

Microhabitat use and abundance estimates of understorey herpetofauna in the highlands of Southern Eastern Ghats, India, with observations on roadkill mortalities

S.R.Ganesh¹ and M. Arumugam²

Department of Zoology, University of Madras, Guindy Campus, Chennai 600 025, India

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

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ABSTRACT

We examined the synecological community assemblage of herpetofauna in the montane zones (> 900 m asl) of four hill ranges in the Southern Eastern Ghats, peninsular India. We found out the microhabitat associations of herpetofauna by quantifying the frequency of resting substrate (=resource state) utilisation of the target taxa in terrestrial, aquatic, semi-fossorial and semi-arboreal strata (trees <5 m height from ground). We, based on a 2000 hr-long (500 hrs. per hill range) visual encounter survey, estimated the encounter rate of each taxa. Lastly, we comment upon the roadkill mortalities of herpetofauna in the study sites and provide an appraisal for conservation.

Key words: amphibians, encounter rate, montane zone, reptiles, resource states, vehicular traffic.