

legs had five digits each. The lizard was collected and photographed (BNHS Regn. No. 1434). It was identified as short tailed agama *Agama minor* Hardwicke & Gray by Mr. J.C. Daniel. The specimen has been deposited in the BNHS Collection, Reptile section, Regn. No. 1434.

THE BOOK OF INDIAN REPTILES (Daniel 1983) mentions the short tailed agama as a widely distributed species in the Gangetic plains and central and western India. Yet *Agama minor* does not find a place in the reptilian fauna of Rajasthan (Sharma 1995). Sharma also informed the authors that he has not found it during

his surveys in Rajasthan (pers. comm.). Thus our finding of *Agama minor* in a dry grassland in southeast Rajasthan is extremely important and it is probably the first report from this region.

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## 21. THE BREEDING OF THE INDIAN ROCK PYTHON (*PYTHON MOLURUS*) IN MUDUMALAI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, TAMIL NADU

The Indian rock python (*Python molurus*) is widely distributed in India, although little information is available on its breeding habits (Acharjyo and Mishra 1976; Daniel 1983; Dattatri 1990; Bhupathy 1993). This note describes my observations on the breeding habits of the Indian rock python in Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (MWS).

There are remnants of several abandoned buildings which were constructed by the British Army during World War II near Kargudy Guest house in MWS. On 10 April 1996, an adult python was entering one such construction: a damaged underground septic tank. The tank was very shallow (around 0.5 m depth) and there was a small cavity on the side wall of the tank into which the python entered and coiled itself. The python was visible only partially from outside. The next day, on closer observation, we saw some eggs around which the python was coiled. Since the cavity was small, we were unable to count the number of eggs. We visited the place regularly and recorded the presence of the python. The python was observed incubating the eggs till 2 June. On 3 June, when we inspected the place, we saw nine python hatchlings moving around the egg mass which was inside the cavity, but

the adult python was not to be seen. A day later, one of the hatchlings, which measured 65 cm in length, was found dead. The cause of death could not be ascertained. The remaining eight hatchlings moved away from the tank within the next four days. Later, when all the hatchlings moved off from the place, we removed the egg mass from the cavity and counted 46 eggs. Out of 46 eggs, only nine had slit-like openings indicating hatching.

The egg laying season we recorded (April) is slightly earlier than that reported in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur, Central India (Bhupathy and Vijayan 1989, Bhupathy 1993) and North India (Smith 1945). This could be due to environmental reasons. The incubation period estimated by us was fifty-three days (from 12 May to 3 June). This is similar to that reported earlier, 58 days (Daniel 1983) in the natural condition and 55 to 60 days (Dattatri 1990) in captivity. Our observation further confirms the statement of Daniel (1987) that the mother leaves the eggs soon after hatchlings emerge.

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## 22. RAINBOW TROUT (*SALMO GAIRDNERII*) IN ANAIMALAI HILLS, WESTERN GHATS

The rainbow trout *Salmo gairdnerii* is an anadromous fish like Salmon. It was introduced in India from United Kingdom, New Zealand and Sri Lanka in 1869 (Talwar and Jhingran 1991). The first attempt to import trout eggs and fry from abroad was made in 1863 by Francis Day (Jhingran and Sehgal 1978).

### Introduction of trout into Kerala and its present status

Introduction of trout into Kerala dates back to 1909 when eyed-eggs of *Salmo trutta fario* were brought from the United Kingdom. A hatchery was made at Kanniamallay estate for brown trout. But these efforts met with little success, hence efforts to introduce brown trout were given up in Kerala in favour of rainbow trout. A rainbow trout hatchery was established in 1941 at Eravikulam. Another hatchery at Rajamalai was established to meet the demand for the Maddupatty and Kundally reservoirs, Elephant and Devikulam lakes, Kadallar,

Pettimudi and Rajamalai streams. The management of trout fishery through hatcheries and its introduction in reservoirs and hillstreams was controlled by the High Range Angling Association, Munnar. In 1943, Dr. Freeman transplanted rainbow trout fingerlings in the Konalar streams, near Valparai, Tamil Nadu from Munnar High Range zone, Kerala (Jhingran and Sehgal, 1978). In 1939, trout hatchery management and stocking of the streams with trout achieved great success in Munnar. Molesworth and Bryant (1921) and Mackay (1945) reported their findings on trout in Travancore and the Nilgiris. After that there is no literature on the culture or natural occurrence of trout in Anaimalai.

The Rainbow trout *Salmo gairdnerii* is now well established in streams and rivers of Munnar and Valparai. Last year, a survey was conducted in the Anaimalai hills which confirmed the occurrence of *S. gairdnerii* in the wild. During our survey we were able to collect three