

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

White, L.R., J.S. Parmerlee, Jr., and R. Powell. 1992. *Typhlops synterus*.

Typhlops synterus Thomas

Typhlops synterus Thomas, 1965:436. Type-locality, "5 km N Pedernales, Pedernales Province, Dominican Republic." Type-specimen, Museum of Comparative Zoology MCZ 77215, an adult (sex unknown), collected by David C. Leber and Richard Thomas, on 25 June 1964 (not examined by authors).

• **Content.** No subspecies are recognized.

• **Definition.** *Typhlops synterus* is a blind snake characterized by (see Thomas, 1976 and 1989, for complete explanations of characters): (1) head tapered, weakly ogival; (2) rostral narrow in dorsal aspect (RW/RW 0.39-0.47), oval, rarely parallel or clavate, not flared on apex, labial flare pronounced (category 3); (3) preocular angle 20-40°, apex rounded (mode), acute, or truncate, lower portion contacting only the 3rd upper labial; (4) ocular length modally < 1/2 height, sinuosity (minimum preocular length/maximum preocular length) 0.25-0.10; (5) rostronasal pattern calyculate; (6) 1 cycloid postocular, rarely 2; (7) 1st parietal expanded, bladelike, width spanning 3 scale rows (rarely standard with width spanning 2 scale rows); (8) 2nd parietal spanning 2 scale rows, rarely absent; (9) TL to 209 mm; (10) TL/tail length in females 27-51, males 29-50; (11) TL/midbody diameter 25-36; (12) middorsal scales 299-353; (13) scale rows 22-22; (14) coloration extensive, dorsal pigmentation (medium to light brown or pale tan, often with lighter mottling) fading gradually on the venter, but extending entirely across the venter in places; melanophore distribution on individual scales uneven, adding to the mottled effect; (15) rectal caecum present; (16) hemipenes expanded, with flat apex and sulcus spermaticus on raised edge (but not dividing to follow circumference of apex); (17) cranium tapered, with across

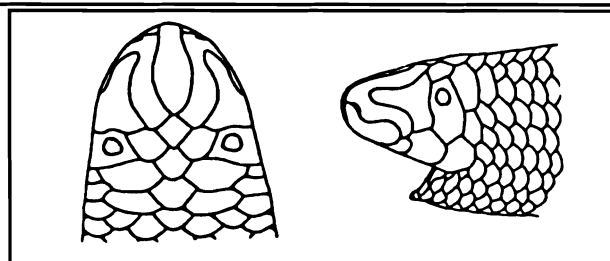
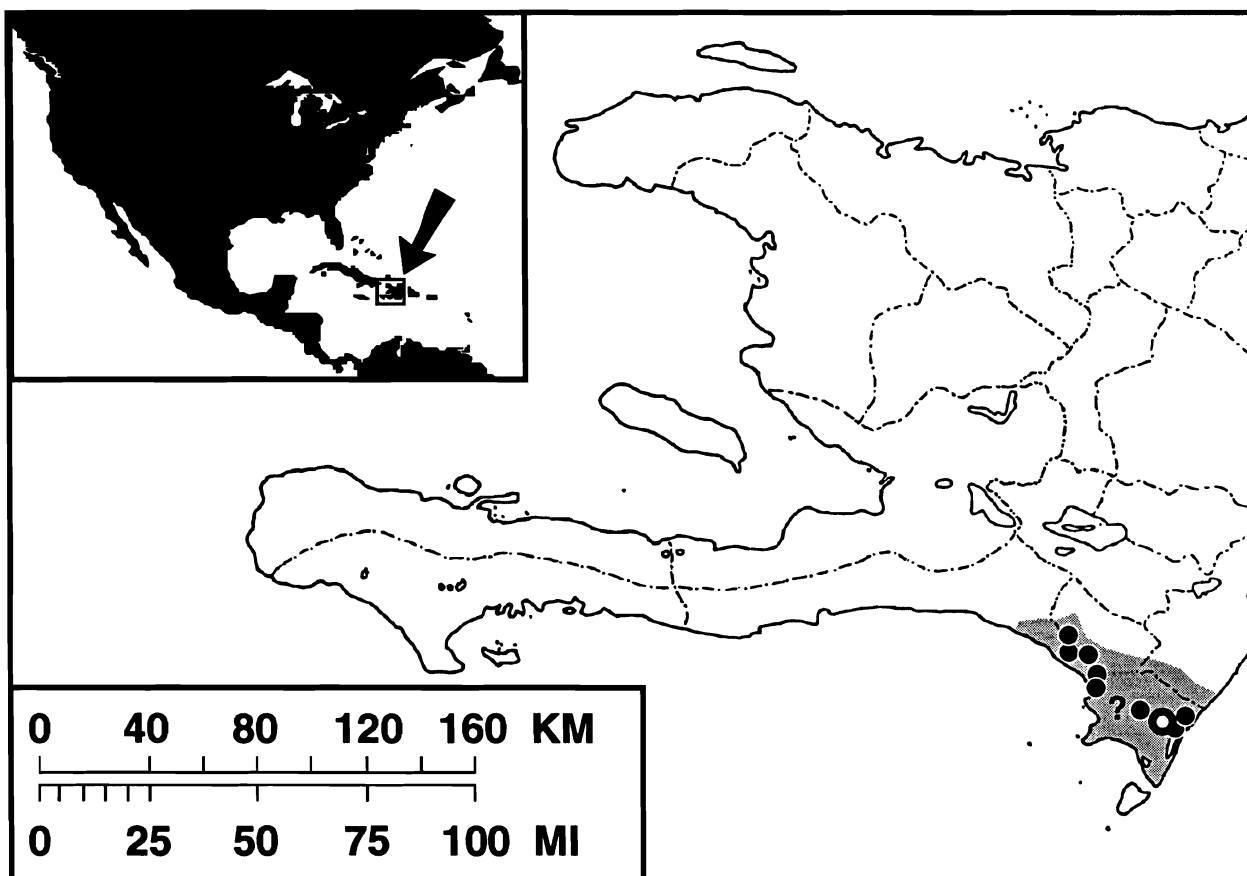


