

TWO NEW SPECIES OF *Cnemaspis* (SAURIA: GEKKONIDAE) FROM TAMIL NADU, SOUTHERN INDIA

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Two new species of *Cnemaspis* (Sauria: Gekkonidae) are described from peninsular India. *Cnemaspis otai* n.sp. occurs in the southern Eastern Ghats at Vellore. It is a small member of the genus (snout-vent length to 29.7 mm) diagnosable by the combination of characters: paired postmentals in broad contact; nostril not in contact with supralabial I; midventrals 18; dorsal tubercles isolated and scattered; no spine-like tubercles on flanks; ventrals smooth; four preanal and three femoral pores; tail with enlarged flattened scales forming whorls, supralabials to angle of jaws 7; narrow distal lamellae under digit IV of pes 13 – 15; dorsum grayish-brown, with three pairs of partially fused, black paravertebral spots. *Cnemaspis yercaudensis* (snout-vent length 24.9 mm) is known from a single specimen taken at Yercaud in the Shevaroy Hills. It is diagnosed by the following characters: postmentals separated by a single scale; nostrils in contact with supralabial I; midventrals 22; no spine-like tubercles on flanks; ventrals smooth; two preanal and three femoral pores; narrow distal lamellae under digit IV of pes 11 – 12; dorsum grayish-brown, darkly mottled; ventrum and gular region yellowish-cream, unpatterned. The presence of a lateral pair of cloacal bones in these and other south Asian species of *Cnemaspis* may be synapomorphic and should be investigated further. These species are the first Indian *Cnemaspis* to be described from their respective hill ranges and help to fill the large gap (Western Ghats to southeastern Thailand) in the distribution of the genus as a whole.

Key words: *Cnemaspis* new species; *Cnemaspis otai*; *Cnemaspis yercaudensis*; Systematics; Ghats, eastern; Shevaroy Hills; India, south.

INTRODUCTION

The gekkonid genus *Cnemaspis* Strauch, 1887, includes a large number of essentially diurnal species that range from southern to south-eastern Asia, as well as equatorial Africa (Smith, 1935; Wermuth, 1965). At present, 38 nominal species are recognized from Asia (Kluge, 1993; Das, 1993; Das and Bauer, 1998; Bauer and Das, 1998). The disjunct distribution of its member species in Asia has been reported, with species known from Sri Lanka and the Western Ghats in the west, and Thailand, south to the Malay Peninsula, many of the islands of the Greater Sundas, and (after an apparent absence on Java and Bali) on Lombok and Timor (McCann, 1953; Das, 1993). Recent field work has revealed the existence of hitherto

undescribed species from some of the intervening regions, including the Eastern Ghats and the Shevaroy Hills (this paper), as well as north-eastern India (Mathew, 1995; Das and Sengupta, unpublished data).

A total of 15 species of *Cnemaspis* have been reported from the hill ranges of south-western India (the Western Ghats) and from the central hills of Sri Lanka (Smith, 1935; Sharma, 1976; Inger et al., 1984). These differ markedly from most southeast Asian members of the genus, which are often larger, exhibit a distinctive tail-arching behavior (Das, 1993), and have relatively longer digits with less marked development of broad basal lamellae (Russell, 1972). Two new Indian species of *Cnemaspis* are reported here, one each from the Eastern Ghats and the Shevaroy Hills, an isolated massif to the east of the Nilgiri Hills, where the Eastern and Western Ghats join (Fig. 1). No named species of the genus have been hitherto reported from either the Eastern Ghats or the Shevaroy Hills.

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