

22. *Additions to the Collection of Oriental Snakes in the Indian Museum.*—Part 2.—*Specimens from the Andamans and Nicobars.*—By NELSON ANNANDALE, B.A., D.Sc., *Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Museum.*

All the snakes recorded or described in this communication are from the Andamans or the Nicobars. With one exception, they have been collected and presented to the Museum either by Major A. R. Anderson, I.M.S., or by Mr. C. G. Rogers. The one exception is the type of a new Sea-Snake, which was taken by the Indian Marine Survey. Mr. G. A. Boulenger has kindly examined several of the other specimens. I am much indebted to Major Anderson for several letters on the snakes of the islands. I have added a revised list of the species known to occur in the two archipelagoes or represented from them in the Indian Museum, having re-examined the specimens recorded by Mr. W. L. Slater in all cases in which there was any doubt.

TYPHLOPIDÆ.

TYPHLOPS BRAMINUS (Daud.)

This is evidently the common species in the Andamans, or at any rate in the neighbourhood of Port Blair. Major Anderson has lately sent us twenty-four very dark specimens from that station.

The type of *T. andamanensis* still remains unique, if it is in existence. I have not been able to trace its history. The Museum does not possess examples of *T. oatesii*, described from the Cocos group.

COLUBRIDÆ.

LYCODON AULICUS (Linn.)

We have lately received several specimens of this common Indian species both from the Andamans and the Nicobars. One from the Nicobars belongs to var. E of Boulenger's "Catalogue;" those from the Andamans to var. C, a common form in Ceylon.

OLIGODON WOODMASONI (Scl.)

Simotes woodmasoni, *Slater, J.A.S.B.*, (2) LX, p. 235; *List. Snakes*, p. 24.

A young specimen, lately received from Major Anderson, has been submitted to Mr. Boulenger, who regards it as belonging to the genus *Oligodon*. I have compared it with Mr. Slater's types, with which it is identical. Mr. Boulenger notes that it is nearly related to *O. trilineatus*, a Malayan species.

COLUBER MELANURUS, Schleg.

A specimen from the Andamans has the entire dorsal surface of the head and body of an almost uniform dark plumbaceous

grey. The markings on the side of the head and on the neck are, however, quite distinct, and the individual is otherwise normal. We have in the Museum a similar specimen from Borneo.

DENDROPHIS PICTUS (Gmel.)

A specimen has been sent by Mr. Rogers from Henry Lawrence Island, Andamans. The species appears to be common all over the Andamans and Nicobars. Some of the Andaman specimens, are very dark in colour, but this character does not seem to be constant.

TROPIDONOTUS PISCATOR (Schneid.)

We have lately received a specimen from the South Andamans, while we had already a number from several localities in the archipelago. I have not been able to find any record of the occurrence of this common Indian species in the Nicobars.

TROPIDONOTUS NICOBARENSIS, Scl.

T. nicobaricus Sclater, *J.A.S.B.*, LX (2), 1891, pp. 231, 250.

T. nicobarensis, *id.*, *ibid.*, p. 241.

T. nicobariensis, Boulenger, *Cat. Snakes*; p. 192.

The type of this species still remains unique. I have examined it very carefully, dissecting out the maxillary on one side, and have no doubt that Mr. Sclater was right as to its generic identification. The maxillary teeth, 24 in number, increase slightly from before backwards, and show no signs of being stunted posteriorly; but the division of the anal plate appears to me to have been traumatic. If the species is identical with Cope's *Prymniodon*, the latter must have been founded on an individual injured or abnormal as to its dentition. This seems possible, as the type was otherwise deficient.

DIPSADOMORPHUS CEYLONENSIS, Gthr.

Mr. Rogers has presented two specimens from the South Andamans. The snakes from Assam and the Andamans identified by Mr. Sclater as *Dipsas fusca*, are young individuals of this species.

DISTIRA ANDAMANICA, sp. nov.

Head moderate, hardly separated from the neck; the greatest depth of the latter half that of the body; body deep, strongly compressed; tail short. Rostral much broader than deep; nasals shorter than frontal, three times as long as the suture between the præfrontals; frontal not much longer than broad, shorter than distance from rostral, much shorter than parietals; one præocular, very large; 3 postoculars; no loreal; 2 large, superimposed anterior temporals; 7 upper labials, 3rd and 4th entering eye; two pairs of sub-equal chin shields, the posterior pair separated

from one another by two rows of scales. Head scales smooth for the most part, but with a few minute, irregularly placed pits. Eyes large and prominent. Body scales imbricate, but feebly so or not at all posteriorly, with a very short keel or a tubercle; 31 scales round neck, 39 round body; ventrals distinct, bituberculate, with a central longitudinal groove, occasionally divided, 238 (in the type) in number. *Colour*—pale-yellow on sides and belly, with about 40 large, black rhomboidal marks on the dorsal surface. These are not in contact either above or below, reaching about half way down the body on the neck and tail and almost to the ventral margin of the tail. Throat and chin darker yellow, the former feebly irrorated with black. Dorsal surface of the head pale-green as far backwards as the posterior border of the præfrontals and of the 2nd supraocular, black posteriorly.

