

New records of *Leptotyphlops borrichianus* Degerbøl, 1923 in northwestern Patagonia

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Abstract. Leptotyphlopids snakes are rare in southern Argentina, but as result of several field trips carried out in the last years we collected a few specimens of *Leptotyphlops borrichianus*. Some of them represent new localities for the species in the region. In addition, we comment on previous records of *Leptotyphlops borrichianus* in northwestern Patagonia.

Keywords. Serpentes, Leptotyphlopidae, Mendoza and eastern Neuquén Provinces, Argentina.

Leptotyphlops borrichianus Degerbøl, 1923 is a small leptotyphlopids snake (about 280 mm total length) endemic to Argentina (Fig. 1), distributed through the western and southern areas of Monte phytogeographic region (Fig. 2), including La Rioja, San Juan, Mendoza, and Rio Negro provinces (Freiberg, 1951; Ceí, 1986; Avila et al., 1998; Giraudo and Scrocchi, 2002). The citation of Williams and Francini (1992) for La Pampa was not confirmed by Tiranti and Avila (1997) due to the absence of collected material from this province. The species appears to be rare and is known from only a few localities, and its presence in Neuquén and southern Mendoza Provinces was unknown until now. In a recent field guide (Scolaro, 2005) a general geographic distribution for this species in northern Patagonia is outlined, probably based on the previous work of Ceí (1986), but without voucher specimens or bibliographic references describing specimens from this area. In the last years, as result of field trips carried out to northwestern Patagonia, several leptotyphlopids snakes were collected

by active searches under stones in areas not previously cited in the known geographic distribution for this species. All specimens were collected in typical Monte phytogeographic formation, with *Larrea divaricata* and *L. cuneifolia* as dominant bushes. All snakes were found under small to medium stones with sandy soil below. All animals were collected by hand, fixed with 10% formalin and stored in 70% ethanol, using standard procedures. Standard measurements were taken under microscope (Table 1) and identification were made using the key of Ceí (1986). Voucher specimens are deposited in the herpetological collections Luciano Javier Avila Mariana Morando of the Centro Nacional Patagónico (LJAMM-CNP), Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina, and the Instituto de Herpetología, Fundación Miguel Lillo, San Miguel de Tucuman, Tucuman, Argentina (FML), under the following catalog numbers (each number corresponds to the numbers in fig. 2): Mendoza province: LJAMM 11388.; Malargue Department: (1) Rio Tinto Mining Facility, ~20 km N main camp (36°59'38.1"S 69°26'46.7"W, elevation 943 m), CHF Pérez, A. Gatica, C. Navarro coll. Neuquén province: LJAMM 11108-09: Añelo Department: (2) Aguada Pichana, Bajo de Añelo (38°25'43.7"S 69°09'31.3"W, elevation 521 m), C.H.F. Perez, F. Farinaccio, J. Nittmann, D. Pérez coll. Rio Negro province: LJAMM 10482, General Roca Department: (3) Villa Regina (39°06'S 67°05'W, elevation 280 m), CHF Pérez coll.; FML 13601 (4) Chichinales (39°06'05"S 66°56'12.7"W, elevation 217 m), CHF Perez, D. Pérez coll. Avellaneda Department:

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Figure 1. *Leptotyphlops borrichianus* (LJAMM 11109) from Aguada Pichana, Bajo de Añelo, Neuquén province, northern Patagonia, Argentina. Photographs by C. H. F. Perez.

FML 13600 (5) Chimpay (39°08'41.7"S 66°08'41.1"W, elevation 193 m), CHF Pérez coll.

We present herein new records for this species for southern Mendoza, and northeastern Neuquén, representing the southwesternmost records for *L. borrichianus*, and extending the known distribution 578 km (airline) South from vouchered records of northern Mendoza and 144 km (airline) West of records of Rio Negro Province. We also report new localities along the Rio Negro valley, extending the know distribution in that area 130 km E from the unique citation in this province by Freiberg (1951).

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Table 1. Measurements and scale counts of the specimens of *Leptotyphlops borrichianus*. FML 13600 was not available for this study.

