

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles.

Thomas, R. and R. Powell. 1995. *Typhlops capitulatus*.

Typhlops capitulatus Richmond

Typhlops capitulatus Richmond, 1964:2. Type-locality, "Manneville, [Département de l'Ouest], Haiti, at the north-west end of Lake Saumâtre." Type-specimen, Museum of Comparative Zoology (MCZ) 62636, an adult (sex unknown) collected by A.S. Rand and J. Lazell on 10 August 1960 (not examined by authors).

Typhlops capitulatus capitulatus: Thomas, 1965:438.

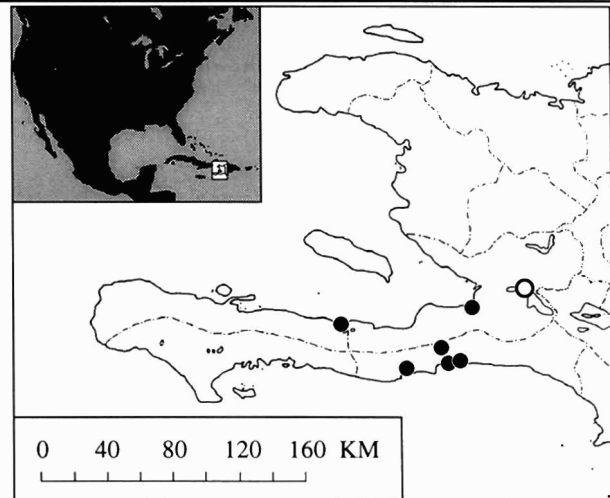
Typhlops capitulata: Schwartz and Thomas, 1975:196.

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

• **Definition.** *Typhlops capitulatus* is a moderately-sized blind snake characterized by (see Thomas, 1976 and 1989, for complete explanations of characters): (1) tapered head and a somewhat flattened, rounded to weakly pointed head; (2) rostral broad in dorsal aspect (RW/RL 0.48-0.63), clavate to oval, not flared on apex, labial margin slightly flared; (3) preocular angle 30-50°, apex round to angulate, lower portion contacting only the 3rd of upper labials; (4) ocular length about 3/4 height, sinuosity 0.30-0.13; (5) rostronasal pattern calyculate to weakly divergent; (6) postoculars 2, rarely one, and cycloid; (7) 1st parietal standard, width spanning 2 scale rows (occasionally absent); (8) 2nd parietal standard, width spanning 2 scale rows (occasionally absent); (9) TL to 267 mm; (10) TL/tail length is 29-46; (11) TL/midbody diameter 25-36; (12) middorsal scales number 358-457; (13) scale rows 20-20; (14) coloration is unicolor pale to dark reddish brown, fading slightly ventrally or with irregular midventral unpigmented areas, head pale and with distinct unpigmented areas around the mouth and vent; (15) rectal caecum present, but small; (16) hemipenes expanded (but none completely everted); (17) cranium pronouncedly tapered, width across prefrontals 77-87% of width across prootics; (18) premaxilla narrow, about 30% of width across prefrontals, not protuberant, inset between nasals in a shallow V, posteroventral edges angled forward and meeting the blade in an angular junction, blade narrow; (19) nasals elongate with no lateral angles, bordering the narial opening; (20) septomaxilla without sliver, anterior portion not tapered; (21) frontal-parietal suture V-shaped, sinuous; (22) frontal without an anterior blade- or wedgelike process; (23) optic foramen canalicular; (24) postorbital process of parietal very reduced or absent; (25) parietal without temporal ridges; (26) lappet of prootic blunt, extending beyond a very short tongue, tongue not extending to parietal; (27) supraoccipitals fused with exoccipitals; (28) exoccipitals fused with prootics; (29) angular not sliverlike; (30) dorsal process of quadrate with a pronounced hook; (31) atlantal hypapophysis tablike, 4-5 total hypapophyses; (32) hyoid with a Y-shaped basihyal having a short entoglossal process, ceratobranchials long; (33) pelvis absent or extremely reduced to small bones of indeterminate homology.

• **Diagnosis.** This blind snake may be distinguished from its congeners by the following combination of characters: maximum TL 267 mm, TL/tail length 29-46, TL/midbody diameter 46-57, middorsal scales 358-457, scale rows 20-20, and coloration pale unicolor brown to dark reddish brown or with irregular, midventral, unpigmented areas (in addition to unpigmented



Map. Distribution of *Typhlops capitulatus* (modified from Schwartz and Henderson, 1991). The large circle marks the type-locality, dots indicate other records.

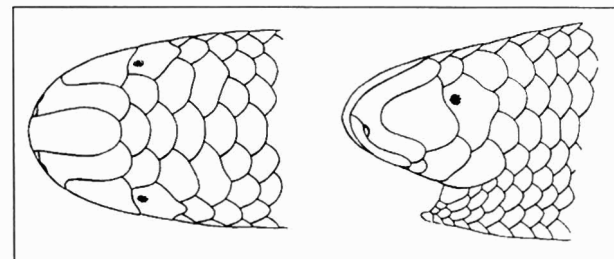


Figure. Head of the holotype of *Typhlops capitulatus* (MCZ 62636) (from Richmond, 1964).

areas around the mouth and vent), fading slightly on the venter and distinctly paler on the head.

• **Descriptions.** In addition to the original of Richmond (1964), Thomas (1976) and Schwartz and Henderson (1991) provided descriptions of the species.

• **Illustrations.** Line drawings of the head are in Richmond (1964), of a flattened rostral scale in Thomas (1965), and of the septomaxilla, the quadrate, the cranium, postnasal configuration, and the head in Thomas (1976). The latter also provided line histograms of middorsal counts.

• **Distribution.** The species is known from xeric and mesic habitats in the Plaine de Cul de Sac and west along the Tiburon Peninsula to the Miragoâne area, and on the south coast east and southwest of Jacmel. The range has been illustrated in Richmond (1964), Thomas (1976), and Schwartz and Henderson (1991).

• **Fossil Record.** None.

• **Pertinent Literature.** In addition to the original description of Richmond (1964), discussion in Thomas (1965), and the systematic treatise of Thomas (1976), the species is included in checklists and guides by Schwartz and Thomas (1975), Henderson and Schwartz (1984), Henderson et al. (1984), Schwartz and Henderson (1985, 1988), and Powell et al. (1996).

Schwartz (1971, 1980) characterized this species as a South Island form. 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.

• **Etymology.** The name *capitulatus* is from the Latin "having a small head" (Richmond, 1964).

• **Remark.** Frank and Ramus (1995) proposed the common name "Richmond's worm snake" for this species.

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