

New record of *Sphenomorphus maculatus* (Blyth, 1853) in northwestern Bangladesh

Md. Mahabub Alam^{1,*}, Md. Fazle Rabbe¹, and Md. Mokhlesur Rahman¹

The Spotted Litter Skink, *Sphenomorphus maculatus* (Blyth, 1853) has a distribution that includes much of South and mainland Southeast Asia as well as China and is thought to extend even into the Sunda Region and New Guinea (Uetz et al., 2018). In Bangladesh it is common in mixed evergreen forests in the northeast, southeast, and east of the country, as well as in some deciduous forests of the central part (Hasan et al., 2014; Khan, 2015a), but in some of these regions confirmed scientific reports are still missing. Until now, this species has not been reported from northwestern Bangladesh.

Sphenomorphus maculatus inhabits moist forested areas rich in moist leaf litter (IUCN Bangladesh, 2015) and is also found near swamps and on hills in Bangladesh (Hasan et al., 2014). As a diurnal terrestrial predator, it primarily feeds on ground insects, particularly grasshoppers, spiders, and crickets (Chakma, 2009; Hasan et al., 2014; Khan, 2015b). IUCN Bangladesh (2015) considered this species as of Least Concern (LC).

During a survey on the campus of Rajshahi University, Rajshahi Division, northwestern Bangladesh (24.3704°N, 88.6311°E; Datum WGS84) on 2 December 2017, we discovered an individual of *Sphenomorphus maculatus*. We observed the skink in an abandoned area surrounded by residential buildings after dark, at 2030 h, in the short grass. Upon spotting the animal, we photographed it with a Canon EOS 760D camera for identification. We followed Hasan et al. (2014) to make a positive identification in the field and deposited photographs in the Professor Md. Kazi Zaker

Husain Museum, Department of Zoology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (photographic voucher numbers W23001a). The individual was not collected because of the protected status conferred on the species under the Bangladesh Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012.

The individual matched the characteristics listed by Chakma (2009) and Hasan et al. (2014) well, including bronze brown to dark brown dorsal colour, two median series of small black spots, a dark lateral band with small white spots, tail length about double that of snout–vent length, and with comparatively large and smooth dorsal scales (Fig. 1). The first report of *S. maculatus* in Bangladesh was from 1994 in Whykoeng Teknaf, Cox’s Bazar District (Khan, 2015a). Since then, reports have indicated the species’ presence in seven localities



Figure 1. *Sphenomorphus maculatus* from Rajshahi University campus, Rajshahi Division, northwestern Bangladesh (photographic voucher number W23001a). Photo by Md. Fazle Rabbe.

¹ Department of Zoology, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh.

* Corresponding author. E-mail: mahabub.zoo@du.ac.bd

Table 1. Known locality records for *S. maculatus* in Bangladesh. Approximate coordinates are indicated by asterisks (*).

| Place | Latitude | Longitude | References |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|---|
| Whykoeng, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar | 20.8846°N* | 92.2981°E* | Khan (2015a) |
| Teknaf Game Reserve, Cox's Bazar | 20.9339°N | 92.2603°E | Reza and Perry (2015) |
| Milonchari Hillside Resort, Bandarban | 22.1678°N | 92.2233°E | Mahony and Reza (2008); Mahony <i>et al.</i> (2009) |
| Kaptai National Park, Rangamati | 22.5000°N | 92.2000°E | Mahony <i>et al.</i> (2009); Reza and Perry (2015) |
| Lawachara National Park, Moulvibazar | 24.3283°N | 91.7778°E | Reza and Perry (2015) |
| Madhupur National Park, Tangail | 24.6903°N | 90.1347°E | Reza and Perry (2015) |
| Rajshahi University campus, Rajshahi | 24.3704°N | 88.6311°E | present study |

within Bangladesh, including our new record. Mahony *et al.* (2009) and Reza and Perry (2015) recorded *S. maculatus* from the Kaptai of Rangamati District. Reza and Perry (2015) also recorded the species from

Lawachara National Park and Modhupur National Park. Another locality, the Milonchari Resort in Bandarban District (Mahony and Reza, 2008; Mahony *et al.*, 2009) houses both juvenile and adult *S. maculatus*. We provide an up-to-date list for localities with *S. maculatus* in Bangladesh in Table 1.

