

Sitana

Classification

Kingdom : Animalia
Phylum : Chordata
Class : Reptilia
Order : Squamata
Family : Agamidae
Genus : Sitana



For further details, [Link](#)

Characteristics

- Sitana, or fan-throated lizards, are small, ground-dwelling, insectivorous lizards in the agamid family, found in South Asia, including India. They have characteristic expandable throat fans for display, often inhabit dry forests and grasslands, and exhibit an interesting bipedal gait when running away from danger.
- **Size:** Sitana are small to medium-sized lizards, with males typically measuring 37-47 mm and females 36-52 mm in snout-to-vent length.
- **Physical Features:** They possess slender, elongate digits with sharp claws, and an enlarged projecting scale on the posterior side of their hind thighs that differentiates them from the related Sarada genus.
- **Throat Fan:** A defining feature is their "dewlap" or throat fan, which they display for courtship and territorial purposes.
- **Coloration:** Background colors vary from brown to dark brown, with distinctive dark rhomboidal markings on the trunk and often a pale band along the back.
- **Hind Limbs:** A defining feature of the genus Sitana is their reduced hind limbs, which are covered with uniform, strongly keeled scales and lack the enlarged projecting scale found in other agamid species. They have only four toes on their hind feet, which is a key characteristic for identification.

Scales:

- **Keel-like scales:** The body is covered in uniform, keeled scales, with the scales on the limbs being particularly strongly keeled.
- **Varying sizes:** Dorsal scales are generally larger than ventral scales, and lateral scales are typically the smallest.
- **Subdigital lamellae:** The subdigital lamellae (underneath the toes) are entire and can vary in number between species.

Habitat and Habits

Habitat:

- Sitana lizards are ground dwellers, preferring open ground in thin forests, scrublands, and dry tropical forests in southern India and other parts of their range.
- They are typically found in arid, open habitats, such as grasslands, sand dunes, and agricultural fields.
- **Diet:** They are primarily insectivores, feeding on insects and sometimes mollusks and seeds.
- **Behavior:** When disturbed, Sitana lizards may sometimes run on their hind legs in a bipedal (two-legged) gait to escape predators.

Interesting Fact

- The display of their colorful throat fans is a crucial part of their social behavior, used to attract mates and defend territories against rivals, similar to how some birds display feathers.