



On the distribution of the reticulated leaf-toed gecko (*Hemidactylus reticulatus*)

The genus *Hemidactylus* Oken, 1817, is a large, widely distributed genus belonging to the most speciose gekkonid lizard family in the world (Mahony, 2009; Uetz & Hosek, 2013; Mirza & Sanap, 2014). The reticulated leaf-toed gecko *Hemidactylus reticulatus* Beddome, 1870 was first reported based on specimens collected from under stones on rocky ground in Kollegal (12°9'N, 77°6'E), Karnataka, India (Beddome, 1870). The distribution range of this Indian endemic gecko is Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu (Smith, 1935; Agarwal, 1981; Das, 2002; Sharma, 2002; Chandra & Gajbe, 2005; Srinivasulu & Das, 2008). In this note, we present an updated distribution of *H. reticulatus* in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, India based on our sightings and collection records.

In Andhra Pradesh, *H. reticulatus* was previously known from Palakonda Hills, Thummalabailu and Rajampet in Kadapa (earlier Cuddapah) District (Smith, 1935; Sharma, 2002); Adoni, Gudikall, Yemmiganur, Sundipenta, near Pangidi Vagu and Rollapadu in Kurnool District (Murthy, 1986; Sharma, 2002; Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu, 2004; Srinivasulu & Das, 2008); Eddenmotu, Fringemotu, Vijayapuri (South) and Macherla in Guntur District (Sharma, 2002; Srinivasulu *et al.*, 2006; Srinivasulu & Das, 2008) and Kanigudi in Chittoor District (Agarwal *et al.*, 2011) (Fig. 1).

In Telangana, this species has been reported from Nandikonda, Devarakonda, Vijayapuri (North), Madhavaram, Suryaraopet, Nidigul, Yelleshwaram in Nalgonda District (Sharma, 2002; Srinivasulu *et al.*, 2006), and Uma Maheshwaram in Mahbubnagar District (Srinivasulu *et al.*, 2006) (Fig. 1). The northernmost locality record of this species is from Sarguja, Chhattisgarh (Agarwal, 1981; Chandra & Gajbe, 2005).

During our herpetofaunal surveys in recent years, the Reticulated leaf-toed gecko has been recorded from three hitherto unreported sites in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In Andhra Pradesh on 11th January, 2009 we collected a specimen (Fig. 2; NHM.OU.REP.2-2009) from Jaggayapet (16°52'N, 80°40', alt. 97 m) in Krishna District. In Telangana on 30th March 2007, a specimen was sighted at Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park (17°19'N, 78°53'E, alt. 494 m), Hyderabad from where another specimen (Fig. 3) was photographed in late 2006. More recently, on 23rd February 2012 a specimen (Fig. 4; NHM.OU.REP.10-2012) was sighted and collected from Enuparathiguttalu (18°3'N, 79°29'E, alt. 265 m) in Karimnagar District. All specimens were identified by the dorsal coloration, network of dark lines forming a reticulate pattern on the dorsum, tail with pointed tubercles and its characteristic way of coiling its body and tail (Figs. 2–4).

The ground-dwelling Reticulated leaf-toed gecko inhabits rocky outcrops in open scrub forests and deciduous forests (Molur & Walker, 1998; Das, 2002; Srinivasulu & Das, 2008; Srinivasulu & Srinivaasulu, 2013). At Enuparathiguttalu, the individual was found on the ground in open scrubland with rocky outcrops adjacent to a hill. At Jaggayapet, the gecko was found in a rocky area under a stone in a dry deciduous forest patch, as was the one at the Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park in 2007.

The present records extend the range of *H. reticulatus* further north into Telangana and further east into Andhra Pradesh. The nearest documented locality record for Enuparathiguttalu is Madhavaram (17°17'N, 79°27'E) in Nalgonda District which is to the south at a distance of 91 km. The nearest documented locality record for Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park is Nandikonda (17°3'N, 79°16') in Nalgonda District which is to

the south east at a distance of 79 km. The nearest documented locality record for Jaggayyapet is Madhavaram (17°17'N, 79°27'E) in Nalgonda District which is to the north west at a distance of 82 km. In Andhra Pradesh, the southernmost location of this species is from Kuppam in Chittoor district (Agarwal *et al.*, 2011).

The recent sightings of *H. reticulatus* both within its known distribution range and outside it indicates that this species is under represented and further dedicated studies will reveal a larger distribution range. We also opine that the ecological requirements and threats to the habitat of *H. reticulatus* should be studied to ensure its future survival.

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Figure 1: Current distribution pattern of *H. reticulatus* in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, India



Figure 2: *H. reticulatus* in life (NHM.OU.REP.2-2009) at Jaggayapet, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, India (photo: M. Seetharamaraju)

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Figure 3: *H. reticulatus* in life (not collected) at Mahaveer Harina Vanasthali National Park, Hyderabad (photo: S.R. Ganesh).



Figure 4: *H. reticulatus* in life (NHM.OU.REP.10-2012) at Enuparathiguttalu, Karimnagar District, Telangana, India (photo: Chethan Kumar).