Figure. Dorsal and lateral views of the head of the holotype of *Typhlops synterus*, MCZ 77215 (from Thomas, 1965).

prefrontals 85-90% of width across prootics; (18) premaxilla narrow (36-38% width across prefrontals), protuberant, slightly concave anteriorly, with posteroventral edges angled forward, joining blade in obtuse angle; blade narrow; (19) nasals with lateral angle, excluded or nearly excluded from narial opening by contact or close approach of prefrontals and premaxilla; (20) septomaxilla without hook, anterior portion broad; (21) frontal-parietal suture V-shaped, sinuous; (22) frontal with small wedgelike anterior ventral process, no blade; (23) optic foramen canalicular; (24) postorbital process of parietal prominent; (25) parietal without temporal ridges; (26) lappet of prootic prominent, overlapping short tongue, tongue not extending to parietal; (27) supraoccipitals small, unfused or partly fused to exoccipitals, not in contact with one another or only in narrow contact; (28) exoccipitals not fused with prootics; (29) angular sliverlike; (30) dorsal process of quadrate slightly hooked anteriorly; (31) atlantal hypapophysis tablike with weak keel; total hypapophyses 6; (32) hyoid with Y-shaped basihyal and rodlike ceratobranchials; (33) pelvic moieties weakly triradiate with cartilaginous hypoischial and prepubic extensions.

• **Diagnosis.** *Typhlops synterus* is unique in the extremely



Map. Distribution of *Typhlops synterus* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The large open circle marks the type-locality, solid circles indicate other records. The question mark indicates the lack of information regarding distribution in the southern and southwestern parts of the Barahona Peninsula.

narrow anterior extension of the preocular. Other distinctive features include a very short tail, extreme labial flare of the rostral, reduced supraoccipitals that lack or have only narrow median contact with one another. Possession of 22 scale rows with no posterior reduction distinguishes this from all other Hispaniolan congeners (except variant specimens of *T. pusillus*).

• **Descriptions.** In addition to the original description of Thomas (1965), Thomas (1976) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991) described the species.

• **Illustrations.** Line drawings of the head are in Thomas (1965, 1976); the former also compared rostrals of five Hispaniolan species (including *T. syntherus*); line histograms of middorsal scale counts and line drawings of dorsal and anterior ventral views of the cranium were provided by the latter.

• **Distribution.** The species is known only from the xeric lowlands of the Barahona Peninsula of Hispaniola. The range is illustrated in Thomas (1965, 1976) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991). The apparently disjunct nature of the distribution may be an artifact reflecting the inaccessibility of the lower Barahona Peninsula.

