

## New locality records and distribution extension of *Hemidactylus triedrus* Daudin, 1802 (Squamata, Gekkonidae) at the North-East parts of Aravalli ranges, Rajasthan, India

Sharma Krishan Kumar\*, Sharma Vivek and Sharma Neha

*Hemidactylus triedrus* (Fig. 1) is a gecko listed as “Data Deficient” by IUCN due to the lack of information about its distribution and various other biological aspects viz. breeding, feeding etc. The distribution of this species in Indian subcontinent was described by earlier workers (Boulenger, 1890; Smith, 1935; Sharma, 2002) from southern parts of Rajasthan up to the eastern state Orissa where it is abundant. Its distribution has also been reported from Karachi, Pakistan (Iffat, 2006). There is no record of *Hemidactylus triedrus* from the North-Eastern parts of Aravalli mountain ranges which show peculiar habitats contrary to the western Thar desert of the state, Rajasthan.

For the present study (2007-2010), the northern parts of Aravalli ranges near the outskirts of Sariska wildlife sanctuary (79°17' to 76°34' N and 27°5' to 27°33' N and with 300-722 altitude with over all coverage area of 765.80 sq. km.) were surveyed for the occurrence

of *Hemidactylus triedrus*. One adult and two juveniles were encountered in leaf foliage at the slopes of hill ranges at 76° 38' 15.66" / 27° 18' 12.48" (Fig. 2). Further exploration in subsequent season led to discovery of two more adult specimens nearby. After detailed morphological observation and photography for their identification all the specimens were released to their respective habitats. Special attention was made not to harm the individuals during the observations. Earlier workers have reported an even distribution of this lizard and reported it being abundant (Boulenger, 1890; Sharma, 2002). While analyzing the distribution of this lizard in Rajasthan, the nearest record was found near the central parts of Aravalli ranges at Ajmer (about 286 km southwest of new locality mentioned here).

The Aravalli mountain range one of the oldest mountain ranges of the world bisects the Rajasthan state and plays a role as a natural barrier for the Thar Desert. The central parts of Aravalli range is facing threats such as mining, deforestation and urbanization resulting in habitat loss which may lead to a higher rate of decline of this lizard as in the case of many saurian species. Therefore, the species needs serious consideration for its conservation.

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Biodiversity Research Laboratory, Zoology Department,  
Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati University, Ajmer-305009,  
Rajasthan, India; e-mail: kksmds@gmail.com

\*Corresponding author



Figure 1. *Hemidactylus triedrus* (Adult).



**Figure 2.** Schematic map showing the occurrence of *Hemidactylus triedrus* with old records (black filled circles) and the new locality (red filled circle).

The exploration of new locality for the occurrence of *Hemidactylus triedrus* in the far north east part of Aravalli ranges was carried out because it represents habitat characteristics such as mountain slopes with leaf foliage and seasonal vegetation cover with higher amount or diversity of insects specifically the termites which are the main food of the species.

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