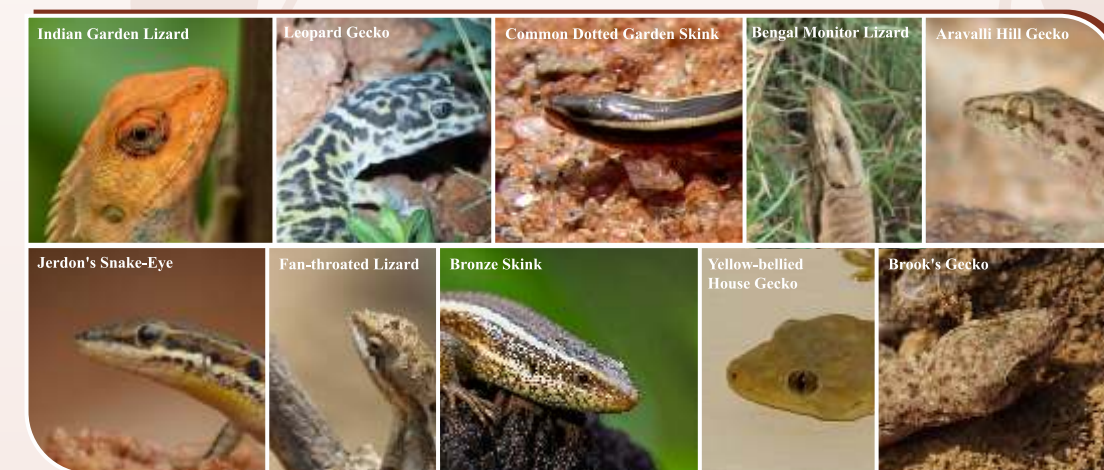


A widely diversified group of reptiles, the lizards are generally distinguished from snakes by the presence of limbs. However, limbless lizards occur, but the Indian species can be separated from snakes by the presence of eyelids in lizards. The shape of the body is indicative of the habit of the species. The Indian lizards lay small clutches of eggs which are parchment like or hard shells. The eggs are usually buried in the soil for incubation. None of the Indian lizards are poisonous.



### Foods of Lizards



SOHAIL MADAN

**Bronze Skink** *Eutropis macularia*

**Local Name:** Bahmani

**Food:** Small insects

**Breeding:** May and June

Body cylindrical, dorsal scales with 5-8 keels, ventral scales smooth; 28-30 scales round the body. A pair of dorso-lateral bands starts from above the eye till the base of the tail. As with other Eutropis species, the scales are keeled. Color pattern deep brown, olive or bronze-brown in color; dorso-lateral band light or yellow; sometimes with black spots on the base of the tail. Breeding males have orange color on the lateral side of the body. Juveniles are grey with a bronze head.



LAKHAN KOHLI

**Brook's Gecko** *Hemidactylus brookii*

**Local Name:** Dabbedar Chhipkali

**Food:** Mainly insects

**Breeding:** Eggs are laid during late April and early May.

Lives in a variety of habitats, on trees, rocks, under stones and on building. Its loud *chuck chuck* call is often heard after dusk. Breeds as other geckos do during the hot weather. Two spherical eggs are laid. Eggs hatch in about 39 days.



ISHTYAK AHMED

**Common Dotted Garden Skink** *Lygosoma punctata*

**Local Name:** Sani mashi

**Food:** Crickets, cockroaches and other insects

**Breeding:** April to May

Maximum snout to vent length recorded is 85mm. An elongated, snake-like slender skink with feeble five-toed limbs. Lower eyelid with a transparent disc. General colour brown above, each scale having a basal black spot. In the juvenile, the spots are joined to form 4 to 6 lines on the back. Yellowish white below with each scale having a black central spot. The juvenile's tail is red in colour. Widely distributed, but not often seen as it spends most of its life underground. Its habits are little known.



DR SURYA PRAKASH

**Aravalli Hill Gecko** *Cyrtopodion aravallensis*

**Food:** Crickets, cockroaches and other insects

Aravalli rock gecko (*Cyrtopodion aravallensis*) is a species of gecko, a lizard in the family Gekkonidae. The species is endemic to northern India. Delhi Ridge-gecko (*Cyrtodactylus aravallensis*) which was described 21 years ago from Delhi Ridge. This seems to be an extremely rare reptile whose closest relatives occur in the Himalayas and the Middle East. Systematics Lab (<http://www.frogindia.org>) is now studying the fauna of Delhi Ridge.



LAKHAN KOHLI

**Fan-throated Lizard** *Sitana Ponticeriana*

**Local Name:** Sargota

**Food:** Ants and other small insects.

**Breeding:** Seasonal; commences in April-May, when the throat fan of the male assumes its brilliant colouration.

A small lizard, easily distinguished by the presence of only four as against five toes in all other agamids. The fan-like throat appendage in the male is an additional distinguishing character.

A ground-dwelling, diurnal agamid, common in open sandy scrub country. A fast and graceful runner, occasionally adopting a bipedal gait when hard pressed. Rests in the shade of bushes and other cover & many climb these for basking.



SOHAIL MADAN

**Indian Garden Lizard** *Calotes Versicolor*

**Local Name:** Girgit

**Food:** Primarily insects, ant forming a large proportion of the food

**Breeding:** Seasonal, April to end September

A medium-sized, arboreal lizard with oval head and laterally compressed body. In the male, the cheeks are muscular and swollen. Two distinct spines on each side of head behind tympanum. Dorsal scales large. Equal six, keeled and directed backwards and upwards. Tail long, cylindrical, and swollen at the base in the male. A distinctive dorsal crest of lance-shaped scales from nape to above vent in the male.



