

***Korniliostyphlops* a new genus of Blindsnake from the island of Socotra.**

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ABSTRACT

Hoser (2012) published a review of the world's extant Scolecophidians naming numerous new tribes, genera and subgenera.

The new taxonomy was based on a scientific review of all species in light of recent molecular studies and older morphological studies involving the majority of known species.

Notwithstanding the usual howls of protest from a group known as the truth haters (e.g. Kaiser *et al.* 2013), who advised others to ignore the taxonomy proposed by Hoser (2012), other authors have in fact upheld the Hoser taxonomy, including Hedges *et al.* (2014), Rangasamy *et al.* (2014), Wellington (2014) and others.

In a review of the Palearctic and Socotran species Kornilios *et al.* (2013) found significant divergence between members of the genus *Lenhosertyphlops* Hoser, 2012, which by their estimate was nearly 30 million years ago.

As a result of this significant division and obvious morphological differences, the species

Lenhosertyphlops socotranus (Boulenger, 1889) is herein placed in a new monotypic genus *Korniliostyphlops* *gen. nov.*, formally defined and named herein according to the Zoological Code (Ride *et al.* 1999).

The genera *Trioanotyphlops* Hoser, 2012 and *Cottontyphlops* Hoser, 2012 were also confirmed as distinct (with a 19.6 MYA divergence) by the molecular data of Kornilios *et al.* (2013).

Keywords: Taxonomy; Blindsnakes; *Lenhosertyphlops*; *Xerotyphlops*; *socotranus*; new genus; *Korniliostyphlops*.

INTRODUCTION

Hoser (2012) published a review of the world's extant Scolecophidians naming numerous new tribes, genera and subgenera.

The new taxonomy was based on a thorough scientific review of all species in light of recent molecular studies and older morphological studies involving the majority of known species.

Notwithstanding the usual howls of protest from a group known as the truth haters (e.g. Kaiser *et al.* 2013), who advised others to ignore the code-compliant taxonomy proposed by Hoser (2012) on the basis of robust scientific evidence, other authors have in fact upheld the Hoser taxonomy, including Hedges *et al.* (2014), Rangasamy *et al.* (2014) and Wellington (2014).

Wellington (2014), Cogger (2014a, 2014b) and many others advised strongly against the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) plan to steal the works of Hoser and rename taxa in breach of the Zoological Code.

When upholding the validity of the new Blindsnake taxonomy of Hoser (2012), Hedges *et al.* (2014) engaged in extreme taxonomic vandalism to rename several Blindsnake genera named by Hoser (2012) two years earlier.

Scott Eipper (Eipper 2013) said of this plan: "You cannot use a viewpoint (Kaiser *et al.* 2013) - to act as a veto - to disregard the use of the code."

Dubois (2014) also spoke out against the actions of Kaiser *et al.* (2013) and Hedges *et al.* (2014).

On that basis, other authors have continued to use the correct Hoser (2012) nomenclature (e.g. Rangasamy *et al.* 2014) for the Blindsnakes in preference to the non-code compliant names coined by Hedges *et al.* (2014) for the same genera. Hedges *et al.* (2014) had invoked what has become known as "the Kaiser veto" in breach of the Rules of the Zoological Code and also international Intellectual Property (IP) Law.

In terms of the rules of the Zoological Code and its application, a co-signatory of Kaiser *et al.* (2013), Scott Thomson did in fact give an accurate appraisal of the position in a post on Kingsnake.com in 2003, where he said:

"Nomenclature is pretty black and white. There are a set of rules. Apply them, if the name is valid, use it, if not reject it. If you don't like it.... well I don't recall that being in the rules. Cheers, Scott Carettochelys.com"

In a review of the Palearctic and Socotran species Kornilios *et al.* (2013) found significant divergence between members of the genus *Lenhosertyphlops* Hoser, 2012, which by their estimate was nearly 30 million years ago.

This divergence was anticipated by Hoser (2012), when naming the (then) monotypic tribe *Lenhosertyphlopini* Hoser, 2012.

As a result of this significant division and obvious morphological differences, the species *Lenhosertyphlops socotranus* (Boulenger, 1889) is herein placed in a new genus, formally defined and named herein according to the Zoological Code (Ride *et al.* 1999).

