The Brahminy Blindsnake (*Virgotyphlops braminus*, Figs. 1 & 2) is the smallest and most widely distributed vertebrate, the most successful invasive herpetological species, and the most frequently introduced parthenogenetic reptile in the world (Bomford et al. 2009; Grace and Grace 2015; Mahoney et al. 2015). It has now reached at least 118 countries and island territories on every continent (except South America and Antarctica) and inhabits no fewer than 543 islands (Wallach 2020a).

Some 15 years passed from the first observation and collection of the little Indian snake, which Russell (1796) called the *Rondoo Talooloo Pam*, until it was formally described and christened *Eryx braminus* by Daudin (1803). Another quarter century passed before Cuvier (1828), realizing that boids and scolecophidians were not related, transferred *braminus* to the genus *Typhlops*, where it remained for nearly 140 years until Robb (1966) established *Ramphotyphlops* for the Australasian typhlopids with eversible hemipenes and retrocloacal sacs.

![Fig. 1. A Brahminy Blindsnake (*Virgotyphlops braminus*) from Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie County, Florida. Photographs by Kenneth L. Krysko.](image1.png)

![Fig. 2. A Brahminy Blindsnake (*Virgotyphlops braminus*) from Seminole, Pinellas County, Florida. This snake is about to shed, which accounts for the blue-gray coloration. Photograph by Kenneth L. Krysko.](image2.png)
Lack of hemipenial data for *braminus* resulted in its transference to *Ramphotyphlops* based on geography. Only eight years later, McDowell (1974) transferred *braminus* to *Typhlina* based on an earlier synonym for *Ramphotyphlops*, but it reverted back to *Ramphotyphlops* when it became known that *Typhlina* was a preoccupied genus (Williams and Wallach 1989; Wallach 2009). The molecular study of Hedges et al. (2014), which broke up the cosmopolitan genus *Typhlops* into numerous genera, resulted in *braminus* becoming *Indotyphlops braminus*. Most recently, Wallach (2020b) transferred *braminus* to a newly created genus *Virgotyphlops* in recognition of its obligate parthenogenetic nature.

The data collected for the two tables summarizing the invasions of Mexico and the USA by Brahminy Blindsnakes emanated from four types of sources: the primary literature, natural history collections, online databases, and social media. A complete listing of sources is in Wallach (2020c). Museum acronyms follow Wallach et al. (2014) except for:

### Table 1. Data on the invasion of México by Brahminy Blindsnakes (*Virgotyphlops braminus*)) arranged chronologically from earliest to latest appearance. Columns contain the state, followed by the known minimum (Min.) and maximum (Max.) elevation in meters, the first date it was observed or reported, the earliest known museum voucher, and the reference of its first verified publication.

| State                  | Elevation | First Date | Earliest Voucher | First Publication                  |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| **Guerrero**           | 12        | 1891       | ZMUC 52172       | Shreve 1938: 144                   |
| **Michoacán**          | 22        | 1913       | BMNH 1914.1.28.120–1 | Smith and Taylor 1945: 19          |
| **Sinaloa**            | 0         | 1961       | UCLA 14693       | Campbell and Howard 1962: 202      |
| **Baja California Sur**| 19        | 1963       | BYU 22441        | Murphy and Otley 1979: 119         |
| **Morelos**            | 1,015     | 1965       | FMNH 154799      | Dixon and Hendricks 1979: 36       |
| **Querétaro**          | 757       | 1971       | SAM 1185         | Cervantes and Minton 1975: 117     |
| **Jalisco**            | 11        | 1991       | UNAM-MZFC 4754   | Dundee and Flores-Villela 1991: 26 |
| **Veracruz**           | 0         | 1993       | MZFC 5480        | Mendoza-Quijano et al. 1993: 110   |
| **Oaxaca**             | 24        | 1993       | UNAM-MZFC 6009   | Mendoza-Quijano et al. 1994: 34    |
| **Puebla**             | 1,236     | 1993       | EBUAP 930033     | Eliosa-León et al. 1995: 110       |
| **Aguascalientes**     | 1,550     | 1993       | UAA-VR 254       | Vázquez-Díaz and Quintero-Díaz 2001: 279 |
| **Nuevo León**         | 361       | 1995       | ENCB-IPN         | Alvarez and Murillo 1996: 1–2      |
| **Distrito Federal**   | 2,249     | 1995       | IBH 11281        | Mancilla-Moreno and Ramírez-Bautista 1998: 54 |
| **San Luis Potosí**    | 127       | 1996       | IIZD 206         | Campillo-García 2013: 26, 40       |
| **México**             | 1,740     | 1997       | IBH 11307        | Valdespinio and García-Collazo 2000: 186 |
| **Quintana Roo**       | 5         | 1998       | ECO-CH-H 530     | Cedeño-Vázquez et al. 2003: 394    |
| **Durango**            | 1,125     | 1999       | CIIDRUD 502–3, 535 | Guzmán y Muñiz-Martínez 1999: 2   |
| **Tamaulipas**         | 82        | 2004       | UTA 53054        | Farr et al. 2013: 635              |
| **Campeche**           | 3         | 2005       | UNAM-MZFC 18282  | Solano-Zavaleta et al. 2006: 500   |
| **Nayarit**            | 8         | 2007       | UNAM-MZFC 6148–9 | Quijada-Mascareñas and Canseco-Marquez 2007: 490 |
| **Sonora**             | 229       | 2007       | UNAM-MZFC 6147   | Quijada-Mascareñas and Enderson 2007: 490 |
| **Tabasco**            | 7         | 2007       | INIRENA 678      | Paz-Gutiérrez et al. 2008: 373    |
| **Hidalgo**            | 1,308     | 2008       | CIB 2346         | Hernández-Salinas and Ramírez-Bautista 2010: 519 |
| **Yucatán**            | 4         | 2009       | MCZ Herp. Obs. 27 | Paradiz-Domínguez 2016: 630       |
| **Chiapas**            | 117       | 2010       | MCBFESI 254      | Hernández-Ríos y Trejo-Perez 2010: 622 |
| **Chihuahua**          | 1,440     | 2015       | SDSNH-PC 5274–6  | Carbajal-Márquez et al. 2015: 573  |
| **Baja California Norte** | 9    | 2015       | UABC 2205        | Valdez-Villavicencio et al. 2016: 205 |
| **Zacatecas**          | 1,902     | 2015       | SDSNH-PC 5301    | Bañuelos-Alamillo y Carbajal-Márquez 2016: 204 |
| **Coahuila**           | 1,543     | 2016       | Naturalista, 6.vii.2016 | Wallach 2020a: 78                   |
| **Guanajuato**         | 1,628     | 2018       | iNaturalist, 14.vi.2018 | Wallach 2020a: 79                   |
| **Colima**             | 15        | 2019       | iNaturalist, 20.x.2019 | Wallach 2020a: 79                   |
AUM = Auburn University Museum of Natural History, CIB = Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, CIIDRUD = Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación para el Desarrollo Regional, Unidad Durango, ECO = El Colegio de la Frontera Sur, Unidad Chetumal, ENCB = Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Biológicas, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, GMNH = Georgia Museum of Natural History, IBH = Instituto de Biología, Universidad Autónoma de México, IIZD = Instituto de Investigaciones de Zonas Desérticas, Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí, MCBFESI = Museo de las Ciencias Biológicas “Enrique Beltrán,” FES-Iztacala, MMNS = Mississippi Museum of Natural Science, NCSM = North Carolina State Museum, SAM = Sherman A. Minton private coll., UAA = Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, UABC = Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, and UCLA = University of California at Los Angeles.