Measurements of type—

Total length	...	...	30 inches.
Length of tail	...	...	$2\frac{3}{4}$ "

A single female from the Andamans. Judging from its bold coloration, this specimen is immature. In many respects the species resembles *Enhydris curtus*, from which it may be distinguished superficially by the possession of unbroken parietals and distinct chin shields. It has six grooved teeth posterior to the large poison fangs in each maxilla. Its nearest ally is *D. lapimidoides*.

SNAKES OF THE ANDAMANS AND NICOBARS.

NAME OF SNAKE.	Andamans.	Nicobars.
<i>Typhlops braminus</i>§|| (Daud.)	×	—
<i>Typhlops oatesii</i> ,* Blgr.	×	—
„ <i>andamanensis</i> ,* Stol.	×	—
<i>Python reticulatus</i>,§|| Schneid.	—	×
<i>Lycodon aulicus</i>§|| (Linn.) ..	×	×
<i>Polydontophis sagittarius</i>§|| (Cant.)	—	×
„ <i>bistrigatus</i>|| (Gthr.)	—	×
<i>Ablabes nicobarensis</i> ,* Stol.	—	×
<i>Oligodon sublineatus</i> , D. & B.	—	×
„ <i>woodmasoni</i> * (Scl.)	×	×
<i>Zamenis mucosus</i>§|| (Linn.)	×	—
<i>Coluber porphyraceus</i>, §|| Cant.	×	—
„ <i>melanurus</i>§|| (Schleg.)	×	×
„ <i>oxycephalus</i>,§|| Boie ...	×	×
<i>Dendrophis pictus</i>§|| (Gmel.)	×	×
<i>Tropidonotus stolatus</i>§|| (Linn.)	—	×
„ <i>piscator</i>§|| (Schneid.)	×	—
„ <i>nicobarensis</i> ,* Scl.	—	×
<i>Chrysodrus granulatus</i> §|| (Schneid.)	×	—
<i>Dipsadomorphus hexagonatus</i> (Blyth) ...	×	—

NAME OF SNAKE.			Andamans.	Nicobars.
<i>Dipsadomorphus ceylonensis</i> , ¹ Gthr.	...	...	x	—
<i>Chrysopelea ornata</i> § ² (Shaw)	...	...	(Narcondam)	—
<i>Cerberus rhynchops</i>§|| (Schneid.)	...	...	x	x
<i>Fordonia leucobalia</i> §|| (Schleg.)	...	...	—	x
<i>Bungarus cæruleus</i> §|| (Schneid.)	...	...	x	—
<i>Naia tripudians</i>,§|| Merr.	...	...	x	—
„ <i>bungarus</i>,§|| Schleg.	...	...	x	—
<i>Platurus colubrinus</i>§|| (Schneid.)	...	...	x	x
<i>Distira andamanica</i> ,* Annand.	...	...	x	—
<i>Hydrus platurus</i>§|| (Linn.)	...	...	—	x
<i>Amblycephalus monticola</i>|| (Cant.)	...	...	—	x
<i>Lachesis cantor</i> * (Blyth)...	...	...	x	x
„ <i>gramineus</i>§|| (Shaw)	...	...	x	x
„ <i>purpureomaculatus</i>§|| (Gray)	...	...	x	x

In the above list, the names of those snakes which are not represented in the Indian Museum by specimens either from the Andamans or from the Nicobars are printed in italics. In the first column a * indicates that a species is peculiar to the Andamans, the Nicobars or both archipelagoes; a § that it has been recorded from the Malay Peninsula south of the Isthmus of Kra; a || that it is known from Assam or Burma. In the other columns, a x shows that a species is known to occur, a — that specimens have not been taken.

It will be seen from this list that the Ophidian fauna of the islands has close affinities with that of Burma and Malaya, while there is possibly a less obvious connection with Ceylon. So far as we know, three species are peculiar to the Andamans, two to the Nicobars, and two to the Andamans and Nicobars together; but our knowledge is still extremely limited, especially as regards the smaller snakes of the Nicobars.

¹ *Dipsas fusca* (Gray) apud Selater, *List Snakes*, p. 47.

² Major Anderson has taken a specimen (var. A) on Narcondam.



Annandale, Nelson. 1905. "Additions to the collection of oriental snakes in the Indian Museum.— Part 2.— Specimens from the Andamans and Nicobars." *Journal and proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 1(7), 173–176.

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