



NOTES ON THE BLIND SNAKE, *LEPTOTYPHLOPS DULCIS*
(BAIRD AND GIRARD) IN NORTHEASTERN
OKLAHOMA*

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The blind snake, *Leptotyphlops dulcis*, has been relatively rare in museum collections. Not until 1926⁴ when Ortenburger listed this species from Kiowa and Harmon Counties had it been reported in Oklahoma. However, it had been known in Cook County, Texas, just below the Okla-

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homa southern boundary, as early as 1891⁵. Since 1926 other specimens have been accumulated in the University of Oklahoma Museum of Zoology from the counties of Cleveland, Choctaw, Comanche, Harmon, Kiowa, Pottawatomie and Woods. Others have been taken near Stillwater by George Moore. It was first found in Tulsa County in 1927 and again in 1928². Hugh Davis collected two specimens in April, 1934, in Comanche County. Thus a wide distribution in the state is indicated.

The largest number of specimens, 27, collected in Tulsa County, were taken by Hamon May, between April and October, 1935; he found them under sandstone slabs and frequently under a limestone boulder which had to be broken before one person could move it. While other secretive snakes such as *Sonora semiannulata* and *Tantilla gracilis* were found in abundance in the same locality, the blind snake seemed to choose the largest rocks under which to hide. Hugh Davis reported finding the blind snake in the Wichita Mountains under a huge "decomposed granite boulder," while Ortenburger and Webster in the Oklahoma Museum of Zoology records state that specimens were collected "from sand of an ants nest." Similar habitats were recently reported by Burt¹ in Texas.

When the blind snake was uncovered in capture it was necessary to dig rapidly as far as 6 or 8 in. in the soft pulverized damp soil. If a specimen got under a second jutting rock under the top soil it could always escape. As many as five specimens have been recovered from under the same boulder. No specimens were ever found on the surface. These activities correspond to the characteristic actions of those cited by Klauber³ in his description of the southwestern species, *L. humilis*.

The largest specimen taken was a female collected June 6, 1935. It was 225 mm in total length and 5.5 mm in diameter. Upon dissection it disclosed seven eggs measuring 7 - 8 mm x 1.2 mm, besides others from microscopic size to 2.3 and 4 mm in length. The largest eggs would doubtless have matured this season. Two other females collected at the same time measured 193 and 195 mm in length and contained only eggs of the smaller sizes, 2.3 and 4 mm in length, and 2.5 mm in diameter.

Scalation in blind snakes is distinctive. The number of dorsal scales from the rostral to the tip of the tail varied from 226 to 236 (average 231) in seven females examined. The ratio of the total length divided by the diameter ranged from 46.36 to 55.71. The number of dorsal scales is within the range as observed for *L. dulcis* by Klauber³, but the ratio of the total length divided by the diameter is here extended from 53 to 55.71.

Six of these snakes were kept during July and August, 1935 at the University of Michigan Biological Station, in northern Michigan, in an attempt to determine what they would eat. Many ants, termites, soft bodied larvae and earthworms were placed in the cages. Although only once observed to feed, a few ant eggs were found in the stomach and large intestines of one specimen. It is possible that the climate was too cool for them.

Those collected in September were retained in a quart Mason jar with a screen wire top, in moist soil, from time of collection until November 1 without food. They burrowed to the bottom of the jar and could be seen at the edge of the glass.

Since at the present time no further study of the species is possible, all specimens have been deposited in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass., in the U. S. National Museum, and in the personal collection of F. N. Blanchard, University of Michigan.

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