

*The Fan-throated lizard
Sitana ponticeriana is a
species of agamid lizard
found in India, Sri Lanka, and
parts of Pakistan, where it can
be found mostly on the
ground, in open ground
patches in thin forests.*

The Fan-throated Lizard **INDIAN BEAUTY**

SMALL, RELATIVELY COMMON
AND OFTEN OVERLOOKED -
MEET THE TINY JEWEL
OF THE SCRUBLANDS



■ This species inhabits moderately moist scrub, rocky and sandy coastal areas, and open areas in dry forests and dry scrublands. It is primarily a ground-dwelling species, but is sometimes found on trees.



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The Fan-throated Lizard *Sitana ponticeriana* is a beautiful agamid found in most parts of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka & Nepal. These gentle agamids are colorful dragons of the modern world. These lizards have a thin flap of skin called a gular appendage, between their throat and their abdomen which they can flap/ flash at will. Normally these appendages are whitish or creamish in color, but what's interesting is that during the breeding season (mainly May-June) the males of these species develop a wonderful coloration ranging from blue-black-red. They take positions over small rocks or

branches on the ground and flash their brightly colored gular appendages to attract other females and also to warn off other males about their territory. I had been always been intrigued by the idea of capturing the beauty of these gorgeous dragons, and so one day I set out to a place called Chalkwadi, near Satara, in Maharashtra, India, which is supposed to have a huge population of these agamids. Reaching the place, I saw a number of huge windmills and then I realized that probably, due to these windmills, there was a lesser density of raptors and in the absence of their natural

predators, these agamids should have thrived. I was right! There were brightly colored males every few meters of this vast plateau. We decided to get acquainted with an apparently rather tolerant fellow who seemed undisturbed by our presence. He was flashing his bright colors to potential mates and rivals alike. After getting some good shots of this very co-operative male, we set out in search of a female. Very soon we came across a gravid female with dull colors but beautiful patterns on the dorsal part of her body. Finally, the day ended with a dip in the nearby Thoseghar Waterfalls. ●

■ This species attains a maximum length of 44 mm (snout to vent length). The coloration is generally olive-brown above, with a series of rhomboidal patches along the middle of the back. A more or less distinct light band is seen along each side of the back.



■ The name Fan-Throated Lizard is given because the males of this species bear a large gular appendage - a loose skin flap of the throat which can be erected up in the form of a fan. This fan-like gular appendage is roughly triangular in shape and extends from the tip of the lower jaw to a considerable length along the belly.



Males of this fascinating species - especially the large territorial ones - extend an iridescent, red-blue-black throat fan as a courtship behavior. Females (seen at right) show a complete absence of the dewlap.





Fan-throated lizards can be locally common and typically inhabit sandy coastal areas and open areas in forests and scrublands. The males' brightly colored dewlap is used primarily in courtship, but might also play a role in communication and possibly defense.