

**ON A RECENT RECORD OF THE RARE INDIAN WART SNAKE,
CHERSYDRUS GRANULATUS (SCHNEIDER) (SERPENTES :
ACROCHORDIDAE) FROM TAMIL NADU COAST**

ABSTRACT

This account records a rare occurrence of an Indian wart snake *Chersydrus granulatus* (Schneider) from Tamil Nadu Coast.

IN the course of studies recently on the sea snakes of Tamil Nadu Coast, the author came across a weird-looking, stout bodied snake (910mm) with a flabby skin captured in the fishing net off Tirumullaivasal, Tanjore district.

Its head with granular scales, the zebra like appearance because of the crossed bars on its back, and the small eyes are so characteristic that the author had no difficulty in identifying it as *Chersydrus granulatus* (Fig. I).

Smith (1943) gives its range as ' the coasts of Ceylon, India, as far as Bombay in the west and Cochin-China in the east ; the Nicobar Island, and says that according to Wall this snake is fairly abundant round the coasts of India. Scalter (1891) has listed only three specimens under this species from Hijili, Midnapore Dt., W. Bengal, Singapore and India with no specific locality. A check up of the available collections has revealed the fact that it has been subsequently recorded from the Chilka Lake in Orissa and the Sundarban, sea coast of West Bengal. Though it is said to be common around the Chilka Lake Annandale (1921) has preferred to omit this species in his account because ' it is not found ashore '.

Despite the claim by the Herpetologists that this snake is common around the Indian Coasts, the fact is quite contrary. In regard to South India, the author has been unable to find any heretofore published localities within Tamilnadu, or, indeed within political S. India. Satyamurti (1960) makes no mention of this species in his guide to the snakes of the Madras Museum. Also, literature records of this species are difficult to evaluate, since this species has been repeatedly confused with

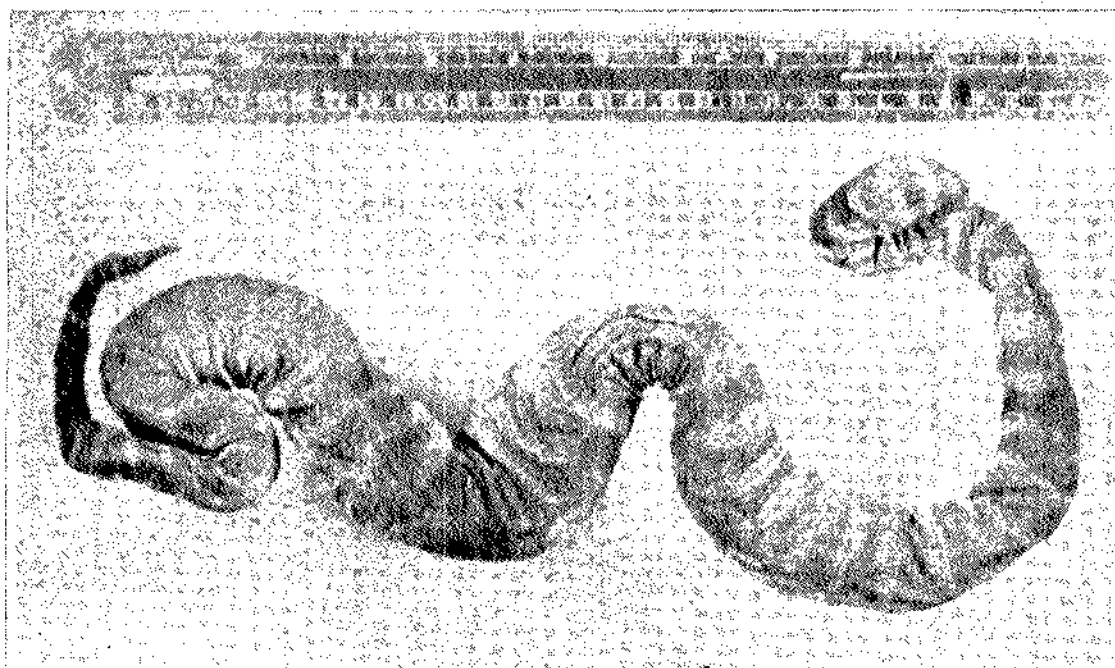


Fig. 1. Dorsal view of *Chersodrus granulatus* (Sch.)

its ally, the Java Wart Snake (*Aerochordus javanicus*). Ditmars (1931) has mistakenly included India in the range of Javanese species. It can be concluded from the above account that the recent collectors have failed to find this species and the present record of it from Tanjore Coast is, therefore, of considerable significance. Probably it is scarce because of its total adaption to the aquatic mode of life far away from the shore and the few specimens getting caught seldom in the fishing nets escaping the notice of the Herpetologists.

The author is grateful to Dr. A. G. K. Menon, Deputy Director, Southern Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Madras-28 for encouragement. Thanks are also due to the photographer Shri S. Vijayaraghavan.

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