Literature relevant to the taxonomy proposed herein as relevant to the species originally described as *Typhlops socotranus* Boulenger, 1889, more recently known as *Lenhosertyphlops socotranus* (Boulenger, 1889) includes the following: Boulenger (1889, 1893), Corkill and Cochrane (1966), Dubois (2014), Eipper (2013), Hedges *et al.* (2014), Hoser (2012), Kornilios *et al.* (2013), McDiarmid *et al.* (1999), Razzetti *et al.* (2011), Ride *et al.* (1999), Rösler and Wranik (2004), Steindachner (1903), Wellington (2014) and sources cited therein.

Of course I should make it clear that the name *Xerotyphlops* Hedges *et al.* 2014 is a junior synonym for *Lenhosertyphlops* Hoser, 2012 and therefore should not be used under any circumstance. *Xerotyphlops* has the same type species as the earlier (and proper) name *Lenhosertyphlops*.

That species is *Lenhosertyphlops vermicularis* (Merrem, 1820). The genus *Trioanotyphlops* Hoser, 2012, included two Middle-eastern species and two from Africa.

I also note herein that Kornilios *et al.* (2013), found that they diverged from *Cottontyphlops* Hoser, 2012 about 19.6 MYA, confirming the Hoser (2012) view that these species should be grouped in separate genera, as named in that paper, noting that Hoser (2012) relied on morphological and geological evidence to separate the genera and not with any available molecular data.

However the molecular results as published by Kornilios *et al.* (2013), confirmed what had been ascertained by the perfectly valid alternative scientific methods.

KORNILIOSTYPHLOPS GEN. NOV.

Type species: *Typhlops socotranus* Boulenger, 1889.

More recently known as *Lenhosertyphlops socotranus* (Boulenger, 1889).

Diagnosis: *Korniliostyphlops gen. nov.* is a genus monotypic for the species *K. socotranus* (Boulenger, 1889).

Korniliostyphlops gen. nov. are separated from the morphologically similar *Lenhosertyphlops* Hoser, 2012 by the following suite of characters: 24 scales round the body (versus 22 or 24 in *Lenhosertyphlops*); preocular broader than the ocular (versus as broad as the ocular in *Lenhosertyphlops*); snout rounded, very prominent; nostrils lateral (versus snout depressed, rounded, strongly projecting; nostrils lateral in *Lenhosertyphlops*); preocular present, being broader than the nasal or the ocular (versus being as broad as the ocular in *Lenhosertyphlops*); colour is whitish, with pale brown lines running between the dorsal series of scales, (versus brown or brownish above, yellowish inferiorly in *Lenhosertyphlops*).

Lenhosertyphlops Hoser, 2012 and *Korniliostyphlops gen. nov.* are separated from all other Blind Snakes by the following suite of characters: Snout is depressed and/or rounded, strongly projecting; nostrils are lateral. The rostral is about one-third of the width of the head, extending nearly to the level of the eyes; nasal is incompletely divided, the cleft proceeding from the second labial; preocular is present, about as broad as the ocular or slightly broader, in contact with the second and third labials; eyes are distinguishable; upper head scales are moderately enlarged; four upper labials.

Diameter of the body is 40-52 times in the total length. The tail is about as long as broad and ends in a spine. There are 22-24 mid body rows. Colour is brownish above and lighter (usually yellowish) ventrally.

Within the genus *Lenhosertyphlops* Hoser, 2012 are the species *Lenhosertyphlops vermicularis* (Merrem, 1820) (type species) and the similar *Lenhosertyphlops etheridgei* (Wallach, 2002), Both *Lenhosertyphlops* (type genus) and *Korniliostyphlops* consist the entire contents of the tribe Lenhosertyphlopini Hoser, 2012.

Distribution: Endemic to Socotra Island (controlled by Yemen).

Etymology: The genus is named in honour of Panagiotti Kornilios of Greece in recognition of his work on Blindsnakes within the tribe Lenhosertyphlopini Hoser, 2012.

Content: *Korniliostyphlops socotranus* (Boulenger, 1889) (monotypic).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This author reports no conflict of interest in terms of any material within this paper.

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