

Dhaman (Indian rat snake)

Classification :

Kingdom : Animalia

Phylum : Chordata

Class : Reptilia

Order : Squamata

Family : Colubridae

Genus : *Ptyas*

Species : *mucosa*



For further details, [link](#)

Characteristics :

- The Dhaman, or Oriental Rat Snake (*Ptyas mucosa*), is a large, non-venomous, diurnal snake found across South and Southeast Asia, highly adaptable to diverse habitats including forests, farmlands, and urban areas.
- It is a fast-moving predator of rodents, frogs, birds, and other small vertebrates, playing a crucial role in controlling pest populations.
- **Size:** Dhamans are large snakes, with mature individuals often reaching 1.5 to 1.95 meters (around 5 to 6.5 feet), though some can exceed 2 meters.
- **Color:** Their coloration varies from pale browns to nearly black, depending on the regional habitat.
- **Speed:** They are known for their fast-crawling speed, which helps them hunt and evade predators.
- **Non-venomous:** Although large, they are harmless to humans and do not have medically significant venom.

Habitat and Behaviour

- **Habitat:** Dhamans are highly adaptable and can be found in a variety of environments, including forests, wetlands, paddy fields, plantations, and even gardens and human settlements.
- **Activity:** They are diurnal, meaning they are active during the day.
- **Semi-arboreal:** They are both terrestrial (ground-dwelling) and arboreal (tree-dwelling).
- **Swimming:** Dhamans can swim readily and vigorously in water, keeping their heads above the surface.

Diet and Hunting

- **Diet:** They are predators with a diet that includes rodents, frogs, toads, lizards, birds, and young turtles.
- **Hunting:** They swallow their prey whole, often while it is still alive.
- **Ecological Role:** By preying on rodents, they are considered "farmers' friends" as they help to control pest populations and maintain ecological balance.

Interesting Facts

- **Defence Mechanism:** When cornered, a Dhaman will inflate its neck and head to appear larger as a defensive measure.
- **Confusion with Cobras:** Due to their habit of inflating their neck, Dhamans are sometimes mistaken for cobras.
- **Ecological Importance:** They are an important part of their ecosystem by controlling rodent populations.
- **Conservation Status:** The Oriental Rat Snake is listed as Least Concern (LC) by the IUCN.