

Shield-tail snake

October 27, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



About Shield-tail snake:

- The newly discovered species of shield-tail snake is **named as Uropeltis caudomaculata**, in reference to the **yellow spot** that it has on each side of the base of its tail.
- The new species is distinguished primarily by its increased **number of ventral scales** and its exclusive distribution along the eastern escarpment of the Western Ghats from Meghamalai to approximately 15 km east of Munnar.
- It is known to be found in **only three localities**: **Meghamalai Tiger Reserve** in Tamil Nadu, **Periyar Tiger Reserve** and **Yellapetty**, Munnar in Kerala.

Key facts about Shield-tail snakes

- These are **non Venomous snakes**.
- They belong to the Uropeltidae family of primitive snakes **endemic to peninsular India & Sri Lanka**.
- They have a large **keratinous shield** at the tip of the tail and hence called shield tailed snakes.
- **Distribution**: They are found in the **Western Ghats and some parts of Peninsular India**.
- **Habitat**: Inhabit **hilly forests** & occupy tunnels in the leaves, humus, rocks & logs.

They are burrowing species found upto 1 feet below the soil.

Q1: What is Keratin?

It is a fibrous structural protein of hair, nails, horn, hoofs, wool, feathers, and of the epithelial cells in the outermost layers of the skin. Keratin serves important structural and protective functions, particularly in the epithelium.

Source: [Scientists discover new species of shield-tail snake in Western Ghats' Meghamalai-Munnar landscape](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/shield-tail-snake/>

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