

History and catalogue of reptile types in the collection of the Zoological Survey of India

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Abstract

The contents of the reptile type collection of the Zoological Survey of India, headquartered in Calcutta, with several regional stations in the country, which incorporates the holdings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Indian Museum, are listed. The annotated list includes original citations, registration numbers, nature of type and present status of every taxon, with additional remarks where necessary. In all, 556 primary and secondary types are present, including 289 name-bearing types (comprising 27 *Chelonii*, 152 *Sauria* and 110 *Serpentes*). A list of types that were not located, including those erroneously mentioned as being in the collection, is also included.

KEY WORDS: Zoological Survey of India, systematic collection, reptiles, type specimens, type catalogue.

Introduction

Systematic research in zoology in India was unwittingly started by Sir William Jones (1746-1794), the noted Orientalist and Founder, Asiatic Society of Bengal (see Cannon, 1960, for a bibliography). Although Jones was himself averse to the killing of animals (Bose, 1885), large numbers of zoological and palaeontological curiosities from all over the British Indian Empire, and even far beyond, including the Middle East, Africa, North America, central Asia, Sri Lanka, the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, and eastern China, began to arrive at the Society after about 1828. These were either gifts from the members of the

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