



### HERPETOFAUNA DIVERSITY IN SURU VALLEY, KARGIL (JAMMU AND KASHMIR) INDIA.



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#### **ABSTRACT:**

The present study has been conducted in the Month April and May (2016). The study was carried out by active survey of walking across mountains, deserts, rock crevices, water bodies and plains searching Herpeto fauna. Most species of limb lizards were found at rocks and mountaineering area where as amphibian's species reported in plains and water bodies.

**KEY WORDS:** Suru valley region, Diversity, Herpetofauna.

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

The maximum faunal diversity has been reported from Western Ghats ranges and the northeastern India. So far as the high altitude herpetofauna is concerned, few publications list the species, specifically from the eastern and western Himalayan region (Verma and Sahi, 1995; Tilak and

Mehta, 1983; Acharji and Kripalini 1951; Boulenger, *et al.*, 1907).

Waltner (1991) for the first time listed the species found in the Himalayan region and also provided their altitudinal ranges. Due to cold climate, inaccessible habitat and lack of expertise, the herpetofauna of Himalayan region is poorly studied.

India being one of the top twelve mega biodiversity Countries of the world, boast a rich herpetofauna with 299 Amphibian species (Dinesh and Radhakrishnan 2009) and 506 reptiles (Das 2003). Aengals *et al.*, (2011) accounted 518 species of reptiles which includes 3 species of crocodiles, 34 species of turtles and tortoises, 202 species of lizards and 279 species of snakes belonging to 28 families.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in suru valley. The Suru valley is a valley in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir which is situated at north side of district Kargil. The climate is cold with four distinct seasons, viz., autumn (September to November), spring (March to May), winter (December to February) and summer (June to August). The temperature has a relatively narrow range between -32 °C to 38 °C. Moreover, there is no herpeto fauna study carried out so far in Suru Valley Region..

A detailed survey of Herpeto fauna was conducted during April and May (2016). The survey was done by random active searches made by walking across mountains, deserts, rock crevices, water bodies and plains searching Herpeto fauna. Apart from random active searches basking reptiles during day time, opportunistic field observations are also included so as to include most of the species in the region. They were photographed by canon camera. All species are identified with the help of field guide (Daniel 1983). Nomenclature adapted here is as given by Das (1994).

## OBSERVATION AND RESULT

During the study I have been able to collect information of a total 8 species of herpetofauna belong to Reptiles of the order Saurian (lizard) and Amphibians recorded from different site of suru valley. Five species of lizards and two species of frog were reported.

CLASS	ORDER	SUB-ORDER	FAMILY	GENUS/SPECIES	COMMON NAME
REPTILIA	SQUAMATA	SAURIAN	Agamidae	<i>Laudakia tuberculata</i>	Kashmir Rock Agama
			Agamidae	<i>Laudakia himaliyana</i>	Himalayan agama
			Agamidae	<i>Phrynocephalus theobaldi</i>	Theobalds Toad Head Agama
			Scincidae	<i>Scincella ladacensis</i>	Ladakh Ground Skink
			Scincidae	<i>Scincella himalayanus</i>	Himalayan Ground Skink
			Gekkonidae	<i>Cyrtodactylus stoliczkae</i>	Kashmir Rock gecko
AMPHIBIA	ANURA		Bufo	<i>Bufo stomaticus</i>	Indian marbled toad
			Dicroglossidae	<i>Euphyctis cyanophlyctis</i>	Indian skipper frog

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***Laudakia tuberculata***



***Laudakia himaliyana***



***Phrynocephalus theobaldi***





**Scincella ladacensis**



**Scincella himalayanus**



**Cyrtodactylus stoliczka**



**Bufo stomaticus**



**Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis**

## CONCLUSION

A total of eight species of Herpetofauna were observed at the present study. Among them *Laudakia tuberculata*, *Laudakia himalayana*, and *Scincella ladacensis* were found mostly at the altitude of 4000 to 7000m. They were mostly appearing during morning time so that they can easily perform their basking activity.

Due to the high cold environment and fluctuation in day to day weather this area might be low in herpetofauna diversity.

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