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** In addition to the original description of Thomas (1965) and the systematic treatise of Thomas (1976), the species is included in checklists and guides by Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Schwartz et al. (1978), Henderson and Schwartz (1984), Henderson et al. (1984), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988), and Hedges and Thomas (1989). Schwartz (1980) characterized *T. syntherus* as a South Island species. Thomas (1989) discussed relationships with Antillean congeners. SEA/DVS (1990) provided an index of habitats in the Dominican Republic. Schwartz and Henderson (1991) summarized the literature on natural history. White et al. (1992) discussed trophic relations with syntopic *Sauresia agasepsoides* and *Amphisbaena gonavensis*.

• **Etymology.** Thomas (1965) stated that the name *syntherus* (from the Greek *sym* [= together] and *thera* [= hunting]) refers to the syntopic association of *T. syntherus* with four other species of burrowing reptiles. Because *Typhlops haitiensis* Richmond is now considered a synonym of *T. sulcatus* Cope (Thomas, 1966), only three species of fossorial reptiles, in addition to *T. syntherus*, are known to occur together in the Barahona peninsular lowlands: *Typhlops sulcatus*, *Amphisbaena gonavensis*, and *Leptotyphlops pyrites*.

Literature Cited

Hedges, S.B. and R. Thomas. 1989. Supplement to West Indian amphibians and reptiles: a check-list. Milwaukee Pub. Mus. Contr. Biol. Geol. (77):1-11.

Henderson, R.W. and A. Schwartz. 1984. A guide to the identification of the amphibians and reptiles of Hispaniola. Milwaukee Pub. Mus. Spec. Publ. Biol. Geol. (4):1-70.

—, —, y S.J. Incháustegui. 1984. Guía para la indentificación de los anfibios y reptiles de la Hispaniola. Mus. Nac. Hist. Nat. Ser. Mono. (1):1-128.

Schwartz, A. 1980. The herpetogeography of Hispaniola, West Indies. Stud. Fauna Curaçao Other Carib. Isl. 61(189):86-127.

— and R.W. Henderson. 1985. A guide to the identification of the amphibians and reptiles of the West Indies exclusive of Hispaniola. Milwaukee Pub. Mus., Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

— and —. 1988. West Indian amphibians and reptiles: a check-list. Milwaukee Pub. Mus. Contr. Biol. Geol. (74):1-264.

— and —. 1991. Amphibians and reptiles of the West Indies: descriptions, distributions, and natural history. Univ. Florida Press, Gainesville.

— and R. Thomas. 1975. A check-list of West Indian amphibians and reptiles. Carnegie Mus. Nat. Hist. Spec. Publ. (1):1-216.

—, —, and L.D. Ober. 1978. First supplement to a check-list of West Indian amphibians and reptiles. Carnegie Mus. Nat. Hist. Spec. Publ. (5):1-35.

SEA/DVS. 1990. La diversidad biológica en la República Dominicana: reporte preparado por el Departamento de Vida Silvestre para el Servicio Alemán de Cooperación Social-Técnica y Fondo Mundial para la Naturaleza (WWF-US). Apendices. Sec. Estado Agric., SURENA/DVS. Sto. Domingo, República Dominicana.

Thomas, R. 1965. A new species of *Typhlops* from the Barahona Peninsula of Hispaniola. Copeia 1965:436-439.

—, 1966. A reassessment of the herpetofauna of Navassa Island. J. Ohio Herpetol. Soc. 5:73-89.

—, 1976. Systematics of Antillean blind snakes of the genus *Typhlops* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae). Ph.D. Diss., Louisiana State Univ.

—, 1989. The relationships of Antillean *Typhlops* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae) and the description of three new Hispaniolan species, p. 409-432. In C.A. Woods (ed.), Biogeography of the West Indies: past, present, and future. Sandhill Crane Press, Gainesville, Florida.

White, L.R., R. Powell, J.S. Parmerlee, Jr., A. Lathrop, and D.D. Smith. 1992. Food habits of three syntopic reptiles from the Barahona Peninsula, Hispaniola. J. Herpetol. 26:in press.

Lisa R. White, Department of Biology, Miami-Dade Community College, South Campus, Miami, FL 33156, John S. Parmerlee, Jr., and Robert Powell, Department of Natural Sciences, Avila College, Kansas City, MO 64145.

Primary editor for this account, Larry David Wilson.

Published 30 November 1992 and Copyright © 1992 by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles.
