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Cover: Indian Grey Wolf *Canis lupus pallipes* and Smooth-coated Otter *Lutrogale perspicillata* sharing the territory in Chambal basin. Digital art on Procreate by Aakanksha Komanduri.

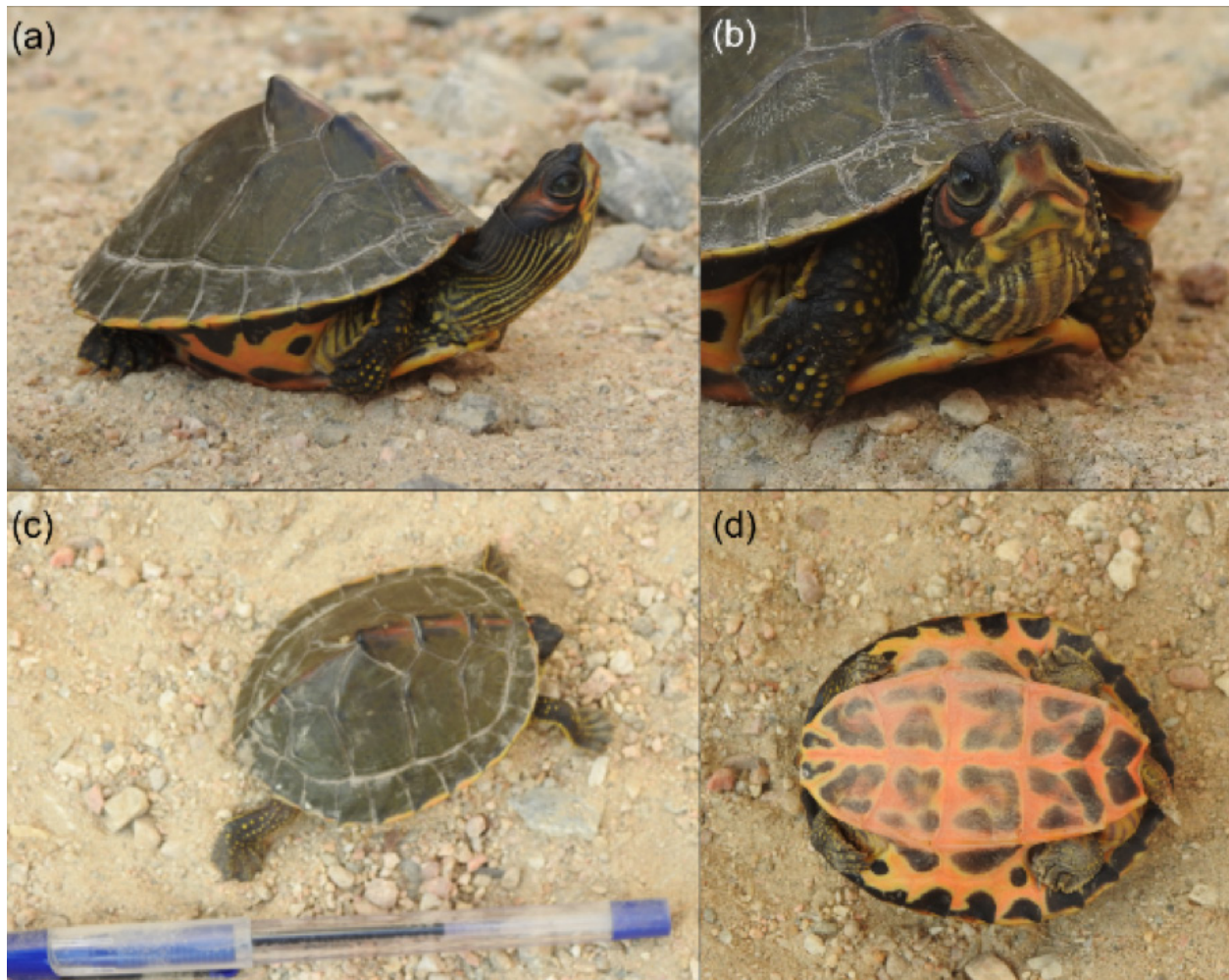


Image 1. A—side | B—front | C—dorsal | D—ventral views of the Indian Roofed Turtle *Pangshura tecta* (Gray, 1831) sighted in Jaisamand Lake, Udaipur District, Rajasthan, India. © Vijay Kumar Koli.

Pichola lakes) of Udaipur city prior to 1992 (S.K. Sharma pers. comm. 29 December 2025; Sharma 2014). More recently, the species was reported from Pichola Lake in 2025, located approximately 45 km north (aerial distance) of the present observation site. In the southern direction, Ahmedabad (Gujarat State) represents the nearest available distribution record, approximately 196 km away (aerial distance) (iNaturalist 2026; India Biodiversity Portal 2026). Additional recent observations from several localities within Rajasthan have also been uploaded through citizen-science platforms during the last few years (iNaturalist 2026). Here, we report a new sighting of *Pangshura tecta* based on a turtle sighted in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

OBSERVATION

On 28 December 2025, at approximately 0700 h, a slow-moving juvenile turtle (Image 1) was sighted along

the roadside near the edge of Jaisamand Lake (24.269° N, 73.955° E; elevation 305 m; Image 2) in Udaipur District, Rajasthan.

