

RANGE EXTENSION OF ASSAMESE DAY GEKKO *CNEMASPIS ASSAMENSIS* DAS AND SENGUPTA (SAURIA: GEKKONIDAE)

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The Gekkos of the genus *Cnemaspis* is represented by 42 species in Asia and as many as 19 species are known from India (Kluge, 2001; Das, 1993; Das & Bauer, 1998 & 2000; Bauer & Das, 1998; Das & Sengupta, 2000). Species of this genus shows discontinuous distribution pattern that are restricted to peninsular and northeastern India with a considerable geographic gap in between (Das, 1993). The eastward distribution continues to Malay peninsula, offshore islands near Vietnam, and the islands of Sundas through Myanmar (McCann, 1953; Wermuth, 1966; Rösler, 1995; Das & Sengupta, 2000).

Cnemaspis jerdonii and *C. assamensis* are the two species known from northeastern India until now. Mathew (1983) recorded *C. jerdonii* from Dainadubi forest (90°45'E-25°51'N), Garo hills, Meghalaya, which was considered endemic to Western Ghats, while *Cnemaspis assamensis* was recently described as new species from Mayeng Reserve Forest (91°21'32"E & 25°48'55"N) of Kamrup district, Assam (Das & Sengupta, 2000). Sengupta *et al.* (2000), and Das (2002) subsequently reported *C. assamensis* from Garbhanga Reserve Forest and Nilachal Hills respectively, both in Kamrup district, Assam. **Image 2^w** shows the known distribution of *C. assamensis*.

On 30th June 2004, at 1330hr, we found two individuals of *C. assamensis* while conducting a herpetological investigation near Diffolu camp (93°04.629'E, 26°35.705'N, altitude 86m) within Ghorakhati Range of the Kaziranga National Park, Assam. The individuals were observed on the trunk of a *Ficus benghalensis* tree (dbh ca. 1.5m), about 1m above ground. The tree was on the bank of the river Brahmaputra and ca.30m away (from flowing water). We collected one of them, a gravid female (**Image 1^w**, snout-vent length 30.8mm) and the other individual escaped by retreating inside the crevices on the tree trunk.

The area (Kukurakata Reserve Forest) investigated was a small hill on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra covered with tropical semievergreen forest. Many *Ficus* trees were observed in the area and we could confirm occurrence of this species in many of those trees during latter part of our survey. We also observed an individual several times on a rock on the ground beside a small tree (dbh 20cm) that retreated within crevices between the rock and ground.

This record from Kaziranga National Park constitutes the first record of this species outside the Kamrup district and its distribution range has been extended to the east by ca. 200km. It is also suggested that *C. assamensis* is likely to occur in the intervening areas between Garbhanga RF (near Guwahati) and Kaziranga National Park on the slope of Khasi-Garo-

Jayantia hills and the adjoining hills of Karbi Anglong.

Further, the distribution of *C. jerdonii* in northeastern India, an endemic species to the Western Ghats needs to be confirmed. Report of *C. jerdonii* by Mathew (1983) from Dinadubi forest, Garo Hills may actually be that of *C. assamensis* considering its habitat contiguity and ecological similarity with the type locality of the latter.

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^w See Images 1 & 2 in the web supplement at www.zoosprint.org

