

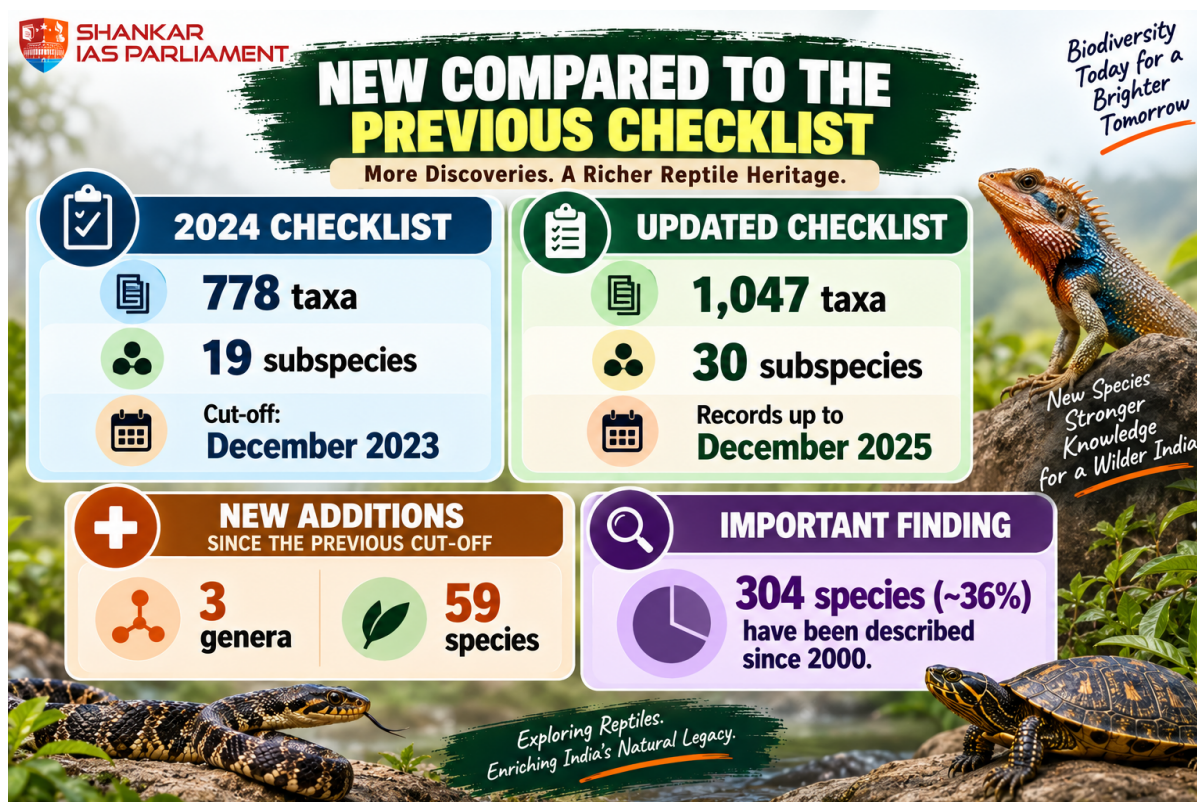
Indian Reptile Diversity & Scientific Names

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Species

Why in News?

A recent study published in Zootaxa provides an updated checklist and a comprehensive analysis of the scientific nomenclature of Indian reptiles.

- **New study** - The checklist encompasses **267 years of zoological records**, spanning from **1758 to December 2025**.
- India currently possesses 1,047 recognized reptile taxa, comprising the following:
 - 839 species
 - 30 subspecies
 - 178 genera
- This study is significant as it investigates the etymology, specifically the **origin and meaning, of Indian reptile names**.



1758: The beginning of modern zoological nomenclature

- The publication of the **10th edition of *Systema Naturae*** by **Carl Linnaeus** is widely recognized as the origin of modern zoological nomenclature.

- **Carl Linnaeus**

- Swedish naturalist
- He developed the foundation of modern biological classification.
- He is also associated with the development of **binomial nomenclature**.

Binomial Nomenclature

- A scientific name generally consists of two components: **Genus and species**
- For example: **Ophiophagus hannah**
 - *Ophiophagus* refers to the genus.
 - *Hannah* denotes the species epithet.

A **toponym** refers to a name that originates from a specific geographical location.

An **eponym** denotes a name that is derived from an individual.



ORIGINS OF INDIAN REPTILE SCIENTIFIC NAMES

Scientific names of Indian reptiles are derived from multiple sources.

PRIMARY SOURCES



Latin and Classical Greek

Aquila
Python
Draco



Geographical Locations



Personal Names



Smithii
Andersoni
Boulengeri



Indian and Local Languages

नाग (*Naga*)
घोरपड (*Ghorpad*)
कवाच (*Kavach*)



**Morphological
Characteristics**



Longirostris
Bicolor
Spinosus



**Cultural and
Historical References**



Indicus
Ashokae
Vasuki

*Names that Connect
Nature, Culture and History*

REPTILES | HERITAGE | OUR SHARED TOMORROW

- **Local Indian Languages in Scientific Nomenclature** - Scientific nomenclature is not exclusively based on Latin or Greek origins.
- The study identified instances where scientific names have origins in local Indian languages, specifically in:

- 19 genera
- 34 species
- **Examples**
- **Naja**
 - Genus representing cobras.
 - The name is derived from the Sinhala term "naya," which means cobra.
- **Daboia**
 - This genus is believed to have a Hindi origin.
 - It is associated with the Hindi word 'dabohiya,' which can be interpreted as:
 - "that lies hidden"
 - "the lurker"
- **Chitra**
 - The term is derived from the Sanskrit word "chitra."
 - It means variegated or multicoloured.
 - The term refers to colour patterns.
- **Batagur kachuga**
 - The term 'kachuga' is derived from the Hindi word 'kachua'.
 - It means turtle.
- **Ahaetulla laudankia**
 - The name is derived from the vernacular term used in Odia.
 - This is associated with the snake's resemblance to dried stems of the following plants:
 - bottle gourd
 - lau

Reference

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