

## A New *Ramphotyphlops* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae) from Western Australia

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### Abstract

A new blind-snake, *Ramphotyphlops howi*, is described from north-west Kimberley.

### Introduction

It was observed in a recent revision of *Ramphotyphlops* (Storr 1981) that in the Western Australian Museum there were only eight specimens of blind-snake from north-west Kimberley. Yet these few specimens represented five species (four of them new), which led to the expectation that several more species remained to be discovered in this region.

It was therefore no great surprise when the first specimen of blind-snake collected in the Port Warrender/Mitchell Plateau area proved to be new.

### *Ramphotyphlops howi* sp. nov.

Figures 1 and 2

#### Holotype

R77226 in Western Australian Museum, collected by P. Griffin on 22 April 1982 at Walsh Point, Western Australia, in 14°34'S, 125°51'E.

#### Diagnosis

A dark, moderately slender blind-snake with rounded snout, 18 midbody scale rows and nasal cleft proceeding from second labial. Most like *R. guentheri* (Peters) but darker and having fewer ventrals (434 v. 525-580) and a completely divided nasal. Distinguishable from *R. micromma* Storr by its much larger eye and nasal cleft terminating lower on nasal and thus not visible from above.

#### Description

Total length (mm): 210. Tail length (% total length): 2.9.

Rostral (from above) oval, about one and one-third as long as wide, a little more than half as wide as head and not extending back to level of eyes. Frontal

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much smaller than prefrontal. Snout rounded in profile. Nostril inferior, much nearer to rostral than to preocular. Nasal cleft proceeding from second labial to nostril, thence curving upwards and forwards to rostral.

Midbody scales in 18 rows. Ventrals 434; scales very wide and only narrowly in contact with adjacent scales of same longitudinal row, i.e. approaching condition in *R. braminus* (Storr 1981: 270). Subcaudals 16.

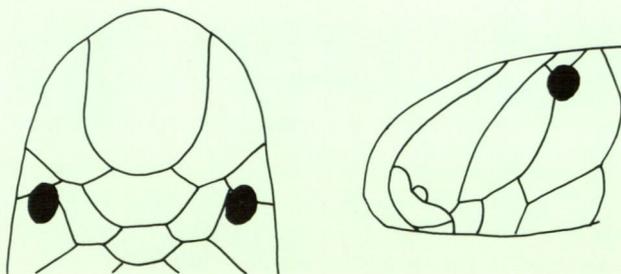


Figure 1 Head of *Ramphotyphlops howi*.

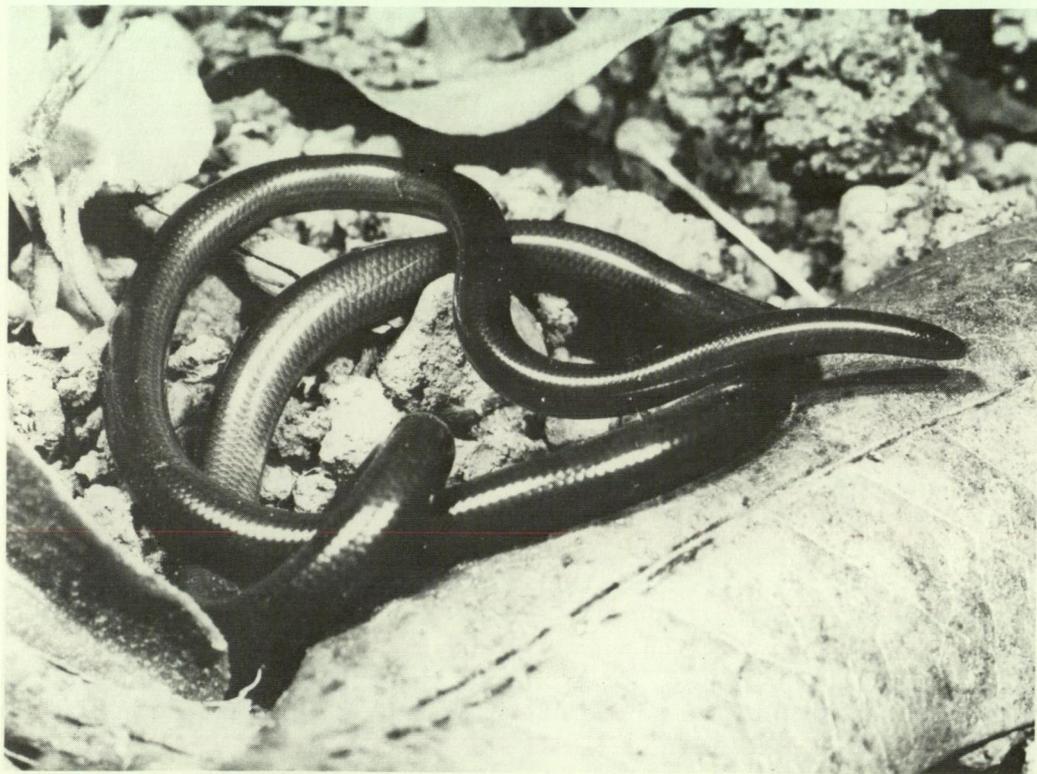


Figure 2 Holotype of *Ramphotyphlops howi*, photographed in life by P. Griffin.

Back dark brown, gradually merging with brown lower surface. Head a little darker than back. Terminal fifth of the tail still darker, i.e. blackish-brown.

### Distribution

Known from one place on shore of Admiralty Gulf in subhumid north-west Kimberley. The holotype was found on damp, clayey, stony soil just before dawn.

### Derivation of Name

After Dr R.A. How, head of the Museum's Department of Biological Survey.

### Reference

Storr, G.M. (1981). The genus *Ramphotyphlops* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae) in Western Australia. *Rec. West. Aust. Mus.* 9: 235-271.