

A New *Ramphotyphlops* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae) from Central Australia

G.M. Storr*

Abstract

A new blind-snake, *Ramphotyphlops centralis*, is described from the Alice Springs district.

Introduction

Recently Mr M.W. Gillam sent me for identification a parcel of reptiles from the collection of the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory, Alice Springs (NTM A/S). Among them were six specimens of an undescribed blind-snake.

Ramphotyphlops centralis sp. nov.

Holotype

R317 in NTM A/S, a male collected in October 1976 at Alice Springs, Northern Territory, in 23°42'S, 133°52'E.

Paratypes (all in NTM A/S)

Northern Territory

Alice Springs (5890, 5895, 5906, R138); Pine Gap (5888).

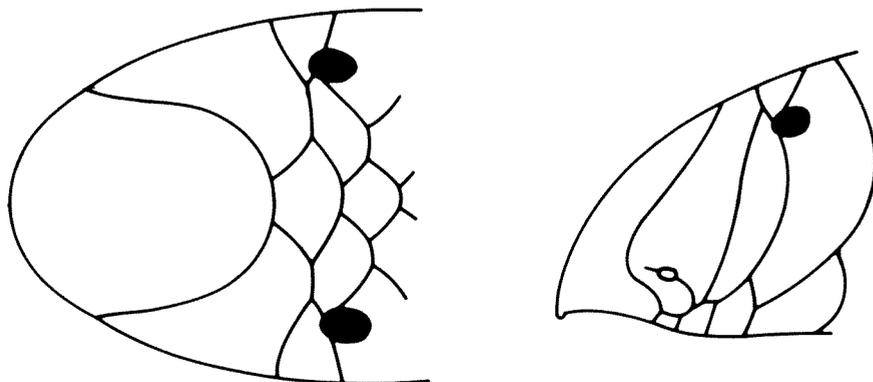


Figure 1 Head of *Ramphotyphlops centralis*.

*Department of Ornithology and Herpetology, Western Australian Museum, Francis Street, Perth, Western Australia 6000.

Diagnosis

A moderately slender *Ramphotyphlops* with 20 midbody scale rows and nasal cleft proceeding from second labial; snout relatively short and tipped with cutting edge.

Description

Total length (mm): 165-306 (N 6, mean 246). Length of tail (% total length): 1.5-3.1 (N 6, mean 2.5).

Rostral from above elliptic, longer than wide, and extending back nearly to level of eyes. Nasals narrowly separated behind rostral. Snout tipped with strong, dark transverse cutting edge which extends back as a ridge on to nasal scale just above nostril. Nostrils inferior, much nearer to rostral than preocular. Nasal cleft proceeding from second labial (N 6) to nostril or a little beyond, but never crossing nasal ridge or reaching rostral.

Midbody scale rows 20 (N 6). Ventrals 405-482 (N 6, mean 434.8). Subcaudals 12-20 (N 6, mean 17.5).

Upper surface purplish-brown, gradually merging with pale lower surface.

Distribution

Alice Springs and vicinity, Northern Territory.

Remarks

This snake is a member of the group of species that includes *R. unguirostris*, *R. australis*, *R. hamatus* and *R. endoterus* (Storr 1981). Of these species, *R. centralis* is most like *R. hamatus*, which it resembles closely in the shape and scutation of the head. However, *R. hamatus* has more midbody scale rows (22), fewer ventrals (less than 400) and a sharp jagged boundary between the dark upper and pale lower surfaces.

Reference

Storr, G.M. (1981). The genus *Ramphotyphlops* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae) in Western Australia. *Rec. West. Aust. Nat.* 9(3): 235-271.