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113**Preliminary study on herpetofaunal diversity of Nilgala forest area in
Monaragala district, Sri Lanka**D M S S Karunaratna, A A T Amarasinghe, U T I Abeywardena, M D C Asela and D G R
Sirimanna

The Young Zoologists' Association of Sri Lanka, National Zoological Gardens, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka.

Nilgala Forest Area (NFA) is one of the largest and important forest area in Monaragala District, Uva Province. It contain 12,432 hectares and lies within 7° 08' – 7° 14' NL and 81° 16' – 81° 20' EL. Its elevation range between 200m to 700m within the Irindahela, Hangale, Yakun hela (highest point 700 m), Hamapola, Badangamuwa, Keenagoda, Makada, Karadugala, Kukulagoda, Ewalahela, Gorikkada hills. The mean annual rainfall varies between where the average annual rainfall 1500mm – 2000mm (rain during northeast monsoon), while the mean annual temperature of the area is 28 °C – 31 °C. The vegetation comprised with lowland tropical moist semi evergreen forest and savannah forest, home gardens and small patch paddy cultivations. The dominant tree species are Aralu (*Terminalia chebula*), Bulu (*Terminalia bellirica*) and Nelli (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Other than biodiversity, Nilgala is rich of archaeological monuments, such as prehistoric, proto-historic and historical Buddhist monasteries.

During the two-year study period, total number of 70 reptile species were and 19 amphibian species recorded. Reptiles include 44 genera of 17 families and 20 (28.5%) endemic species. Amphibian fauna contain 13 genera including 4 families and 6 (31.5%) endemic species. 41.4% (29) of reptiles and 26.3% (5) of Amphibians listed as 'Nationally Threatened' in the 1999 IUCN National threatened list. Out of 70 species 38 (54.2%) are Serpentine reptiles (11 endemics) and 32 (45.7%) species are of Tetrapod reptiles (9 endemics). Among the recorded species, 11 Serpentine, 3 Tetrapod, and 2 amphibians have not been recorded by previous workers. Furthermore seven unidentified species were also recorded during the survey, which probably include new amphibian species belonging to genus *Nannophrys*. Human activities such as man-made fire, illegal logging, extensive use of chemicals for agriculture, forest clearing for chena cultivation and road kills were identified as a main threat for the natural habitats as well as faunal species.