



Ticks (*Amblyomma gervaisi* and *A. pattoni*) on Indian Rock Pythons, *Python molurus* (Linnaeus 1758), from Himachal Pradesh, India

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Reptiles are hosts to a number of parasitic organisms ranging from protozoans to arthropods (Frye 1991). Among these, ticks are the most common arthropod group that parasitizes reptiles (Kilingenberg 1993). Ticks are distributed worldwide and primarily found in warm and humid climatic conditions (Auffenberg and Auffenberg 1990). Ticks are a well-known cause of dermatological problems in reptiles and the diseases spread by ticks are a major constraint to animal productivity while causing morbidity and mortality in animals (Ghosh and Nagar 2014). Many ticks in the genus *Amblyomma* (previously *Aponomma*) are specific to snakes and lizards (Hoogstraal and Aeschlimann 1982), with 37 of 102 species exclusively parasitizing reptiles (Buczek et al. 2006).

On 5 April 2017, three confiscated Indian Rock Pythons (*Python molurus*) from Karsog, Himachal Pradesh, India (31°23'00.3"N, 77°12'16.6"E) (Fig. 1), were screened for ectoparasites. All visible ticks were collected using sterilized forceps, transferred to vials containing 70% alcohol, and identified using the key in Sen and Fletcher (1962). After the removal of ticks, the rescued pythons were released into natural habitat.

The three Indian Rock Pythons were infested with a total of 23 ticks (Table 1) identified as *Amblyomma gervaisi* (n = 18) and *A. pattoni* (n = 5). Most were near the mouth and cloacal aperture of the snakes.

Ticks in the genus *Amblyomma* have been previously recorded in southern Asia from wild and captive snakes, including Oriental Ratsnakes (*Ptyas mucosa*), Indian Cobras (*Naja naja*), King Cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*), Indian Rock Pythons (*Python molurus*), and Reticulated Pythons

Table 1. Number of ticks (*Amblyomma gervaisi* and *Amblyomma pattoni*) recorded from three Indian Rock Pythons (*Python molurus*) from Karsog, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Sex	Length (m)	Weight (kg)	<i>A. gervaisi</i> (n)	<i>A. pattoni</i> (n)
Male	2.00	3.94	5	2
Male	2.27	5.30	8	3
Female	2.22	5.90	5	0

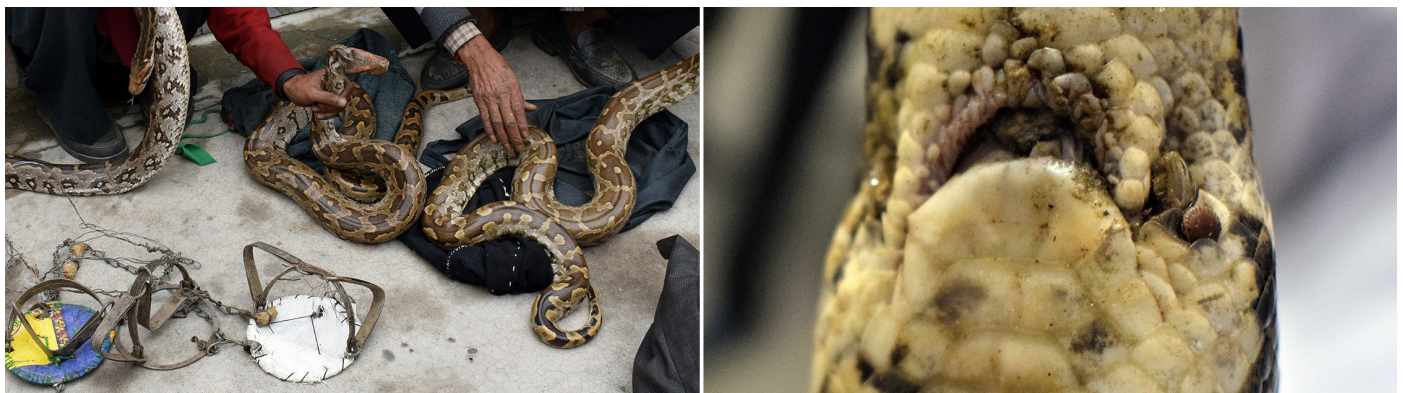


Fig. 1. Three confiscated Indian Rock Pythons (*Python molurus*) from Karsog, Himachal Pradesh, India (left). A tick (*Amblyomma pattoni*) adjacent to the cloacal aperture of an Indian Rock Python (right). Photographs by the author.

(*Malayopython reticulatus*) (e.g., Rajesh et al. 2015; Pandit et al. 2011). However, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first report of ticks in the genus *Amblyomma* infecting snakes in the state of Himachal Pradesh.

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