region. The aim of this paper to report distribution range extension of a Banded Trinket Snake *Oreocryptophisporphyraceus* (Cantor, 1839) to the state of Mizoram, North East India on Indo Myanmar border.

**Keywords:** Distribution range, *Oreocryptophisporphyraceus*, Mizoram, North East India, Indo Myanmar border.

### Introduction

Mizoram is one of the North Eastern Hill states of India covered with lush green vegetation. The state is divided into eight political districts like Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Lawngtlai, Champhai, Kolasib, Serchhip and Mamit. The state falls in one of the Biodiversity hotspots of India / World. Snake diversity of the state remained undiscovered due to inner line regulation and some other associated problems in the state. Snake diversity of the state has been reported by many workers (Harit&Ramanujam, 2002; Harit, 2008 & 2010; Mathew, 2007a & b; Lalthanpuiaet.al. 2008). The studies mainly remained confined to Aizawl and Champhai districts of the state. The aim of this paper is to report for the first time distribution range extension of a Banded Trinket Snake *Oreocryptophisporphyraceus* (Cantor, 1839) to the state of Mizoram, North East India on Indo Myanmar border. The distribution range of *Oreocryptophisporphyraceus* has been reported from Sikkim and West Bengal (Darjeeling District), to Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. China, Malaysia and found up to 1000 to 2600 meter (Whitaker and Captain, 2008). The occurrence of the *Oreocryptophisporphyraceus* is being reported for the first time from Champhai district of the state. Champhai District of Mizoram

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lies between 23<sup>0</sup> to 24<sup>05</sup>' N latitude and 93<sup>0</sup> to 94<sup>026</sup>' E longitude. The altitude of the area ranges from 500 to 2200 m above msl. It's precipitation ranges from 1600 to 2200 mm. The summer temperature of the area varies from 18<sup>0</sup>C to 31<sup>0</sup>C approximately with winter temperature ranging from 04<sup>0</sup>C to 23<sup>0</sup>C approximately.

**Observations** :- On 03<sup>rd</sup> September, 2015, author came to know a small snake at Vengsang area of Champhai district of the state. The day had drizzling shower throughout the day and it was not a sunny day. The snake was fortunately searched and caught alive without causing any damage to snake. The details of the snake were taken and recorded for identification, which are as given below –Body scales smooth, neck is narrower than head, tip of the head is blunt, eyes has round pupil, colour red brown above with broad dark brown black bands. Hind body has two additional narrow black strips, extending posterior to tip of tail, tail narrow and thin. Head with three narrow black lines; the two that start from eyes runs posterior to joins first black band on neck; the middle dorsal line on head extends to head end only. Body scalation 19:19:17; anal scale divided; subcaudals paired; supralabials 7, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> touching eyes; 7<sup>th</sup> supralabials not touching eyes; preocular 1, postocular 2.

**Results and Discussion** : Based on above measurements and characteristics it was identified



to be Banded Trinket Snake *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus*(Cantor, 1839) as per Whitaker and Captain (2008), Shaw and Barker (2000), Smith (2003). The observed specimen was a baby hatchling of *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus* (Cantor, 1839) as per its colouration (Fig. 1 and 2).



**Fig. 1** Baby hatchling of *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus*



**Fig. 2** Baby hatchling of *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus*

This is the first report of occurrence of Banded Trinket Snake *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus* (Cantor, 1839) in Mizoram, North East India and documents range extension of its distribution from Sikkim, Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh to the state of Mizoram. Snakes are one of the wonderful gifts of nature, prefer to live away from human habitation, but are normally encountered near human habitation due to various reasons like reduction of forests cover; change in climatic conditions; pollution in soil, water and air quality; availability of prey species and many more anthropogenic activity that leads the snakes, to reach accidentally near human habitation. These are life threatening to them and are likely to be killed by man, due to

ignorance of their importance and their ecological services rendered to mankind. Some snakes are having narrow range of distribution. Whereas some snakes are in wide range of distribution. The factors behind may be the lack of studies on these animals in other localities. The present report is the first report of occurrence of Banded Trinket Snake *Oreocryptophis porphyraceus* (Cantor, 1839) in Mizoram, which further adds to the Reptile / Snake fauna in the Bio resources of the state and further suggests to undertake thorough studies on these animals throughout the state so that these important creatures are discovered and documented systematically and scientifically and further conservation strategies is devised in the area.

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