

Range Extension for the Khasi Hill Long-Tailed Lizard, *Takydromus khasiensis* Boulenger, 1917 (Squamata: Lacertidae) from India's North Eastern Region into the Gangetic Plains Landscape at Gorumara National Park, West Bengal

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Of the 238 lizard species documented for India, the family Lacertidae is represented by 11 species belonging to four genera. In West Bengal, only one species of lacertid is known whereas in the neighbouring North Eastern Region (NER) of India, comprising the eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura, the family Lacertidae is represented by four species in one genus.

Gorumara National Park is located in the foothills of the Himalayan Terai Arc Landscape, on the floodplains of the Murti and Jaldhaka Rivers in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, which is part of the Gangetic plains biogeographic zone and the lower Gangetic floodplain province (Rodgers et al., 2002). The park is characterized by tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannahs, shrublands, and moist broadleaf forests and is a most important migratory corridor for Asian elephants, *Elephas maximus* (Mallick, 2010). It is also home for many interesting megafauna species, including the great Indian one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), gaur (*Bos gaurus*), leopard (*Panthera pardus*), leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), jungle cat (*Felis chaus*), and Malayan giant squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*). In the park 50 species of mammals, 194 species of birds, 22 species of reptiles, seven species of turtles, and 27 species of fish have been recorded (Anonymous, 2005).

A faunal inventory conducted by the Zoological Survey of India was carried out from 3–10 November 2017 in Gorumara National Park, and on 6 November at 10:55 h a long-tailed lizard was spotted by the first author while it was moving on the ground in the garden of the Gorumara Forest Beat Office, South Gorumara Range, Gorumara National Park (26.7873°N, 88.8411°E). Since collection of vertebrate specimens was not permitted in the park, the specimen could not be vouchered. However, it was carefully observed and photographed (Canon Power Shot SX60 HS Digital Camera) and its characteristics were noted for later identification and species confirmation.

The photograph (Fig. 1A) allowed identification of the specimen as a subadult Khasi Hill long-tailed lizard, *Takydromus khasiensis* Boulenger, 1917 (Squamata: Lacertidae). Its characteristics matched those given for the species in the accounts of Smith (1935), Das (2002), and Purkayastha (2013). The image was also compared to that of a subadult *T. khasiensis* (Fig. 1B), taken by the third author in July 2017 at Gunti Wildlife Sanctuary, southern Tripura State (ca. 23.4529°N, 91.8293°E). Members of the genus *Takydromus* have exceptionally long tails, which measure almost three times an individual's snout–vent length. In India, only four *Takydromus* species have been reported, including *T. khasiensis*, *T. sexlineatus* Daudin, 1802, *T. sikkimensis* (Gunther, 1888), and *T. haughtonanius* Jerdon, 1870. Juvenile *T. khasiensis* have a greenish-brown dorsum with a metallic gloss, a blackish-brown dorsolateral stripe, and a greenish-white venter (Figs. 1 A,B) as described by Boulenger (1917), Smith (1935), and Sharma (2002).

Takydromus khasiensis has so far been reported from the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Tripura, where it is the most common member of the

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Figure 1. Subadult Khasi Hill long-tailed lizards, *Takydromus khasiensis*. (A) An individual encountered on 6 November 2017 in Gorumara National Park, West Bengal, India. Photo by Swati Das. (B) An individual encountered in July 2017 at Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary, South Tripura, India. Photo by Kaushik Deuti.

genus. *Takydromus sexlineatus* differs by having spots on the dorsum and a distinct whitish border between the dorsum and the dorsolateral stripe. *Takydromus haughtonanius* has a reddish-brown dorsum with a green dorsolateral stripe, but it is known only from the holotype found at the type locality (Goalpara District,

Assam). No earlier record of *Takydromus* exists from West Bengal. This report extends the distribution of the genus *Takydromus* and, specifically, the species *T.khasiensis* from the NER states into the Gangetic Plains Landscape of West Bengal.

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