

Addendum to the proposal for a new generic name, *Virgotyphlops*, for the species *Eryx braminus* Daudin, 1803 (Serpentes: Typhlopidae)

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INTRODUCTION

The generic name *Virgotyphlops* was proposed by WALLACH (2020a) for the obligative parthenogenetic species *Eryx braminus* Daudin, 1803, currently placed in the genus *Indotyphlops* Hedges et al., 2014. The original publication establishing the name *Virgotyphlops* was registered with ZooBank subsequent to its publication (urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:60EB1C4F-F4C5-4449-BC6F-4733DE538C30). FRÉTEY & DUBOIS (2021) challenged the availability of the name *Virgotyphlops* based on two points, the first being a questionable fulfillment of Art. 13.1.1 of the *Code* (ICZN, 1999) and the second being lack of preregistration with ZooBank as per Art. 8.5.3 (ICZN, 2012a-b). The author was unaware of the 2012 amendments to the *Code*, explicitly discussed in detail by DUBOIS et al. (2013), regarding electronic publication of new names at the time he proposed *Virgotyphlops* (WALLACH, 2020a). This publication will assure that the name *Virgotyphlops* is available under the *Code*; however, it is still up to the herpetological community to decide on its taxonomic justification.

NOMENCLATURE

In order to validate the name *Virgotyphlops* and make it available under the *Code*, we must discuss the two issues pointed out by FRÉTEY & DUBOIS (2021). The first is that, although FRÉTEY & DUBOIS (2021) correctly state that Art. 13.1.1 requires “a description or definition that states in words characters that are purported to differentiate the taxon,” they

maintain that WALLACH (2020a) failed to do so for the genus *Virgotyphlops*. However, the paragraph preceding the new name states “the parthenogenetic nature alone of *I. braminus* warrants recognition of this species as a new genus that is separate from its most closely related snakes of the *Indotyphlops pammeces* species group.” This statement, while not explicitly stated as a “diagnosis,” clearly defines the diagnostic character of the species and new genus. *Virgotyphlops braminus* is unique among all snakes in being an obligate parthenogenetic species. The fact that parthenogenesis applies equally to both the species and the new genus should not be a reason to disqualify the character as being diagnostic and therefore not fulfilling the requirement of Art. 13.1.1.

Secondly, the failure to preregister the name with ZooBank is now being corrected with this online publication, which has been registered in ZooBank as urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:E129FB52-BBB2-40A4-87D0-8F32BA116021. The name is being proposed once again, this time with a 2021 publication date. All previous references to *Virgotyphlops* are unavailable and technically anonyms or, more precisely, atonyms *vide* DUBOIS & FRÉTEY (2020).

SYNONYMY

Serpentes Linnaeus, 1758
Scolophidia Duméril & Bibron, 1844
Typhlopidae Merrem, 1820
Asiatyphlopinae Hedges et al., 2014

Virgotyphlops gen. nov.

Virgotyphlops (atelonym) WALLACH, 2020a: 10; WALLACH, 2020b: 326–329; MIDGAARD, 2021: RepFocus website; NAHUAT-CERVERA, 2021: 85, 89, 91; UETZ & HALLERMANN, 2021: Reptile Database website.

Type species: *Eryx braminus* Daudin, 1803: 279.

Content: *Virgotyphlops braminus* (Daudin, 1803) by monotypy.

Diagnosis: *Virgotyphlops* can be distinguished from all other genera of the squamate suborder Serpentes by its triploid karyotype ($3n = 42$), obligative parthenogenetic method of reproduction, and confluence of the supranasal gland line with the caudal portion of rostral gland line on dorsum of head, interrupting the anterior and posterior rostral lines (WALLACH, 2020a). *Virgotyphlops* can best be described as a genus of miniature, unisexual, all-female, highly successful invasive snakes.

Etymology: derived from the Greek *virgo*, meaning virgin birth, and *typhlops*, meaning blind [snake].

Vernacular names: Flowerpot snake or Brahminy blindsnake.

Distribution: Due to the ease with which it can be transported in the soil of plants, the natural range of *Virgotyphlops braminus* has greatly expanded as a result of human commerce to include humid to arid climates in tropical, subtropical, and occasionally temperate regions of the world, except for South America (which it has not yet invaded). Outside of Asia, it is primarily found in domestic and urban habitations.



Virgotyphlops braminus, head.

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