Our new record extends the distribution of the species approximately 200 km northwest of the closest record at Tangail (Fig. 2). As the new record is geographically far from previous records, there appears to be a significant Wallacean shortfall (lack of geographic distribution information) in Bangladesh for *S. maculatus*. Our new record fills some of this shortfall for this species in Bangladesh.

Acknowledgements. The authors thank Professor Mohammad Firoj Jaman for confirming the species' identity. We also thank Md. Salauddin for helping prepare the distribution map.

References

- Chakma, S. (2009): *Sphenomorphus maculatus*. In: Encyclopedia of Flora and Fauna of Bangladesh. Volume 25. Amphibians and Reptiles, p. 99–100. Kabir, S.M.H., Ahmad, M., Ahmed, A.T.A., Rahman, A.K.A., Ahmed, Z.U., Begum, Z.N.T., Hassan, M.A., Khondker, M., Eds., Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh.
- Hasan, M.K., Khan, M.M.H., Feeroz, M.M. (2014): Amphibians and Reptiles of Bangladesh: a Field Guide. Dhaka, Bangladesh, Arannayk Foundation. 191 pp.
- IUCN Bangladesh (2015): Red List of Bangladesh. Volume 4. Reptiles and Amphibians. Dhaka, Bangladesh, IUCN Bangladesh Country Office. 337 pp.
- Khan, M.A.R. (2015a): Wildlife of Bangladesh: Checklist and Guide. Dhaka, Chayabithi Publications. 567 pp.
- Khan, M.M.H. (2015b): *Sphenomorphus maculatus*. In: IUCN Bangladesh. Red List of Bangladesh. Volume 4. Reptiles and Amphibians, p. 126. Dhaka, Bangladesh, IUCN Bangladesh Country Office.

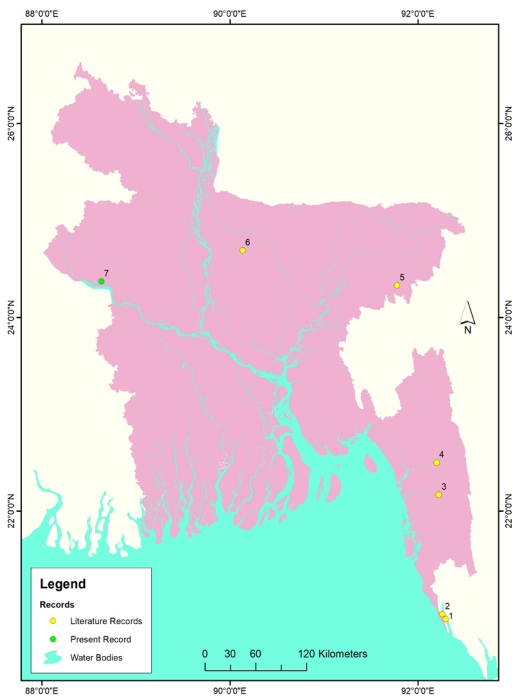


Figure 2. Map of Bangladesh (pink colour) indicating known localities for *Sphenomorphus maculatus*. (1) Whykoeng, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar; (2) Teknaf Game Reserve, Cox's Bazar; (3) Milonchari Hillside Resort, Bandarban; (4) Kaptai National Park, Rangamati; (5) Lawachara National Park, Moulvibazar; (6) Madhupur National Park, Tangail; and (7) Rajshahi University campus, Rajshahi.

- Mahony, S., Reza, A.H.M.A. (2008): A herpetofaunal collection from the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh, with two new species records for the country. *Hamadryad* **32**: 45–56.
- Mahony, S., Hasan, M.K., Kabir, M.M., Ahmed, M., Hossain, M.K. (2009): A catalogue of amphibians and reptiles in the collection of Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Hamadryad* **34**: 80–94.
- Uetz, P., Freed, P., Hošek, J., Eds. (2018): *Sphenomorphus maculatus*. The Reptile Database. Available at: <http://www.reptile-database.org>. Accessed on 6 February 2018.