The first record of *Virgotyphlops braminus* in the New World, dating from 1891, was based on a specimen collected by S. Silldorff in Acapulco, Guerrero, Mexico on 5 September 1891 (ZMUC 52172). It first was reported in the literature by Shreve (1938), and Taylor (1940) hypothesized that *V. braminus* was inadvertently transported to Acapulco by the Spanish galleon trade between the Philippines and Mexico.

It next was reported from Michoacán by Gadow (1913), and the earliest traceable voucher specimens are a pair collected in Carrizal on 28 January 1914 (BMNH 1914.1.28.120–121). In the succeeding century, *V. braminus* has been reported from all 32 states in Mexico (Table 1 lumps the newly recognized state of Mexico City together with the Distrito Federal where it was previously administered). Maximum known elevations are in Morelos at 2,620 m, in the Distrito Federal at 2,376 m, in México at 2,367 m, in Jalisco at 2,414 m, in Puebla at 2,150 m, and in Guanajuato at 2,022 m. Not surprisingly, the lowest maximum elevations occur in the Yucatan Peninsula with 3 m in Campeche, 20 m in Quintana Roo, and 23 m in Yucatán (Table 1).

Brahminy Blindsnakes have been documented from one-third of the states in the USA (Table 2). Hawaii holds the distinction for the first appearance of *V. braminus* in the USA with the importation in the 1920s of palm trees from the Philippines to landscape the Kamehameha Boys’ School (now Bernice P. Bishop Museum) in Honolulu (Fisher 1948; Hunsaker and Breese 1967). The earliest voucher was collected by W.E. Bonsey on 1 October 1927 (BPBM 1588) and identification was derived from material collected by P. Gantt in January 1930 (Slevin 1930). This snake also possesses the highest recorded elevation of 3,049 m in Haleakala.
National Park on Maui. In the continental USA, V. braminus was first recognized in 1979 in Florida (AUM 32681) and the first published report followed four years later (Wilson and Porras 1983). Since then, it has dispersed to another 15 states for a presently known total of 17, encompassing 94 counties and occurring on 33 islands (nine Hawaiian islands and 24 Keys in southern Florida).

Virgotyphlops braminus almost certainly inhabits new regions of which the scientific and lay communities are unaware. Since V. braminus is a fossorial, nocturnal, and extremely small serpentine, it is rarely observed during the day and, because it superficially resembles an earthworm, when excavated or uncovered, it is not always recognized for the snake that it is. Closer inspection, however, will reveal smooth glossy scales, tiny eyes, a protrusible tongue, and rapid movement on a surface in a wriggling snakelike manner.

Everyone who comes across one of these snakes is urged to photograph or collect it and submit documentation to an appropriate agency (i.e., museum, online database, or social media). Due to several unique features of the snout, and other characters in combination, V. braminus can be positively identified from a photograph (unlike nearly all other scolecophidians that must be preserved and have their scales examined and counted under a microscope; Wallach 2020b).

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