

A NEW WORM-SNAKE (*LEPTOTYPHLOPS*) FROM SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

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(With 1 Text-figure)

AN examination of *Leptotyphlops* material in the Transvaal Museum, from South-West Africa, has disclosed the presence there of a slender form, in which the first or anterior upper labial is absent and which is in no way related to *Leptotyphlops labialis*, the only other form from South-West Africa lacking the first upper labial. On the other hand, it would appear to be the form referred to *scutifrons* by certain authors, who have assumed that the first or anterior upper labial is absent in *scutifrons*, in spite of the fact that Peters, in his original and subsequent descriptions of the latter (1854, p. 51; 1865, p. 261, pl. —, f. 5; and 1882, p. 104, pl. xiv, f. 4 and pl. xv, f. 4), specifically states that the first upper labial—though small—is present. Under the circumstances all those specimens from South-West Africa, lacking the first upper labial and previously assigned to *scutifrons*, are now regarded as belonging to the newly erected species described hereunder.

Leptotyphlops occidentalis sp.nov.

?*Glauconia scutifrons* Werner, 1917, *Mitt. Zool. Mus. Hamburg*, 34, 205; Mertens (part?), 1955a, *Abh. Senckb. Naturf. Ges.* 490, 88.

Glauconia scutifrons FitzSimons, V. (part), 1930, *Ann. Transv. Mus.* 14, 40 (Keetmanshoop).

TYPES. Holotype (TM. 5017) and paratype (TM. 5027) from Keetmanshoop, Great Namaqualand, South-West Africa, collected by Mr G. van Kerkhoff, on 31 March 1912.

DIAGNOSIS. Distinguished from *Leptotyphlops scutifrons*, with which it has been previously confused, and other related species, by the absence of the first or anterior upper labial and the subvertical nasal suture (diagonal in *scutifrons*).

DESCRIPTION. Snout broadly rounded and strongly projecting; rostral large, very broad in front where its width is two-thirds that of the head and three times that of the nasal shield, tapering rather sharply behind to an obtuse point, which reaches beyond a line between the posterior borders of the eyes and is in contact with the frontal and supraoculars; nasal completely divided by a subvertical to slightly diagonal suture into a small lower and a much larger upper part; no anterior or first upper labial present between the nasal and ocular; latter broader than nasal but equal in depth to same; eye visible below upper anterior corner of ocular; supraoculars slightly smaller than frontal which, in turn, is smaller than following shields; postocular vertically elongate, subequal in size to following shields, in contact with frontal above and posterior upper labial below; second or posterior upper labial about as long as deep and not reaching level of lower border of eye; five lower labials.

Body extremely slender, its diameter being contained about 80 times in total length; scales in 14 rows at mid-body.

Brown above, but with scales all paler-edged to give a checkered effect; below, lighter than above, and with scales also paler-edged.

Total length 206 (195 + 11) mm.; diameter of body 2.6 mm.; length of tail into total length 18.8 times.

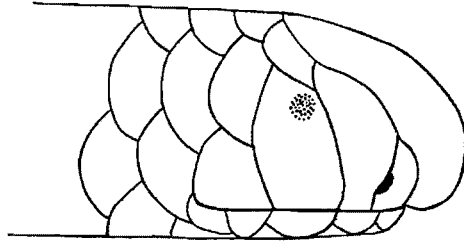


Fig 1. *Leptotyphlops occidentalis* sp.nov. Side view of head of Holotype (TM 5017).

REMARKS. Together with the paratype, the following specimens TM. 25150 and TM. 25151, from Brandkaross and Kuboos, Richtersveld, Little Namaqualand; S.A. Museum 17474 (2 specimens) from Kaoko Otavi, Kaokoveld, South-West Africa, and McGregor Museum (no number) from Ababis Nauzerus and Klein Karas agree closely with the type in head scaling, but colour varies from greyish to purplish brown, darker above than below, but with scales all paler-edged. As may be seen from the detailed tables of dimensions given below, the tail is short (its length contained in total length 18.5 to 22 times), while the body is very slender, its diameter being contained in total length 78–101 times within the series.

| Dimensions | Total length (mm.) | Body diam. (mm.) | Total length/ tail | Tail/ diam. body |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| TM. 5017 (Type) | 206(195 + 11) | 2.5 | 18.8 | 82 |
| TM. 5027 (Paratype) | 160(152 + 8) | 2.0 | 18.9 | 80 |
| T.M. 25150 (Brandkaross) | 167(158 + 9) | 1.9 | 18.5 | 88 |
| TM. 25151 (Kuboos) | 213(202 + 11) | 2.1 | 19.3 | 101 |
| SAM. 17474 (Kaoko Otavi) | 250(238 + 12) | 3.2 | 20.8 | 78 |
| SAM. 17474 (Kaoko Otavi) | 178(170 + 8) | 2.3 | 22.2 | 80 |
| MM. — (Ababis Nauzerus) | 176(168 + 8) | 2.2 | 22.0 | 80 |

REFERENCES

- PETERS (1854). *Ber. Akad. Wiss. Berlin.*
 PETERS (1865). *Monatsb. Akad. Wiss. Berlin.*
 PETERS (1882). *Reise nach Mossambique... Zoology III. Amphibien.*