LAKHAN KOHLI

**Jerdon's Snake-Eye** *Ophisops jerdonii*

**Food:** Crickets, cockroaches and other insects.  
**Breeding:** Breeds in May-June.

Common in the open dry jungles of the peninsula. Both have more or less similar colour patterns, brownish or golden colour above with two light stripes. Jerdon's snake-eye is a widely distributed species which is not uncommon. Distinguished by its rough head shield which are keeled and striated. In scrub country inhabits stony area.



SOHAIL MADAN

**Leopard Gecko** *Eublepharis macularius*

**Food:** Common leopard geckos typically feed on crickets, cockroaches, mealworms and other insects  
**Breeding:** Breeds in the hot weather

Leopard geckoes are nocturnal, sheltering under rocks or in burrows in daylight. During periods of activity, the gecko tends to be an inquisitive animal, & although a ground-dwelling species, the clawed toes of the leopard gecko allow them to climb rocks and branches where they can easily absorb heat ventrally. As with many other reptiles, these lizards shed periodically. It was described 20 years ago from Delhi ridge. Extremely rare reptile whose closest relatives occur in Himalayas & the middle east.



RAJENDER SINGH

**Yellow-bellied House Gecko:** *Hemidactylus flaviviridis*

**Local Name:** Chhipkali  
**Food:** Mainly insects including caterpillars  
**Breeding:** Lizards mate during March and early April following a brief courtship. Eggs are laid during late April and early May.

Pale grey above, marking indistinct, ventrally yellowish. In Punjab, the colour is recorded as showing a seasonal change, increasing in intensity with increase of temperature from pale grey in March to dark grey with five wavy black stripes in June.



LAKHAN KOHLI

**Bengal Monitor Lizard** *Varanus bengalensis*

**Local Name:** Goh  
**Food:** Carnivorous. Eats any animal it can overcome. Recorded food items include small mammals, birds, eggs.  
**Breeding:** The main breeding season is June to September. Lay eggs inside the ground, filling it up and using their shouts to compact the soil.

Adult olive, grey or brownish above with sparse black spots, yellowish below, uniform or flecked with black. Young brightly coloured, dark olive with white eye spots arranged across the back, alternating with dark bars or spots.



## Lizards of Delhi

### ABOUT DEPARTMENT OF FORESTS AND WILDLIFE, GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI

The Department is responsible for the improvement of the overall environmental quality, development of forests including the Ridge, protection of wildlife, their habitats and preservation of trees in the National Capital Territory of Delhi in accordance with the provisions made in the Acts and also the directions of the Honourable Supreme Court of India and Delhi High Court. For further information visit [forest.delhigovt.nic.in/](http://forest.delhigovt.nic.in/) or contact the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests at 011 23379629.

### ABOUT THE BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY (BNHS)

BNHS is the oldest and one of the largest non-governmental organisations (NGO) in the Indian sub-continent. For more than 135 years, it has been actively engaged in conservation of nature and natural resources through research, education and awareness. For further information visit [www.bnhs.org](http://www.bnhs.org) or contact 022 2282 1811.

### ABOUT THE BNHS CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTRE (CEC), DELHI

CEC Delhi is set up as a part of the collaborative project between Dept. of Forests & Wildlife, GNCTD and BNHS to educate the people of Delhi about conservation of nature. The centre has reached out to different target groups by organising highly informative and interesting conservation education programmes. For further information mail to [cecbnhsdelhi@bnhs.org](mailto:cecbnhsdelhi@bnhs.org) or contact 91 8800741864.

This field guide has been developed by the BNHS, Conservation Education Centre – Delhi with financial assistance from the Government of NCT of Delhi.

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## Lizards of Delhi

Reptiles form one of the four classes of land dwelling vertebrates or animals with a backbone. The history of reptiles goes back at least 300 million years, even presently, the number of living reptiles, which is about 6000, is double the number of species of mammals. Half the numbers of living reptiles belong to the lizard family.

Often over looked and shunned, these lizards form an important part of our urban ecology and also help in bio-control of pests. It is important to change the mindset of the young generation and expose them to the amazing diversity of life around them. With this thought in mind, I hope this guide will help in promoting awareness and a step towards protecting these animals.

## Happy Herping!

### Ms. Jayshree Ardey Chauhan (IFS)

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Department, Department of Forests and Wildlife, Government of NCT of Delhi

### Man and Reptiles

Majority of reptiles are useful and perform silent service for mankind in controlling agricultural pests, both insects and rodents, but excite little interest in man. If it were not for the poisonous snakes, reptiles as a group would be largely ignored. The greatest danger to this useful group of animals is from the demand for their skin for commercial purposes. The skin trade has made Indian crocodiles endangered, and the demand for snake and lizard skins remains a constant threat to the survival of such useful reptiles as the monitor lizard and rat snake.

### Threat to humans

Non-venomous and harmless to humans. May bite when handled, but is not dangerous.

### Conservation

Reptiles play vital roles in the functioning of ecosystems: as predators, they control their prey populations, and as prey themselves they provide a vital food source for birds and mammals. They serve as useful biological indicators for the health of their environment.