	10482	11108	11109	11388
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female
Total length	197 mm	152 mm	160 mm	138 mm
Tail length	6.83 mm	5.77 mm	6.05 mm	5.01 mm
Body diameter	3.62 mm	2.67 mm	3.14 mm	2.25 mm
Head diameter	2.52 mm	2.02 mm	2.05 mm	1.85 mm
Snout tip to eye	2.24 mm	2.03 mm	1.89 mm	1.86 mm
Scale count around body	13	12	12	13
Scale count along body	278	276	275	288
Scale count along under tail	9	10	12	11

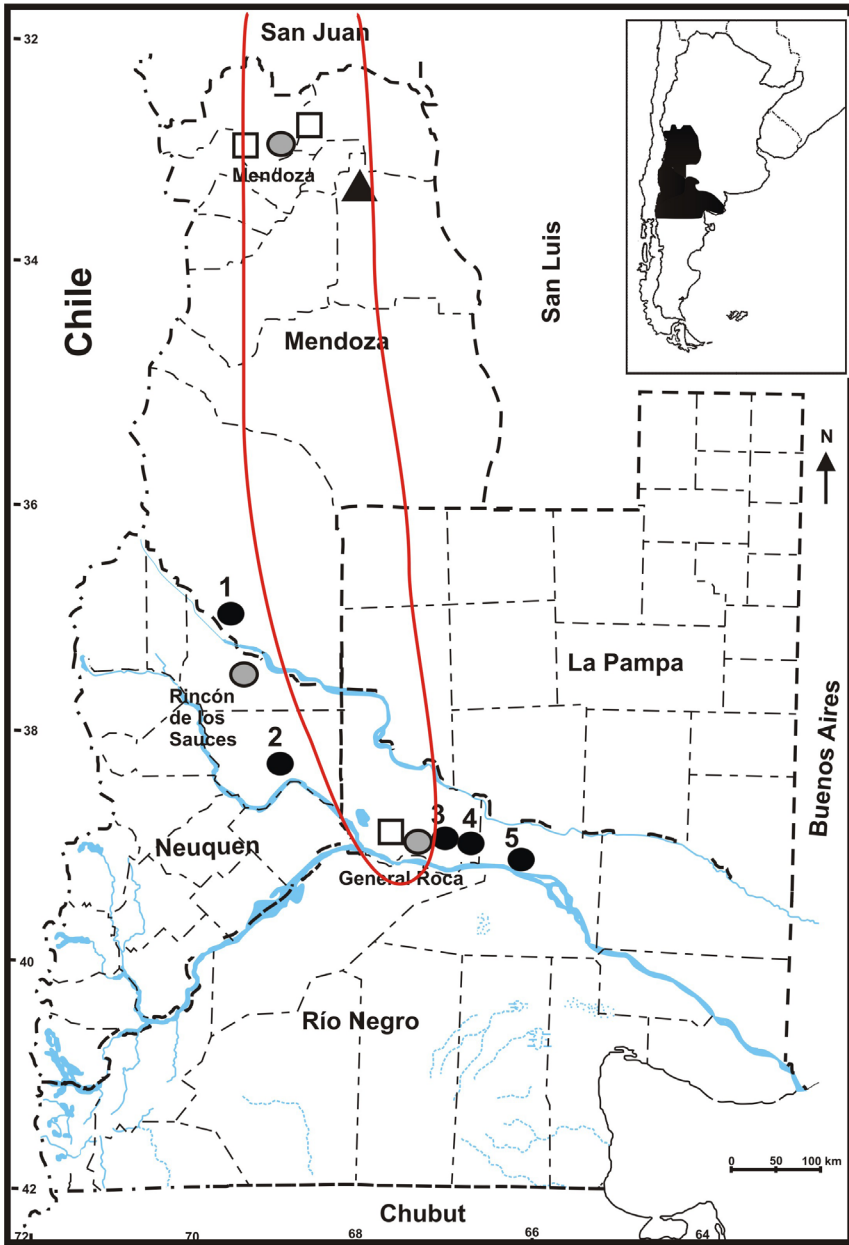


Figure 2. Type locality and new geographic records for *Leptotyphlops borrichianus* in northwestern Patagonia, Argentina. The black triangle identified the type-locality; black circles show new localities the white square identifies bibliographic records (Freiberg 1951; Cei 1986); and the red line encloses the approximate distributional limit of the species according to Scolaro (2005). Main geographic landmarks in the region are marked as reference points, excluding La Rioja and San Juan Provinces.

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