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NEW SITE RECORD OF *MINERVARYA SAHYADRIS* DUBOIS, OHLER & BIJU (AMPHIBIA : ANURA : RANIDAE), IN WESTERN GHATS, INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

A new genus *Minervarya* and a species *Minervarya sahyadris* was described under the family Ranidae by Dubois, Ohler and Biju (2001) from Kerala and Karnataka. They collected the frog from Gundia (lat. 13° 05' N and long. 76° 07' E), Hassan district, Karnataka on 25 July 1984 and Mukkam (lat. 11° 15' N and long. 75° 43' E), Kozhikode district, Kerala on 20 July 2001. No reports were available after the description.

On 12 December 2006, during a faunistic survey tour, we could collect seven specimens of the species from a small ditch along the sides of a slow flowing stream amidst a thick forest near Hipla (lat. 13° 30' N and long. 75° 36' E), Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Chickmagalur district, Karnataka.

We could determine their specific identity (Fig. 1) as *Minervarya sahyadris* Dubois *et al.*, based on the following diagnostic features assigned to the taxon : A small frog with fejerveryan lines on both sides of the belly in life; possessing a rictal gland at the mouth commissure, prominent in life; distinct canthus rostralis; nostrils near to snout tip than to eye; a white horizontal band along the upper lip in life; vomerine teeth present; median lingual process absent; digital extremities rounded, not dilated; webbing rudimentary; inner metatarsal tubercle short, conical; outer metatarsal tubercle present, minute; tarsal ridge present; heels strongly overlapping when folded at right angles to each other; tibiotarsal articulation reaching up to posterior corner of eye. Dorsal skin with longitudinal folds; pupil horizontal and oval, iris golden yellow; sides of head brownish, darker in tympanic region; mid dorsum brown to brick red; upper arm brick red; upper lip white colored; venter yellowish white.

The specimens studied are deposited in the faunal depository of the Western Ghats Field Research Station, Zoological Survey of India, Calicut (Reg. No : VA/609) and their morphometric data is provided in Table 1. Biju (2001) stated that *Minervarya sahyadris* is apparently common and it might have escaped the attention of previous collectors presumably because of its small size which makes it superficially look like a young *Fejervarya*. Varun (Personal communication), on 11th March 2006 sighted these frogs at Parippathodu, Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary, Kannur, Kerala. All the described characters can be very well studied in life than in the preserved specimens as members of this frog show variations in dorsum color which vary from sandy brown to dark brick red.

Table 1 Morphometric data of *Minervarya sahyadris* from Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary. Measurements are given in mm [values given in last column mean \pm standard deviation (range)].

(Reg.No : ZSI/WGFRS/V/A 609)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total of seven specimens
Snout-vent length	17.1	17.0	17.8	17.0	15.6	14.8	16.6	16.6 \pm 1.02 (14.8–17.8)
Width of body behind shoulder	6.2	6.4	5.8	6.4	5.2	5.0	6.0	5.9 \pm 0.56 (5.2–6.4)
Head length	6.2	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.2	5.6	5.7 \pm 0.32 (5.2–6.2)
Head width	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.8	4.6	5.0	4.9 \pm 0.16 (4.6–5.0)
Head depth	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.8	3.0	3.1 \pm 0.20 (2.8–3.4)
Eye diameter	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.2 \pm 0.21 (2.0–2.6)
Interorbital distance	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.2	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.0 \pm 0.18 (1.8–2.2)
Internarial distance	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.9 \pm 0.16 (1.6–2.0)
Diameter of Tympanum	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.3 \pm 0.11 (1.2–1.4)
Eye-snout tip distance	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.2	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0 \pm 0.18 (2.8–3.2)
Eye-nostril distance	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.7 \pm 0.10 (1.6–1.8)
Tibia length	8.4	9.0	9.0	7.0	9.0	7.0	8.0	8.2 \pm 0.90 (7.0–9.0)

In all the specimens studied a faint light lateral black stripe starting from the point of nostril to the thigh end is present, getting darker at the region of tympanum and back of fore arm. In the specimens with dark brick red mid dorsum, space between the mid dorsum and the lateral stripe appears ashy brown.

Our present collection from Hipla extends the range of the species by about 100 km north of the type locality. It appears that the species may occur in the forest stretches of Western Ghats from 11° 15' N to 13° 30' N latitude and 76° 07' E to 75° 36' E longitude (Fig. 2).

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