

A new species of *Indotyphlus* Taylor (Amphibia: Gymnophiona: Caeciliidae) from the Western Ghats, India

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Abstract

A new species of Indian caeciliid caecilian, *Indotyphlus maharashtraensis* (Amphibia: Gymnophiona), is described based on a series of 12 specimens from the northern Western Ghats of the State of Maharashtra. This species differs from the only other species in the genus, *I. battersbyi*, in having fewer primary annuli, many more primary annuli bearing secondary annular grooves, and in the presence of a modified subterminal region that has a depressed preanal strip extending anteriorly from around the vent. A key to the species of *Indotyphlus* is provided.

Key words: caecilians, *Gegeneophis*, herpetology, *Indotyphlus battersbyi*, South Asia, systematics

Introduction

The Western Ghats are a recognised global biodiversity hotspot (Myers et al. 2000) and a centre of caecilian diversity and endemism (e.g. Bhatta 1997; Gower et al. 2004; Ravichandran 2004). Recent description of two new species of the caeciliid genus *Gegeneophis* from localities in the State of Maharashtra have drawn attention to this herpetologically relatively poorly known northern region of the Western Ghats (Giri et al. 2003; Ravichandran et al. 2003). Earlier, Taylor (1960) established the caeciliid genus *Indotyphlus* to receive a new species, *I. battersbyi*. This was based on a single specimen from Khandala, a Western Ghats locality between Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, with additional specimens subsequently reported from nearby Lonavla (Taylor 1968) and 'near Mumbai' (Taylor 1970). Caecilians recently collected from another Maharashtran locality approximately 150 km south of the known provenance of *I. battersbyi* represent a second species of this endemic genus that we describe here.