The individual exhibited a dark olive to blackish head with bright yellow to orange longitudinal stripes extending from the snout along the sides of the head and neck (Images 1A&B). A conspicuous crescent-shaped orange post-orbital blotch was present behind each eye. The carapace was olive to olive-brown with a distinct and well-developed median keel (Images 1B&C), while the plastron was yellow to orange with irregular dark brown blotches (Fig. 1d). Morphometric measurements recorded were: straight carapace length = 6.7 cm, straight carapace width = 5.4 cm, plastron length = 6.2 cm, and plastron width = 3.2 cm.

DISCUSSION

Based on diagnostic morphological characters and

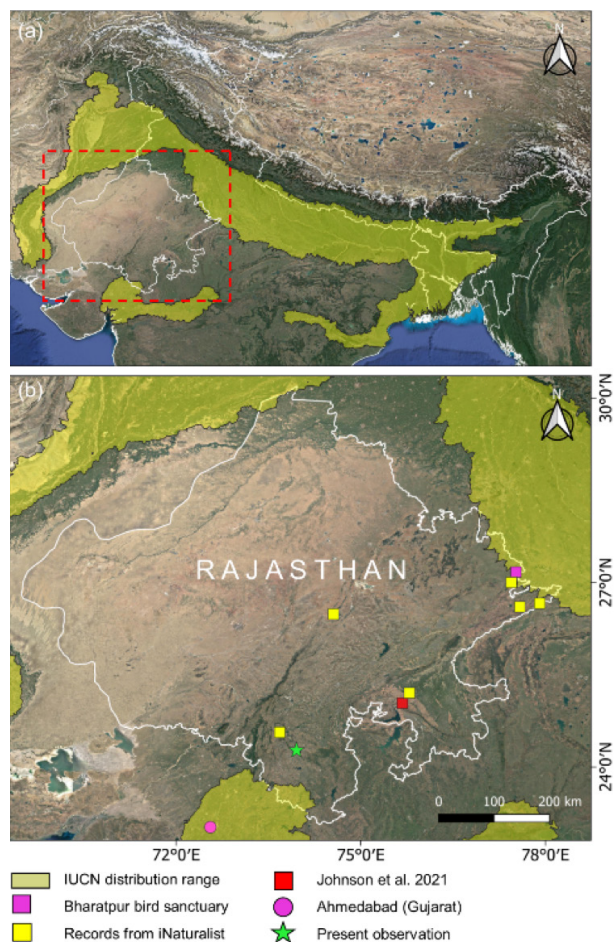


Image 2. A—The distribution range of The Indian Roofed Turtle *Pangshura tecta* (Gray, 1831) | B—its presence records in the state of Rajasthan, India and closest record in Gujarat State (i.e., Ahmedabad).

colouration patterns, the specimen was identified as *Pangshura tecta*. Following available literature (Hossain et al. 2013), the identification was subsequently confirmed by Dr. Satish Kumar Sharma (pers. comm. 29 December 2025). Jaisamand Lake (also known as Dhebar Lake), Asia's second-largest artificial lake (~36 km²), is subject to intensive tourism and fishing activities and serves as a major source of water supply for Udaipur City and surrounding areas. The lake receives water from four main rivers namely Gomti, Jhamari, Rooparel, and Bagaar; it also supports diverse aquatic biota (Balai et al. 2020). The occurrence of the turtle on the roadside suggests that the individual may have been accidentally captured in fishing gear and subsequently released, or that it had moved onto land for basking or dispersal. This species is frequently kept as a pet across India, even in cities not in its known distribution range (Choudhury & Bhupathy 1993). Release of a pet turtle into the

Jaisamand Lake is also a possibility which cannot be discounted.

Although the broader IUCN distribution range of *P. tecta* marginally overlaps with the eastern and southern fringes of Rajasthan (Ahmed et al. 2021), confirmed locality records from these regions remain limited. Published accounts indicate that records of *P. tecta* from Rajasthan are extremely limited and fragmented, with most known occurrences concentrated in eastern parts of the state and adjoining river systems (Bhupathy & Mathur 2013). Therefore, a new record from Jaisamand Lake would represent an important range extension into southern Rajasthan and improve current understanding of the species' regional distribution. Considering the relative number of seasonal and perennial wetlands in southern Rajasthan, as well as the conservation perspective, targeted species-specific surveys are urgently required to assess the current distribution, habitat associations, and population status of *P. tecta* across the state.

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