

## Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Rudman, S.M. and R. Powell. 2010. *Typhlops dominicanus*.

***Typhlops dominicanus* Stejneger**  
**Kouwès dé-tèt, Koulev, Coffin Borer,**  
**Dominican Blindsnake**

*Typhlops platycephalus* Boulenger 1893:30 (not of Duméril and Bibron 1844). See **Remarks**.

*Typhlops dominicana* Stejneger 1904:687. Type-locality, "Dominica." Syntypes, British Museum of Natural History (BMNH) 65.54.177, collector and date of collection unknown, presented to the museum on 4 April 1865; 89.8.14.1–8, collected by G.A. Ramage in June 1889; 91.5.11.2, collected by H.A. Alfred Nicholls, date of collection unknown but presented to the museum by the West Indies Exploration Committee on 11 May 1895 (not examined by authors).

*Typhlops dominicanus*: Hahn 1980:57.

*Typhlops dominicana dominicana*: Schwartz and Henderson 1988:234 (based on Thomas 1976: 63). See **Remarks**.

• **CONTENT.** No subspecies are recognized (but see **Remarks**).

• **DEFINITION.** *Typhlops dominicanus* is a large blind snake characterized by (from Richmond 1966, Thomas 1976, and Schwartz and Henderson 1991), (1) head rounded; (2) rostral broad in dorsal aspect, oval to nearly parallel, not flared on apex, no labial flare; (3) preocular angle 70–95°, apex rounded, lower portion contacting only the third upper labial; (4) ocular length 1/2 to 2/3 height; (5) rostronasal pattern divergent; (6) two postoculars; (7) first parietal standard, width spanning two scale rows or slightly less; (8) second parietal present (mode) or absent; (9) maximum total length (TL) to 385 mm; (10) tail length 60–63 mm; (11) TL/MBD 38–56; (12) middorsal scales 434–499; (13) scale rows 24–22, with reduction occurring at about midbody (46–63% of TL); (14) dorsal coloration extending completely across venter or fading somewhat ventrally, with unpigmented areas around snout and mouth and vent and underside of tail; (15) rectal cecum present; (16) hemipenes attenuate; (17) cranium broad, width across prefrontals 90% of width across prootics; (18) premaxilla broad (about 40% of width across prefrontals), slightly convex anteriorly, not protuberant, posteroventral edges transverse, joining with broad blade in continuously curved juncture; (19) nasals without lateral angle; (20) septomaxilla with hook, anterior portion tapered; (21) frontal-parietal suture transverse, slightly sinuous; (22) frontal without anterior ventral blade-like or wedge-like process; (23) optic foramen canalicular; (24) postorbital process of parietal reduced; (25) parietal without temporal ridges; (26) lappet of protic vestigial, not extending to tongue, tongue moderate, not reaching parietal, no



**FIGURE 1.** *Typhlops dominicanus* from Cabrits National Park, Dominica (photograph by Robert Powell).

secondary foramen; (27) supraoccipitals unfused, in broad medial contact; (28) exoccipitals not fused with prootics; (29) angular not sliver-like; (30) dorsal process of quadrate not hooked; (31) atlantal hypapophysis tablike with keel, total hypapophyses 5; (32) hyoid a single Y-shaped ossified unit; (33) pelvic moieties tripartite, hypoischial cartilages present.

• **DIAGNOSIS.** *Typhlops dominicanus* can be distinguished from *T. monastus* and *T. tasymicris* by having 24–22 dorsal scale rows and a high number (434–499) of middorsal scales (22–20 or 22–22 and < 395 in *T. monastus*; 20–20 and < 429 in *T. tasymicris*; Schwartz and Henderson 1985). *Typhlops dominicanus* can be distinguished from *T. guadeloupensis* (Thomas 1976) by the number of middorsal scales (393–430 in *T. guadeloupensis*), coloration (*T. guadeloupensis* lighter and clearly bicolored), and ocular shape (equal in width ventrally in *T. dominicanus*, narrower ventrally than at eye level in *T. guadeloupensis*).

• **DESCRIPTIONS.** Detailed descriptions are given in Richmond (1966), Thomas (1976), and Schwartz and Henderson (1991), although some characteristics may apply to *T. guadeloupensis* (see **Remarks**).

• **ILLUSTRATIONS.** Thomas (1976) included line drawings of the holotype. Black-and-white photographs are in Goin and Goin (1962, 1971), Goin et al. (1978), and Daniells et al. (2008). Color photographs are in Evans and James (1997) and Malhotra and Thorpe (1999).

• **DISTRIBUTION.** *Typhlops dominicanus* is endemic to Dominica, where it is widely distributed (Underwood 1962) and typically found under rocks and logs or in the open after rain (Schwartz and Henderson 1991; Malhotra and Thorpe 1999). The range was illustrated previously in Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **FOSSIL RECORD.** None.

• **PERTINENT LITERATURE.** The species has been included in notes, checklists, keys, and guides by Barbour (1914, 1930, 1935, 1937), Brooks (1982; prey of *Leptodactylus fallax*), Censky and Kaiser



**MAP.** The distribution of *Typhlops dominicanus*. The type-locality is too imprecise to plot; dots mark known localities.

(1998), Daniells et al. (2008), Evans and James (1997), Frank and Ramus (1995), Henderson and Powell (2009; general natural history), James (2004), Lescure (1987), MacLean et al. (1977), Malhotra and Thorpe (1999), Malhotra et al. (2007), McDiarmid et al. (1999), Powell et al. (1996), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988, 1991, the latter with description and summary of natural history), Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Schwartz et al. (1978), Thomas (1989), and Underwood (1962).

• **REMARKS.** Stejneger (1904) described this species based on a description by Boulenger (1893) of a specimen collected on Dominica and incorrectly identified as *Typhlops platycephalus* (= *T. richardii*). Thomas (1976) indicated that the Dominican populations were subspecifically related to those on Guadeloupe, originally described and currently recognized as *T. guadeloupensis* (Richmond 1966).

• **ETYMOLOGY.** The specific epithet is in reference to the island of Dominica.

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