

Gummudipoondi to Sathyavedu (north of Madras city) and at Kaliveli. I am sure the bird occurs in appropriate habitats elsewhere in the state.

The Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*) is an uncommon winter visitor around Madras and has been recorded in different years at the Guindy National Park and the environs of the Chembarambakkam Lake. Both male and female birds have been seen in the winter months. It has also been recorded recently in Kerala (Neelakantan *et al.* A. *Book of Kerala Birds (Part I)* WWF-Kerala, pp 88-89, 1993).

The Small minivet (*Pericrocotus cinna-*

momeus) is a fairly common bird in the coastal areas of Madras and is seen in Guindy National Park, Theosophical Society Campus, and Madras Christian College Campus, besides other fairly wooded village environs and scrub jungles. I am surprised that this species has not been recorded at Pt. Calimere earlier.

March 31, 1995

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15. NEW LOCALITIES FOR BROWN HILL TORTOISE *MANOURIA EMYS* (SCHLECAGEL AND MULLER) FROM KARBI ANGLONG, ASSAM

The Brown hill tortoise (*Manouria emys*) is also called the Asian brown tortoise, Burmese brown tortoise and Eastern hill tortoise. It is the largest land tortoise of Asia. The colour of the carapace is brownish to brownish-black. The species attains a length of upto 60 cm.

In India, this tortoise has been recorded in Nagaland (Anderson, 1872), Nongkhylllem Reserved Forest in Meghalaya (Das, 1991: Colour Guide), Langting-Mupa Reserved Forest and some other localities of North Cachar Hills in south-central Assam (Anderson, 1871, 1872). Outside, it extends upto Sumatra.

In March, 1992, I examined a partly damaged carapace in Kaliyani Reserved Forest of northern part of Karbi Anglong district in central Assam (26° 25' N; 93° 35' E). Only the straight carapace width could

be measured (37 cm). In October, 1995, a live tortoise was caught by some local tribals in Tarapung area (26° 30' N; 93° 30' E) of the same district and brought to Bokakhat market near Kaziranga National Park for sale. It was then rescued by the civil officials and sent to the Assam State Zoo at Guwahati.

It measured (in cm), Straight line carapace length: 53; Curved carapace length: 62; Straight line carapace width: 36; Curved carapace width: 56; Plastron (greatest length): 56; Plastron length (notch to notch): 52; Shell height: 21. It weighed 21 kg.

September 17, 1996

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description of some new species. *J. Asiatic Soc. Bengal* 40 (part 2): 12-39.

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16. THE KEELED BOX TURTLE *PYXIDEA MOUHOTII* GRAY - A NEW RECORD FOR MANIPUR

The keeled box turtle *Pyxidea mouhotii* Gray, 1862, has been recorded from only a few localities

in the north-east of India, i.e., North Cachar Hills (Das, 1991) and Karbi Anglong (Choudhury, 1993;

JBNHS 90:517) of Assam, Khasi and Garo Hills of Meghalaya, Namdapha National Park (Das, 1991), Mehao Sanctuary (Bhupathy and Choudhury, 1992) and Drupong Reserved Forest (Choudhury, 1996; JBNHS 93:97) of Arunachal Pradesh. All the records except the last one were from the south bank areas of the Brahmaputra river.

On 20 January, 1996, while driving from Imphal in Manipur to Hailakandi in southern Assam, I obtained a carapace of a Keeled box turtle from a road labourer's camp, located between the Barak and Makru rivers (c. 6 km road distance from Barak bridge), at an elevation

c. 200 m above msl, in Tamenglong district of Manipur. The turtle was caught by a labourer from a nearby forested hill-slope.

The carapace (AUC 45) measured (in cm): Straight line carapace length 14.1; Curved carapace length 15.9; Straight line carapace width 11.0; Curved carapace width 15.6 and Carapace height 4.9

September 17, 1996

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17. OCCURRENCE OF INDIAN PEACOCK SHELL TURTLE IN GAUHATI UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

The Gauhati University Campus was built in low marshy areas where a small fragmented wetland (not more than 2.5 ha.) still provides good habitat for wetland fauna.

On 12th August, 1995 a local villager from nearby caught a soft shell turtle on his hook in the Gauhati University campus. The carapace length and width were 26 cm and 22 cm respectively. Length of head plus neck was 20 cm. The clearly reticulate carapace was dark green in colour with four easily distinguished round spots with lighter boundary. The snout was light green with dark spots. Three nails were present in each limb whereas another two

nails were covered by skin and formed a pad - like structure. After consulting various books the turtle was identified as the Indian Peacock soft shell Turtle *Aspideretes hurum*. The habitat where it was caught is low marshy land with paddy cultivation on its edge line and was situated behind the Department of Zoology, with an area of about 1.5 ha. The person who caught the turtle refused to sell it to me.

June 4, 1996

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18. A RECORD CLUTCH SIZE OF RAT SNAKE

The normal clutch size of Rat Snake (*Coluber mucosus*) is reported to consist of 6-14 eggs (Smith 1943 & Daniel 1983). Recently we came across a clutch of Rat snake's eggs from Mannuthy, Kerala on 28th September, 1995, from a heap of soil near a house. There were 32 eggs in the clutch. A few eggs could have been lost as evident from the remains of shells. The eggs had an average size of 46.8 x 31.5 mm and weighed 19.35 gm. The eggs were leathery,

both sides equally domed and were stuck together. Young ones were also found at the site and measured about 40 cm. The clutch size is a record for Rat snake.

June 4, 1996

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Choudhury, Anwaruddin. 1996. "The keeled box turtle *Pyxidea mouhotii* Gray - a new record for Manipur." *The journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* 93, 590–591.

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