

10. OCCURRENCE OF THE PIT-VIPER *TRIMERESURUS*
MALABARICUS (JERDON) ON THE GHODBUNDER ROAD
(THANA DIST.) WITH SOME NOTES ON
THEIR HABITS

From October 24 to December 23, 1968, I found eight specimens of the pit-viper *Trimeresurus malabaricus* on the Ghodbunder road. The sizes ranged from 240 mm. to 840 mm.; five specimens were found dead on the road, two were found live crossing the road and one live one was found on a bush in a roadside ditch. All living specimens were found at night as well as most of the dead ones, pointing to the nocturnal habits of this species. The live specimens were all kept and are living in a terrarium at the time of this writing. The two smaller snakes (260 mm., 280 mm.) feed on small frogs, although they show an interest in the mice that the larger one (840 mm.) is fed. When feeding they strike and hold their prey till dead and then swallow; a frog died in nine minutes after being grabbed by one of the small vipers; a mouse died in two minutes from the bite of the large one, a second mouse died after six minutes. When not gorged with food the snakes become very active in the evening, searching the glass for a way out; during the day they remain coiled (often together) on a branch in the cage. When approached or molested I have noticed the large one vibrating its tail, as observed with many other snakes including *Ptyas mucosus*, *Boiga*, as well as American and Japanese pit-vipers genus *Ancistrodon*, and of course the rattlesnakes, *Crotalus*. The coloration of *T. malabaricus* is slightly variable, one of the live young ones being a much lighter green than the others. The dark zig-zag markings are more prominent in the larger specimens, being much more distinct when the snake is distended with food and more noticeable in the darkness of the cage than in the light while photographing them. No other species of pit-vipers were found by me in the area in question.

C/o K. CHATTOPADHYAYA,
6, CHATEAU MARINE,
MARINE DRIVE,
BOMBAY,
January, 1969.

ROMULUS WHITAKER



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