

First report of the Brahminy Blindsnake, *Indotyphlops braminus* (Daudin), from the Caribbean island of Montserrat

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The herpetofauna of Montserrat includes only two snakes, *Alsophis manselli* and *Antillotyphlops monastus*, both endemic (Hedges *et al.* 2009; 2014). Therefore, the discovery of an introduced third species is important, especially when it may pose a threat to the native blindsnake, *Antillotyphlops*. Here, we report the presence of *Indotyphlops braminus*, the Brahminy Blindsnake, on Montserrat. One individual, 130 mm in total length, was collected under a rock in the Belham River Valley, Salem (16.74139, -62.21861) in late April 2017 by N. Tirard. It was preserved in ethanol and catalogued into the collection of the New York State Museum (NYSM 6453). This is the first record of that invasive species from Montserrat but it has been documented from other Caribbean Islands: Anguilla, Barbados, Grand Cayman, Grand Turk, Guadeloupe, La Désirade, Martinique, New Providence, Petite St. Vincent, Providenciales, St. Barthélemy, St. Croix, St. Eustatius, St. Kitts, and St. Martin (Powell & Henderson 2012, Lorvelec *et al.* 2016).

Indotyphlops braminus is a triploid obligate parthenogen (Wynn *et al.* 1987) with a clutch size of 1–8 (Ota *et al.* 1991). The clutch size of *Antillotyphlops monastus* is unknown but is probably similar. Given that half of the *A. monastus* population are females and all *I. braminus* are females, if all else is equal, *I. braminus* will produce more offspring than *A. monastus*. Blindsnakes generally eat ants and termites (Webb *et al.* 2001) and therefore the two blindsnakes on Montserrat are probably competing for food. Powell *et al.* (2016) listed the Montserrat blindsnake as “near threatened.” The presence of a competitor that probably reproduces more quickly may further threaten this endemic blindsnake population.

For field identification, *Indotyphlops braminus* usually is very dark dorsally, sometimes appearing black. The Montserrat blindsnake is paler dorsally, often pinkish-tan in coloration. Under magnification, *Indotyphlops* (Fig 1A) differs in head scalation (Hedges *et al.* 2014) from *Antillotyphlops* (Fig. 1B).

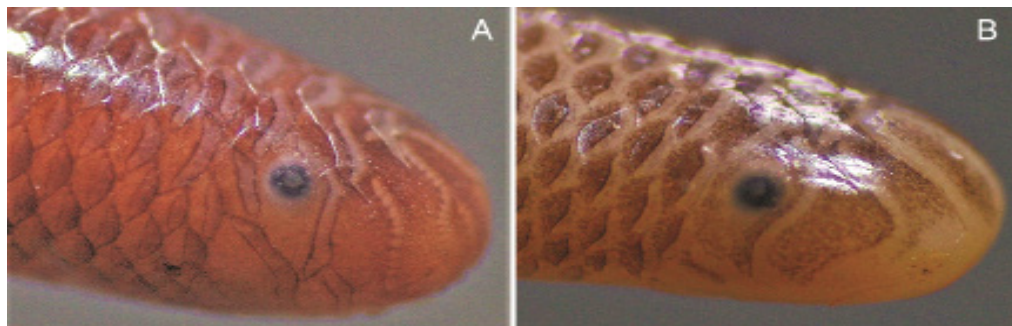


Figure 1. Lateral view of head of (A) *Indotyphlops braminus* (NYSM 6453) and (B) *Antillotyphlops monastus* (NYSM 6454).

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