

Project Update: June 2019

A thorough literature survey was conducted and have gathered almost all literature (nearly 75 peer reviewed journal articles and grey literature) related to Agamidae and will continue to do to build-up the literature database. In addition, unpublished data were collected via personal communication with field experts (nearly 25 people) and referencing grey literature and similar technical reports. Field surveys were conducted only outside of protected areas under the research permits issued by the Department of Wildlife Conservation and Forest Department and the permits are renewed from June 2019 to May 2020. A total of 20 locations in south-western lowlands and foothills, Central Highlands, Knuckles Range and Rakwana Range were surveyed. Field excursions were conducted using bet transects (100 × 5 m) laid across different habitat types.



Field work in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka.

The 1-year long survey has recorded the presence of 19 species of agamids (17 endemic species) inhabiting the study areas. Locations around Knuckles Range accounted for 10 species (eight endemics) whereas nine (seven endemics) and eight (six endemics) species were found in Central Highlands and Rakwana Range respectively. According to preliminary findings, the buffer zones of all these forest areas had good canopy cover (~ 70%) with wet and cool climate (ambient temperature: 24.2–26.5 °C, substrate temperature: 26.7–28.3 °C, relative humidity: 74–92%). According to published literature and field observations such environmental conditions provides the best habitats for endemic and threatened agamids. Numerous range extensions and range reduction were recorded and it was discussed at the National Red Listing committee meeting held by the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment. In June 2019, we presented and shared information with Naturalist Guide Association of Sri Lanka (NAGA) about reptile tourism with special attention to agamids and conservation measures.



Workshop on Agamid conservation tourism