

21. DISTRIBUTION OF *KACHUGA SMITHII* (GRAY) IN ASSAM

Kachuga smithii has a wide distribution in the northern parts of the Indian sub-continent. In Assam, the species has been recorded from Sibsagar (Choudhury 1990), Manas and Kaziranga National Parks, and Jorhat (Das 1991). It has an oval carapace with a blackish vertebral stripe. I, here report, some more localities where I examined the species.

During August and September, 1990, I examined three specimens of *K. smithii* in Dhakuakhana area of Lakhimpur district. These specimens were captured in the Brahmaputra river near Matmora. After measurement, they were released in the Charikaria river. All were immature and their carapace was olive (greenish-grey). In adults, the prominence of brown colour on carapace is noticeable. Neck striped with alternate greenish

weak spine is present in animals from the eastern parts of the range (i.e. Assam), however, he did not mention of any specific example. The blackish vertebral stripe was conspicuously present in all the specimens.

The records near Saikhowaghat in far eastern Assam (95° 40' E) are now the easternmost for the species. Its range has now been extended by about 200 km with Jorhat being the recorded easternmost locality. The Sibsagar specimen (AUC 01), although tentatively identified as *K. smithii*, is a very unusual one with a weak spine, and it appears to me to be somewhat intermediate between *K. smithii* and *K. tentoria*.

The plastron of all the live specimens examined was patterned and hence, they were of the

TABLE I
MEASUREMENTS (IN CM) OF *K. Smithii*

Locality	SCL	CCL	SCW	CCW	SH/CH	PL	Remarks
Matmora	10.7	—	7.6	—	—	—	Live specimen
Matmora	10.5	—	9.0	—	—	—	"
Saikhowaghat	15.0	—	11.0	—	5.9/-	14.4	"
Saikhowaghat	17.3	18.9	12.25	15.8	14.9	—	Carapace (AUC 24)

SCL = Straight line carapace length; CCL = Curved carapace length; SCW = Straightline carapace width; CCW = Curved carapace width; SH = Shell height; CH = Carapace height; PL = Plastron length.

and yellow.

In March, 1994, I examined a live turtle caught in the Lohit river near Saikhowaghat in Tinsukia district. Also, in April, 1994, I obtained a carapace (my collection number: AUC 24) from the same locality. The most remarkable feature of all the five specimens was lack of spine, not even a weak one, on the carapaces. Das (1991) had mentioned that a

nominate subspecies, *K. smithii smithii*. The measurements are listed in Table 1.

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