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Rajmeher Nishane
Independent Wildlife photographer, Amravati, Maharashtra, India

Amey Thakare
Independent wildlife photographer, Amravati, Maharashtra, India

Darshan Dudhane
Biologist, Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India

Corresponding Author:
Darshan Dudhane
Biologist, Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India

Distribution record of *Sarada deccanensis* (jerdon, 1870) from samda reservoir, Daryapur, Amravati district, Maharashtra, India

Rajmeher Nishane, Amey Thakare and Darshan Dudhane

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Abstract
A five-year survey was conducted near Samda Reservoir, Daryapur, Amravati District, Maharashtra to record the presence of the Deccan fan-throated lizard *Sarada deccanensis*. Two individuals, a male and a female, were first sighted on 28 June 2020, with subsequent regular observations until the most recent record on 28 June 2025. These findings represent the first documented occurrence of the species in the locality. This new distributional record extends the known range of *S. deccanensis* into the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and underscores the importance of systematic, long-term faunal documentation around semi-arid reservoir habitats.

Keywords: Fan-throated lizard, *Sarada deccanensis*, Agamidae, Amravati, Samda Reservoir, Vidarbha

Introduction
Sarada deccanensis is also known as Deccan fan-throated lizard (Jerdon, 1870) [1], is an agamid lizard endemic to peninsular India (Deepak *et al*., 2016) [2]. This Lizard species was originally described in the genus *Sitana* and later revised to the new genus *Sarada* following molecular and morphological amends (Deepak *et al*., 2016) [2]. Primary distribution of this species in the rocky grasslands, scrublands, and semi-arid habitats of Maharashtra and northern Karnataka (Amarasinghe *et al*., 2015 [3]; Reptile Database, 2025) [4].
The present observation comes from the vicinity of Samda Reservoir in Daryapur Tehsil, Amravati, Maharashtra, India. Samda Reservoir is a medium irrigation project constructed to provide irrigation to about 1,529 ha of irrigable command areas in Daryapur. The reservoir has a total catchment area of 110.735 km² and lies within the Tapi river basin, under the Purna river sub-basin (Anonymous, 2012).

Materials and Methods
The first sighting was on 28 June 2020 during a birdwatching near Samda Reservoir (Figure 1), Sanglud village, Taluka Daryapur, Amravati, Maharashtra, India (20°56'44.7"N 77°17'39.9"E). Two mature individuals one male and one female were sighted basking on open scrubland adjacent to the reservoir margin (Figure 2 and 3). Identification was based on diagnostic morphological characters, including the tricoloured fan-shaped dewlap in males and habitat association (Deepak *et al*. 2016) [2]. Photographic documentation was made using Nikon Z6 mark III and Nikkor Z 180-600mm f/5.6-6.3 VR lens. No specimens were collected, identification done on the basis of photographic evidences and species was identified by Dr. Amit Sayyed, Herpetologist.

Results and Discussion
This observation confirms the occurrence of *Sarada deccanensis* in Amravati district of Vidarbha, Maharashtra. Previous records largely report the species from western Maharashtra and northern Karnataka (Deepak *et al*., 2016 [2]; Amarasinghe *et al*., 2015) [3]. The present record extends its known distribution eastward, suggesting that semi-arid habitats around reservoirs provide suitable microhabitats for this agamid.
The species is known for its striking male display, characterized by a tricoloured dewlap, which plays a role in sexual selection and species recognition (Kamath, 2016 [6]; Zambre & & Thaker, 2017) [7].

Our observation during the early breeding season supports the use of such habitats for courtship and territorial behaviour.

This new locality record underscores the importance of systematic herpetofaunal survey in central India, where many reptile species remain under-documented. Further surveys are necessary to map the complete distribution of *S. deccanensis* in Vidarbha and to assess habitat use patterns in anthropogenically influenced landscapes such as reservoirs. The surrounding landscape consists of agricultural fields interspersed with open scrub and grassland patches, providing potential habitat for *S. deccanensis* (Figure 4).

Fig 1: A male *S. deccanensis* displaying its tricolored dewlap

Fig 2: Partial opening of the dewlap

Fig 3: A female *S. deccanensis* hiding among the foliage

Fig 4: Flooded farmland under cloudy sky

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