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Additional record of the Arrow-headed Trinket (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*, Mohapatra, Schulz, Helfenberger, Hofmann, and Dutta, 2016) from Rajasthan

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The Arrow-headed Trinket (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*) is a subspecies of the trinket snake (*Coelognathus helena*), belonging to the family Colubridae. The Arrow-headed Trinket is a medium-sized snake, with adults averaging around 1.2 to 1.5 m in length, and inhabits diverse habitats such as dry deciduous forests, scrublands, agricultural fields, and human settlements. Currently, *C. h. nigriangularis* is known to have a wide distribution and is recorded from Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujrat, and West Bengal (Lampe and Lindholm 1902; Edake 2011; Kumbhar et al. 2011; Schulz 2013; Srivastava et al. 2013; Kantimahanti et al. 2015; Mohapatra et al. 2016; Chowdhury et al. 2018; Ashaharraza and Bibekar 2019;

Singh et al. 2020; Bhushan and Kumar 2021; Patel et al. 2021). In Rajasthan, this subspecies is reported from the Ranthambore tiger reserve in Sawai Madhopur District (Singh et al. 2020). Here, we report a new record of this subspecies from Rajasthan.

The field-based report was carried out in Chittorgarh, Rajasthan. The climate of Chittorgarh is dry, except during the monsoon season from July to September. The average annual rainfall of the district is 750–780 mm. The average temperature is 19–45 °C. The winter season in this area is from December to February, and summer is from March to June. The general landscape of this area includes hills composed of sedimentary rocks, including quartzites, shales, and limestone (Rathore et al. 2015). About 70–75% of the area is covered by a hilly terrain. The soils include black, brown, grayish-brown alluvial, and hilly soils (Central Ground Water Board 2007).

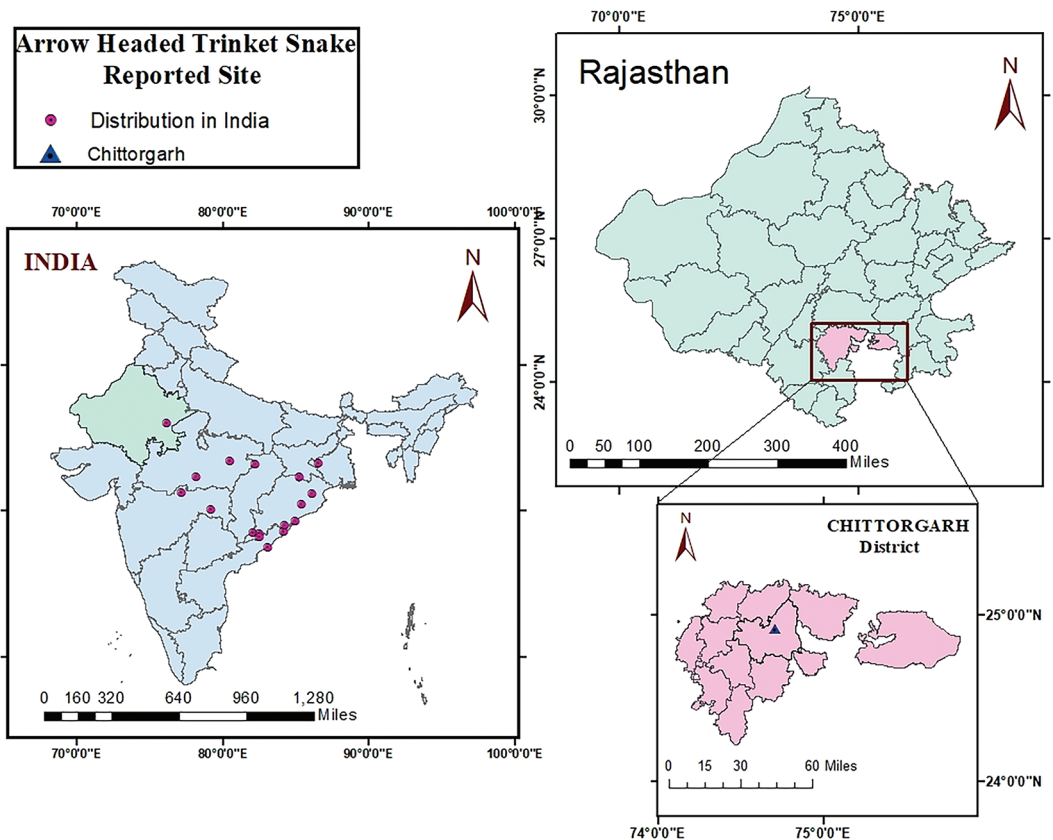


Figure 1. Map showing previous locality records of the Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*) in India (purple circle) and second record in Rajasthan (blue triangle).



Figure 2. Hathini Odhini landscape showing the habitat where the road-killed *C. h. nigriangularis* was found.



Figure 3. Roadkilled Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*) showing the full body view (top), and the dorsal (bottom right) and lateral (bottom left) views of head.

The forest type in this region is mostly mixed miscellaneous forests. These forests are open and consist of short trees belonging to thorny leguminous species. The forests chiefly consist of Dhok (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Safed Dhok (*Anogeissus pendula*), Arjun (*Terminalia arjuna*), Siris (*Albizia lebbek*), Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Palash (*Butea monosperma*), Chilbil

(*Holoptelea integrifolia*), Anjan (*Hardwickia binata*), and Sheesham (*Dalbergia sissoo*). This region also harbours a rich diversity of snakes. Some of the common snakes found in this area include Common Indian Cobra (*Naja naja*), Indian Rat Snake (*Ptyas mucosa*), Indian Python (*Python molurus*), Red Sand Boa (*Eryx johnii*), Common Boa (*Eryx conicus*), Common Indi-

an Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*), and Cat Snake (*Boiga trigonata*).

While conducting field surveys in the Chittorgarh region, we recorded a roadkill specimen of the Arrow-headed Trinket Snake (*Coelognathus helena nigriangularis*) from Hathini Odhini (24°54'45.5"N 74°42'07.2"E) at an elevation of 565.09 m on August 1, 2022, at 09:00 am in the Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan (Figure 1 & 2). The dead specimen had the typical inverted Y shaped marking that extended from the black marking on the ventrolateral side of the neck and joined at the base of the parietal shield, which is not seen in *C. h. helena* and *C. h. monticollaris* (Figure 3). The total length of the snake was 1184 mm and the snout-vent length (SVL) was 980 mm. The head was elongated; rostrum slightly seen from above the head; front bell shaped; nostril present more anterior to the snout than the eye; preocular easily visible from top of the head; nine supra-labials on each side of head, 5th and 6th supra-labials connected to the eyes, and 4th and 5th in contact with the preocular. About 24 zigzag bands were visible on the body, prominent on the anterior side. Behind the eye, a thin black line ran obliquely on each side of the head through the postocular and temporal scales. Another black line descended below the orbit through the 5th and 6th supra-labials and extended up to the lower labials. These characters confirmed the identity of the snake as *Coelognathus helena nigriangularis* (Mohapatra, Schulz, Helfenberger, Hofmann, and Dutta 2016).

While the Arrow-headed Trinket is not currently facing significant conservation threats in India, certain factors could impact its population in the future. Habitat loss due to urbanization, agriculture, and deforestation remains a concern. Additionally, accidental killing through road traffic, and intentional persecution by humans are potential threats. Our observation extends the distribution range of this snake by 212 km in the south-west direction from the closest known locality, which is reaching beyond the Ranthambore tiger reserve (Sawai Madhopur), and highlights its presence across different states of India.

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