***ECHIS CARINATUS* (Indian Saw-scaled Viper). HYPOMELANISM.** Hypomelanism refers to a condition in which individuals exhibit diminished expression of melanin with normally pigmented eyes (Borteiro et al. 2021. Salamandra 57:124–138). Such color aberrancies are rare in nature due to increased predation, lack of crypsis, and reduction in thermoregulatory abilities. Noting them can provide insight into environmental physiology (Arietta et al. 2020. Northeast Nat. 27:641–648).

PHOTOS BY MAYUR GAWAS

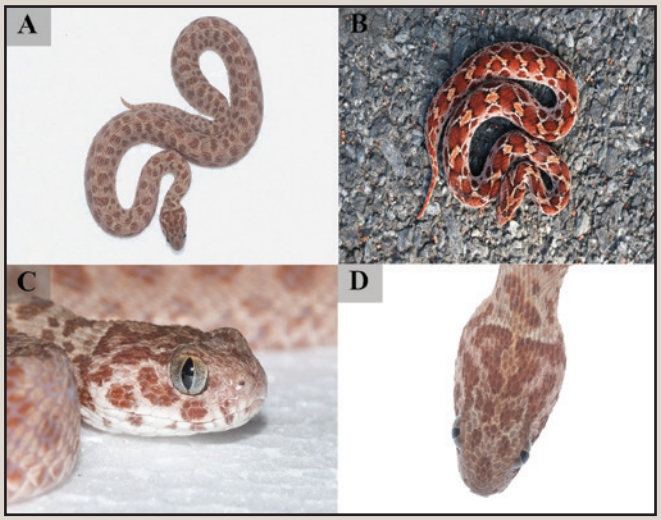


FIG. 1. A) Full body dorsal view of hypomelanistic *Echis carinatus* from Goa, India; B) full body dorsal view of a normally colored individual from the region; C) right lateral head portrait of hypomelanistic *Echis carinatus;* D) dorsal head portrait of hypomelanistic *Echis carinatus*.

Echis carinatus carinatus is a viperid found in dry, open areas of southern India, having an average length of 500 mm (Whitaker and Martin 2015. *In* Gopalakrishnakone et al. [eds.], Clinical Toxinology in Asia Pacific and Africa, pp. 115–136. Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht). Typical dorsal coloration ranges from light or dark brown to brick red or gray with conjoined rhomboidal blotches middorsally, giving a zigzag appearance. It has a stout body with strongly keeled scales and is a medically important snake species in the region (Whitaker and Captain 2004. Snakes of India: The Field Guide. Draco Books, Tamil Nadu, India. pp. 385).

At 0213 h on 21 November 2020, an aberrantly colored snake was discovered in the lateritic bricks stored on the periphery of a house in Chandor Village, Salcete Taluka, South Goa District, Goa, India (15.26420°N, 74.03956°E; WGS84; 23 m elev.). The unidentified snake was removed by a local rescuer and sent to Goa University, where it was identified as a male *E. carinatus* upon everting the hemipenes. The individual (246 mm SVL; 33 mm tail length) had a whitish ventral side with light brown markings on both sides of the ventral scales. The dorsum was pale brown with a faint pale orange vertebral stripe overlaying light brown rounded vertebral spots and light brown blotches on the flanks (Fig. 1A), in contrast to the typical black and dark reddish-brown spots (Fig. 1B). The head bore a pale pattern of small blotches (Fig. 1C, D). This observation is the first report of hypomelanism in *E. carinatus*.

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