



# AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES OF NORTHEAST INDIA

A PHOTOGRAPHIC GUIDE

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**M. Firoz Ahmed, Abhijit Das and Sushil K. Dutta**

## Foreword

The Eastern Himalayan hotspot is one of two global hotspots of high biological diversity in India (the other being the Western Ghats), and contribute significantly to India's position in one of the world's top countries in terms of biotic diversity.

Unfortunately, no published work- comprehensive or concise- is available on the herpetofauna of this important region. On the other hand, plenty of evidence points to the rapid habitat degradation and unrestrained resource exploitation, fuelled by the needs of an expanding economy and emigration from within and across the borders of the region.

I was thus pleased to hear of recent research, after a hiatus of nearly a century, on the herpetofauna of the region. Northeast India lies within the Eastern Himalayan hotspot, and is arguably one of the least known in terms of major global biotas. The herpetological component is here being presented within the cover of a single volume by three young men. The youngest, Prof. Sushil Kumar Dutta, is no stranger to zoologists and developmental biologists, and is an old friend and colleague of mine. He joins two of his own Ph.D. students, Mohammad Firoz Ahmed and Abhijit Das, in preparing this guide, that will permit access of all interested, to identify, and study the region's fauna.

Each species account comprises a common (English) name, recommended vernacular names (in Assamese, Bengali, Manipuri, Nepali, etc), that are sometimes expressly coined for use in this volume, maximum size attained, distinguishing characters, distributional range, habit and habitat, diet, legal protection in India, conservation status and threats (following IUCN criteria), and additional notes (such as whether venomous or otherwise dangerous to humans).

An Assamese edition of the work is now in the market, and one hope that the volumes in different editions will help dispel negative perceptions of these ecologically important groups, and further their research and conservation.

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