

# Squamata, Scincidae, *Eutropis trivittata* (Hardwicke and Gray, 1827): Distribution extension

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**ABSTRACT:** We report the first record of the three-banded skink *Eutropis trivittata* (Hardwicke and Gray, 1827) (Reptilia: Scincidae) for Andhra Pradesh, India, based on a specimen from Araku, Vishakapatnam district. This report also helps in understanding the distribution of this species in South East India.

The Three-banded skink *Eutropis trivittata* (Hardwicke and Gray, 1827) (Figures 1 and 2) is one of the endemic skinks of South Asia (Smith 1935; Sharma 2002). This species has been described by Hardwicke and Gray (1827) based on specimens collected from Dum Dum (22°37'12" N, 88°25'12" E), West Bengal, India. Besides the type locality, this species has been reported from seven locations in India (Figure 3) including Rajmahal (Jharkhand), Belgaum (Karnataka), Jalna (Maharashtra), Pune (Maharashtra), Nasik (Maharashtra), Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and Baphlimali Hills (Orissa) (Boulenger 1887; Smith 1935; Chopra 1964; Baby *et al.* 1976; Rajasekaran *et al.* 2002; Sharma 2002).

Our report is based on a single, freshly trampled, relatively undamaged specimen (NHM.OU.REP.2-2009) that was collected on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2009 by one of the authors (MS) near Araku (18°13'48" N, 82°49'48" E, 882 m above sea level), Vishakapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh, India (Figure 3). Morphometric analysis (SVL = snout-vent length; TL = tail length and the ratio of the tail length vs. snout-vent length) revealed the identity of the specimen to be *E. trivittata*. The Three-banded skink is a moderately large skink (SVL = 46.9 mm; TL = 71.2 mm; TL/SVL = 1.51) brownish above and whitish below; dorsum with 3 yellow-stripes (2 dorsolateral and 1 vertebral) all along the whole length (Figure 2).

*Eutropis trivittata* closely resembles *E. beddomei* (Jerdon, 1870) with respect to keels on the dorsal scales, number of lamellae and the size of the ear openings. However, *E. trivittata* differs from *E. beddomei* in bearing enlarged sub conical tubercles on palms and soles. It also varies from *E. beddomei* in the stripe pattern wherein it has clearly defined vertebral stripe (white or yellow in live condition) and the two dorso-lateral stripes occupying the adjacent halves of the two scales (in *E. beddomei* there are four dark brown stripes, more so evident so in the young individuals, that fade or may completely disappear leaving traces in adult individuals).

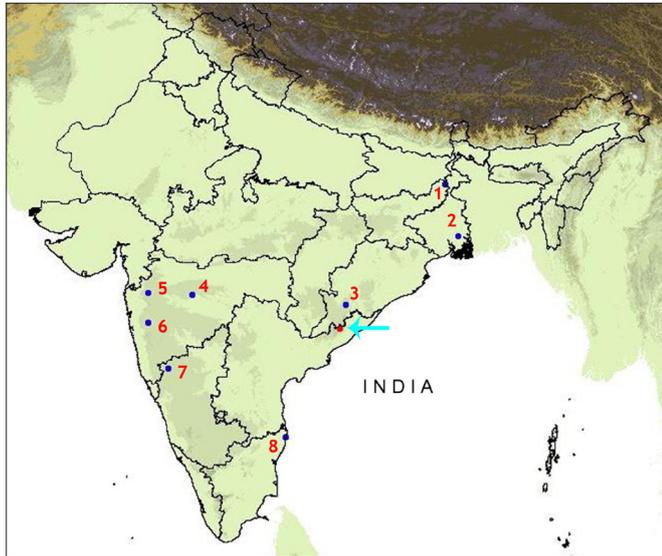


**FIGURE 1.** Specimen of *Eutropis trivittata* (NHM.OU.REP.2-2009) from Araku, Vishakapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, India.



**FIGURE 2.** Detail of the head of *Eutropis trivittata* specimen (NHM.OU.REP.2-2009) from Araku, Vishakapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh, India. Note the vertebral and dorsolateral stripes.

The habitat of the locality where the specimen was found is at an altitude of 882 m a.s.l. with dense forest interspersed with grass patches, rocks, boulders, termite mounds and ant hills. All these conditions provide large amounts of food source in the form of termites, ants and small insects like grasshoppers, and stick-insects. *Eutropis carinata* (Schneider, 1801) and *E. macularia* (Blyth, 1853) were observed sharing the same habitat.



**FIGURE 3.** Geographic distribution map of *Eutropis trivittata* in India based on literature data and this study. Blue dots: 1) Rajmahal (Jharkhand), 2) Dum Dum (West Bengal) (terra typica), 3) Baphlimali Hills (Orissa), 4) Jalna, 5) Nasik, 6) Pune (Maharashtra), 7) Belgaum (Karnataka), and 8) Chennai (Tamil Nadu) from Boulenger (1887), Smith (1935), Chopra (1964), Baby *et al.* (1976), Rajasekaran *et al.* (2002), and Sharma (2002). The red dot represents the locality, Araku, Andhra Pradesh, reported herein (light blue arrow indicates the position).

This constitutes the first record of *E. trivittata* (Hardwicke and Gray, 1821) for Andhra Pradesh, India, extending its distribution to 265 km southwest from Baphlimali Hills, Orissa, the previously known record from the Eastern Ghats.

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