

CHECKLIST OF THE REPTILES OF INDIA WITH ENGLISH COMMON NAMES

Indraneil Das

Centre for Herpetology, Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, Post Bag 4,
Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu 603 104, India

ABSTRACT.- An updated checklist of reptiles (species and subspecies) recorded from the Republic of India is presented, along with their authorities and a suggested common name. The list is significantly larger than those being currently used for biodiversity estimates of this fauna, containing 484 species, of which 182 (37.6 per cent) are endemic.

KEY WORDS.- Reptiles, checklist, English common names, biodiversity, India.

INTRODUCTION

Although the works of Malcolm Arthur Smith (1935-45) continue to be the last authoritative word on the reptile fauna of India, this fauna has seen a dramatic increase in the number of species, as a result of new species descriptions, revision of several groups, raising of a number of subspecies to the rank of species and the records of the occurrence of taxa earlier reported from neighbouring countries within the political boundary of India.

An 'in preparation' work on a checklist of the reptiles of India (also containing synonyms, information on types and taxonomic remarks) shows 484 species, which is significantly different from the information generally available. It was thus thought that a simple interim working checklist would aid workers in herpetology, as well as those who require this information for biodiversity assessments.

This work differs from an earlier one (Das, 1994) in containing names of species that are only found within Indian limits. It also incorporates new name changes, includes all new species described and attempts at standardization of the English common names of all Indian reptiles. A few errors concerning names of authorities, as well as omissions, have been corrected.

As of the cut off date (15 May, 1997), the total number of reptiles species known from the territory of India was 484, which includes 182 endemic species (37.6 per cent of total). If species endemic to the south Asian region (including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri

Lanka) are considered, the endemicity rate for the Indian region would increase substantially.

CROCODYLIDAE

1. *Crocodylus palustris* Lesson, 1831: Mugger crocodile
2. *Crocodylus porosus* Schneider, 1801: Saltwater crocodile

GAVIALIIDAE

3. *Gavialis gangeticus* (Gmelin, 1789): Gharial

DERMOCHELYIDAE

4. *Dermochelys coriacea* (Vandelli, 1761): Leatherback sea turtle

CHELONIIDAE

5. *Caretta caretta* (Linnaeus, 1758): Loggerhead sea turtle
Caretta caretta gigas (Deraniyagala, 1933): Pacific loggerhead sea turtle
6. *Chelonia mydas* (Linnaeus, 1758): Green turtle
7. *Eretmochelys imbricata* (Linnaeus, 1766): Hawksbill sea turtle
8. *Lepidochelys olivacea* (Eschscholtz, 1829): Olive ridley sea turtle

BATAGURIDAE

9. *Batagur baska* (Gray in: Gray & Hardwicke, 1830. "1830-1835"): River terrapin
Batagur baska baska (Gray, 1830): Common river terrapin