



# Attempted Predation of a Snail (*Pila* sp.) by a Buff-striped Keelback (*Amphiesma stolatum*)

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Buff-striped Keelbacks (*Amphiesma stolatum*) are distributed throughout southern Asia, including India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka (Whitaker and Captain 2008). The species also has been recorded from China, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in southeastern Asia (Uetz et al. 2023). Habitat includes a variety of natural and modified environments, typically near water, that include fields, grasslands, cultivated regions, scrub, and gardens (Whitaker and Captain 2008). Baruah et al. (2001) recorded the diet of the species based on gut analyses of 117 specimens and found frogs to be the principal constituent followed by lizards, insects, and even other snakes. Daniel (1983) also reported frogs and toads to be the main components of the diet with occasional rodents and insects.

At ca. 2000 h on 25 October 2022, EPS encountered a Buff-striped Keelback attempting to consume a snail (*Pila* sp.) in Toubul, Bishnupur District, Manipur, India (24.62901 N, 93.78774 E) (Fig. 1). The snake captured the snail but failed to ingest it when the snake’s lower jaw became entrapped in the snail’s operculum. The snake struggled for more than an hour to free itself. ESP subsequently removed the snail from the mouth of the snake and released the snake at its original location.

Numerous species of snakes that specialize in consuming snails have the appropriate adaptations that allow them to do so without becoming trapped in the operculum of their prey (Sazima 1989). This observation is not the first time that a non-specialist snake species has become entrapped in a snail’s operculum (see Fuchs et al. 2020), suggesting that this behavior could be dangerous to species lacking adaptations for consuming snails.

### Literature cited

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**Fig. 1.** Attempted predation of a snail (*Pila* sp.) by a Buff-striped Keelback (*Amphiesma stolatum*). Photograph by Elangbam Premjit Singh.