

New sand boa species

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance | Conservation

Why in News?

*A new herpetological study has reported the first confirmed record of the Sistan sand boa (*Eryx sistanensis*) in India.*

- It is a ***small, non-venomous, burrowing snake***.
- **Habitat** - Most verified records of the snake place it in *farmlands, scrublands, and compact sandy soils* located close to human habitations.
- **Distribution** - Researchers documented 3 live individuals from the northern Thar Desert in Rajasthan.
- Previously known to inhabit parts of Iran and Pakistan, this discovery officially adds a 4th sand boa species to India's native reptile database.
- **4 distinct sand boa species**
 - Red sand boa (*Eryx johnii*)
 - Rough-scaled sand boa (*Eryx conicus*)
 - Whitaker's boa (*Eryx whitakeri*)
 - **Sistan sand boa (*Eryx sistanensis*)** — *New Addition*
- **Key Characteristics**
 - **Persistent Banding** - It can be clearly distinguished from the common red sand boa by its persistent dark, sooty body bands and a tail that gradually tapers toward the tip.
 - Unlike red sand boas, which lose their distinct body bands as they mature into adults, the Sistan sand boa retains these markings throughout its entire lifespan.
 - **Coloration** - Juveniles are typically buff-colored, while sub-adults and fully grown adults exhibit a tan to tan-brown coloration.
 - **Behavioral Traits** - The species is ***notoriously docile***, exhibits a high tolerance to ambient temperature variations, and has low metabolic maintenance requirements.



- **Conservation Status**

- **IUCN Red List** - Not yet evaluated (NE).
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (India)**- Listed under **Schedule II**, granting it high legal protection against hunting, poaching, and commercial trade.

- **Threats**

- Illegal Wildlife Trade and Exploitation.
- Ill-Advised Rescues and Ecological Dislocation.
- Expatriate Herping Tourism and Pet Markets.

Reference

[Mongabay | New sand boa species](#)