



First Record of Dobson’s Burrowing Frog, *Sphaerotheca dobsonii* (Boulenger 1882), from The Dangs District, Gujarat, India

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Dobson’s Burrowing Frog (*Sphaerotheca dobsonii*) is a medium-sized fossorial microglossid found in the “Western Ghats of southern India (Maharashtra, Karnataka), and with substantially less confidence to the east and north to Andhra Pradesh and Orissa state” (Frost 2021). Most reports (e.g., Dutta 1997; Chanda 2002; Daniels 2005; Dinesh et al. 2009; Subramanian et al. 2013; Dahanukar et al. 2017; Prasad et al. 2019) list *S. dobsonii* from the Western Ghats; records from Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu are in Dutta (1998), Daniels (2005), Srinivasulu and Das (2008), and Dinesh et al. (2009). Khandla and Trivedi (2018) reported an observation of *S. dobsonii* in the vicinity of Jamnagar City, Gujarat, without providing any evidence to support that record. Herein I provide the first documented record of *S. dobsonii* from Gujarat (Fig. 1).

At 2320 h on 25 August 2018, I found a road-killed *Sphaerotheca dobsonii* (SVL 45 mm) on a roadside in The Dangs District, Gujarat (20.7834519°N, 73.7141871°E; elev. 410 m asl) (Fig. 2). Morphometrics and morphological data (in particular the relative lengths of fingers, shape and size of the metatarsal tubercles, and the extent of webbing between the toes) were similar to descriptions in the literature. The specimen was deposited in the Bombay Natural History Museum, Mumbai, India (BNHS 6137); the identity of the species was confirmed by Dr. R.J. Ranjit Daniels, Care Earth Trust, Chennai, India.

Dahanukar et al. (2017) and Prasad et al. (2019) doubted that the range of the *S. dobsonii* would extend beyond the Western Ghats, which was reflected in the quote from Frost (2021) cited above. The northernmost extent of the Western Ghats ranges into The Dangs District in southern Gujarat, hence the possibility of *S. dobsonii* occurring there is reasonable. However, Jamnagar District is located across the Gulf

of Khambhat in extreme northwestern Gujarat, rendering the unverified observation recorded by Khandla and Trivedi (2018) unlikely. Extensive surveys in Surat District (Parmar and Tank 2019), which is slightly north of The Dangs District, found no evidence of Dobson’s Burrowing Frogs. However, the presence of an isolated population in extreme northwestern Gujarat remains a possibility in need of confirmation.

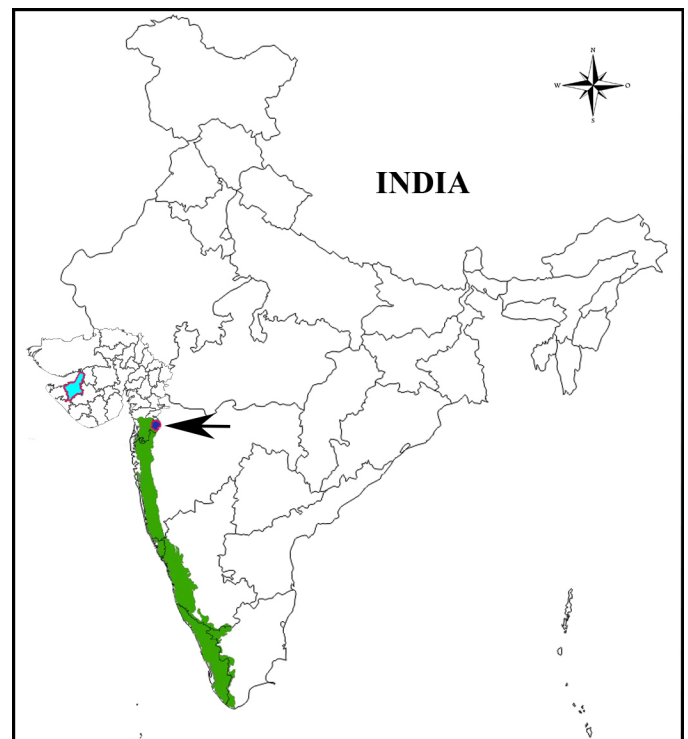


Fig. 1. Map of India showing the extent of the Western Ghats (green), the location of the new locality record for Dobson’s Burrowing Frog (*Sphaerotheca dobsonii*) in The Dangs District, Gujarat (dark blue and marked by the arrow), and the unlikely record in Jamnagar District (light blue).



Fig. 2. A Road-killed Dobson's Burrowing Frog (*Sphaerotheca dobsonii*) from The Dangs District, Gujarat, India. Note relative finger lengths (top center) and the metatarsal tubercle and extent of webbing on the toes (upper right). Photographs by D.S. Parmar; drawing by Vasudev Limbachiya.

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