Langaha (Lamprophiidae) is a genus of arboreal and mainly diurnal snakes endemic to Madagascar. Species are remarkably conspicuous (Fig. 1) by having a protruding scaly appendage at the front of the snout (Bonnaterre, 1790; Glaw and Vences, 2007; Vidal et al., 2008). Three species are currently recognized, Langaha madagascariensis Bonnaterre, 1790, L. alluaudi Mocquard, 1901 and L. pseudoalluaudi Domergue, 1988.

Langaha madagascariensis is the best-known species with localities mainly in the north, on the west coast, and in the southeastern part of the island (e.g. D’Cruze et al., 2007; Glaw and Vences, 2007; Bora et al., 2010). It occurs in dry and wet forest at low elevations (Glaw and Vences, 2007) and individuals are highly cryptic and therefore hard to find. This might compromise the availability of data on the species life history; information on population density is still very scarce (Krysko, 2003, 2005; IUCN, 2011). Recently, two additional records were provided by Gehring et al. (2010) from Madagascar’s east coast. The individuals were found in Vohibola and Tampolo forests considerably enlarging the species’ known distribution (Fig. 2).

On 3 February 2007, we found L. madagascariensis (Fig. 1) on the east coast of Madagascar at Réserve Naturelle Intégrale N. 1 de Betampona (17°55′34.8″ S, 49°12′30.0″ E, 320 m elevation). The specimen was not collected but, with a spear-shaped appendage and no jutting supraocular scales, its identification leaves no doubt. This record was taken in a strictly protected area roughly located between the forests mentioned by Gehring et al. (2010). The reserve encompasses a 2228 ha fragment of a once extensive evergreen lowland rainforest about 40 km northwest of the major port of Toamasina (Andriampianina and Peyrieras, 1972; Razokiny, 1985). The male individual was located during night time, while resting hanged on the leaves of a small tree (Fig. 1). The surrounding habitat consisted of secondary rainforest on the border of the reserve, next to the village of Rendrirendry. Our observation represents the first finding of L. madagascariensis in a protected area in the central eastern coast of the country, which can act as a sanctuary for this species presumably in decline due to ongoing human pressure on lowland forest throughout Madagascar (IUCN, 2011).

The nearest known populations are found at the littoral forests of Tampolo and Vohibola at a distance...
of approximately 75 km to the north and to the south, respectively. These two last remnants of primary vegetation are in some of the most disturbed and anthropogenically influenced areas of Madagascar (Gehring et al., 2010). In their high-resolution multi-taxonomic approach, Kremen et al. (2008) propose a littoral stripe of the northern east coast to consider for expansion of the current reserve network. Although their analysis did not include snake species, our record reinforces the need of preserving and protecting the last remnants of primary forest on the littoral coast.

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