

7. NEW RECORD OF *BRACHYSAURA MINOR* (HARDWICKE AND GRAY), AN AGAMID LIZARD FROM ORISSA, INDIA

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During the faunistic survey, in and around the Satkosia Wildlife Sanctuary of Orissa, in February, 2009, one dead specimen of *Brachysaura minor* (Hardwicke and Gray) was collected and three others were observed. According to Smith (1935), Sharma (2002) and Das (2002), *B. minor* has hitherto not been recorded from eastern India. Since, compilation of a detailed report will take some time, it was considered desirable to record the extension of the distributional range of the species to eastern India up to Orissa.

Material: 1 (Juvenile); Loc. c. 200 m south to Bhurbhura nallah, Labangi, district Angul, Orissa; 21.ii. 2009; Coll. R. Chakraborty. ZSI Registration No. 25833.

Diagnostic Characters: Body feebly depressed, stout, head large; nostrils situated below the canthus rostralis; snout equal or slightly longer than orbit; scales keeled, dorsal ones larger than ventrals; nuchal and dorsal crests are present but not well-developed; two sets of spines above the small tympanum; throat fold present; 11-15 upper and as many lower labials; 48-58 scales round the middle of the body; gular scales either equal or larger than the ventrals; limbs and digits short; tail covered with keeled scales; standard length 53-90 mm; tail not longer than head and body, rounded, slightly compressed, not annulated.

Colour: Dorsal olive-brown, with three rows of dark-brown, light-edged spots on the back and base of the tail; the spots of the middle row are most prominent and rhomboidal; a white stripe on sides of nape, an oblique yellowish stripe from the eye to the angle of the mouth; limbs with dark-brown cross-bars; throat profusely spotted with grey; belly whitish yellow. The juveniles are olive or pinkish brown in colour with dark brown band between eyes.

Habit and Habitat: Terrestrial, crepuscular and nocturnal; in the daytime hides in burrows, usually of rats; sluggish, prefers to rest on stone but can climb up to a metre on vegetation; inhabitants of scrub forest and plains; diet comprises of seeds, insects, and spiders.

Distribution: INDIA: Presently known from Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, western Uttar Pradesh. **Extralimital:** Pakistan.

Status: Vulnerable (Tikader and Sharma 1992); nothing is mentioned by IUCN (2007).

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8. OBSERVATIONS ON UNUSUAL FORAGING BEHAVIOUR OF *ACANTHODACTYLUS CANTORIS* GÜNTHER, 1864, IN WESTERN KACHCHH, GUJARAT, INDIA

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Survival and reproduction of a species depends on its ability to successfully find and capture the resources on which it lives. Successful foraging behaviour is assumed to be adaptive

as it increases survival and reproduction of animals. In lizards, foraging behaviour is studied by various workers (Pianka 1966; Schoener 1971; Huey and Pianka 1981; Regal 1983; Cooper



Fig. 1: *Acanthodactylus cantoris* in the sit-and-wait position of foraging

and Vitt 1989, Cooper 1994; Cloudsley-Thompson 1991; Eifler and Eifler 1999; Wymann and Whitag 2002).

Among lizards, two major modes of foraging are categorised: active, which involves extensive searching or hunting while moving; and sit-and-wait (ambush) foraging (Pianka 1966; Huey and Pianka 1981; Cooper 1994). Actively foraging lizards are characterized by their frequent wandering movements. They eat prey as it is encountered. Active foragers range widely, spend more energy on a daily basis, eat sedentary prey, and are themselves sometimes eaten by sit-and-wait predators. Sit-and-wait foragers remain still for long periods of time, and capture prey as it appears before them. Sit-and-wait predators have small, defined home ranges, eat mobile prey, and seem to have evolved to spend little energy.

Acanthodactylus cantoris Günther, 1864 is a diurnal, insectivorous, terrestrial, and burrowing lizard. In India, *A. cantoris* is reported from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat and Rajasthan (Verma and Sahi 1995; Sharma 2002). It is a common species in the sandy areas, which includes the desert and coast of Kachchh region. Studies on food and feeding behaviour of *A. cantoris* have been carried out by Krishna and Dave (1959), Chandra and Ahluwalia (1973), Bhatnagar and Bhanotar (1973), Sharma and Vazirani (1977), and Sinha (1985). It feeds on a variety of insects, but termites are the most favoured food item of this lizard. As per our observation, they prefer termites to other insects when both are available. *A. cantoris* is mostly an "active" forager, though sometimes also found to be relying on the "sit-and-wait" mode, i.e., it is a "mixed" forager. In 2008, we observed an *A. cantoris* foraging on the butterflies near a small water puddle of riverine patch of Mata-Na-Madh village area (23° 34' 26.8" N; 68° 52' 36.8" E), in Lakhpat taluka of Kachchh district. The surrounding terrain with gentle undulations was sandy and soft, covered with small pebbles, and has mixed thorn forest vegetation in a nearby area.

The foraging mode of *A. cantoris*, in this case, was sit-and-wait but differed from the usual. The lizard had burrowed itself partially in the sand (Fig.1) near a waterbody and was predated on butterflies that approached near. Total observation period was 13 minutes, during which the lizard repeated this practice four times and got success only twice. This occasional observation contributes some information on the feeding ecology of *A. cantoris*.

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