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A new species of Malagasy blind snake of the genus *Typhlops* Oppel (Serpentes: Typhlopidae)

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Madagascar is the third hottest biodiversity hotspot in the world with regard to the reptile fauna, after the Caribbean and middle-America (Myers *et al.* 2000). Moreover, 92% of the 365 described species are endemic to the island (Glaw & Vences 2007). Malagasy snakes of the family Typhlopidae are no exception to this pattern of endemism: except for the cosmopolitan, widespread and introduced *Ramphotyphlops braminus* (Daudin, 1803), all the other species of the family encountered in Madagascar are endemic to the island. The species are allocated into two genera: *Xenotyphlops* (endemic to Madagascar) and *Typhlops* (with a worldwide distribution). However, when contrasted with other tropical forests worldwide, and given the extraordinarily high rates of micro-endemism characterizing several reptile lineages on Madagascar (Yoder *et al.* 1995), the current species richness in Malagasy blind snakes is relatively low: only eight species are recognized in the genus *Typhlops* and two in *Xenotyphlops* (Glaw & Vences 2007). The opportunistic discovery of a *Typhlops*, that could not be assigned to any named taxon, close to a widely frequented research station of the eastern humid forest highlights the limited survey efforts in this region. The purpose of this paper is to describe this new taxon and to stress the need to increase field investigations in the eastern rain forest.

Material and methods

In December 2007, a specimen of *Typhlops* was collected by JPR at 20 h 30 local time during heavy rain, on Route National 45, some 6 km west of Ranomafana (village), Vatovavy Fitovinany Region, Madagascar, and 100 m from the main entrance of Ranomafana National Park. The specimen was lying on the tarmac road, unable to move normally, probably having been run over by a bicycle. The specimen died naturally soon after and was collected and stored in 70% ethanol. On 7 March 2008, Frank Glaw exported the specimen to Germany with permit number 063N-EA03/MG08. The specimen is housed in the Zoologische Staatssammlung München (ZST), Munich, Germany. Muscle tissues were sampled and preserved in 98% ethanol.

Snout–vent length (SVL), tail length including apical spine (TL) and other measurements were performed with an electronic caliper to the nearest 0.1 mm. Mid-body and mid-tail widths were measured across a horizontal plane. Longitudinal scale rows were counted at the 10th scale posterior to the head, at mid-body (approximately), and at the 10th scale anterior to the vent; mid-dorsal scales were counted along the mid-dorsal longitudinal axis from snout tip to tail extremity with rostral and terminal spine excluded; subcaudal counts include the minimum number of mid-ventral scales between the vent and terminal spine; dorso–caudal counts include dorsal scale above vent level to tail tip and do not include the apical spine. Supralabial imbrication pattern follows the classification of Wallach (1993). Vertebrae were counted from a radiograph. Geographical coordinates of localities were determined by global positioning receiver.

***Typhlops rajeryi* sp. nov.**
Fig. 1

Holotype. ZSM 1589/2008, an adult collected by J.P. Renoult on 27 December 2007 in Madagascar: Vatovavy Fitovinany Region, near the entrance to the Ranomafana National Park, 21°15.388'S, 47°25.308'E, alt.: 918 m. The

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