

Herpetofauna of Southern Eastern Ghats, India – II From Western Ghats to Coromandel Coast

S.R.Ganesh^{1*}, A. Kalaimani², P. Karthik², N. Baskaran², R. Nagarajan² & S.R.Chandramouli³

¹Chennai Snake Park, Chennai - 600 022, Tamil Nadu, India.

²Dept. of Zoology, Divn. of Wildlife Biology, A.V.C College, Mannampandal - 609 305,
Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, India.

³Dept. of Ecology & Environmental Sciences, School of Life Sciences,
Pondicherry University, Puducherry - 605 014, India.

*Corresponding Author's E-mail: snakeranglerr@gmail.com

Accepted : June 30, 2018)

ABSTRACT

We surveyed for herpetofauna along the poorly-explored sections of Southern Eastern Ghats. This 1000 hours-long large scale survey covered ranges stretching from near Western Ghats eastwards to the Coromandel Coastal Plains, across a longitudinal gradient. Study area consisting of the tall and wet Bilgiri-Melagiri massifs to the west and the low and dry South Arcot and North Arcot ranges to the east were selected and surveyed. We recorded a total of 95 species including 23 species of amphibians, 35 species of lizards and 37 species of snakes. A descriptive species accounts with photographic vouchers is presented. Noteworthy findings include significant new range records for many wet-zone taxa and a few dry-zone taxa from hitherto fore under-surveyed regions. This includes many rare and range-restricted ones and newly described little-known taxa. The study highlights the importance of landscape-level, long-term fieldwork to unravel the hidden diversity of tropical montane regions like the Eastern Ghats.

Key words: amphibians, dry zone, ecoregion, lizards, peninsular India, snakes, wet zone.