been freshly laid by a skink. Both eggs were transferred to the laboratory.

Eggs were measured with verniers calipers (Table 1) and kept for incubation in a plastic box, which contained wet soil, at room temperature. Subsequently, I found a total of 13 eggs from six different locations. In all, 15 eggs were collected within a 2 x 20 m garden plot near the tiger enclosures of the Sayaji Baug Zoo, which is situated on the banks of the Vishwamitri River, Vadodara. All eggs were taken to the laboratory for incubation under the conditions mentioned.

The area where the eggs were found is regularly visited predators such as the small Indian mongoose (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) and the Bengal monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*).

The average egg dimensions were 10.42 (9.64–10.86) x 7.43 (6.90–7.88) mm (n = 15). A total of 13 hatchlings emerged after an average incubation period of 20 (15-28 days: n = 6) days. Average hatchling length was 46.7 mm from snout to tip of the tail (snout to vent length 19.8 + tail length 26.9 mm). All hatchlings were dark brown. The scales of the upper lips were white with brown edges. There were white spots from temple region to the anterior edge of the fore limb. The belly was white. The hatchlings showed all characters of *M. macularia*.

Minton (1966) recorded gravid female of the species from July to September and young ones were observed in late July through early October. He also observed unattended clutches of eggs of the species under the piles of decaying grass at Pakistan. Inger et al. (1984) recorded eight clutches (each comprising two eggs) with eggs measuring 13-15 x 0.69-0.81 mm, all eggs found under dead leaves and rotting logs at Ponmundi, Kerala, southern India. Daniel (2002) collected females of the species, each containing three to four eggs, in the month of June. The egg size from this study is smaller than the earlier recorded egg size by Inger et al. (1984) in Kerala.

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First record of *Ramphotyphlops braminus* (Serpentes: Typhlopidae) from Gabon, western central Africa

An interview with the gardener working in the flower plantations in front of the WWF office in the Quartier Louis, Libreville, Estuaire Province, Gabon, revealed that he often encountered tiny black snakes while digging. The following day, on 23rd January 2004, he brought us a live adult *Ramphotyphlops braminus* (Daudin, 1803). Our survey (CC, BCO, OSGP) at the same locality (0°24’27’’N, 9°25’52’’E) on the afternoon of 26th January revealed three more specimens (two adults and a juvenile) in less than five minutes, indicating that the species is indeed locally very abundant. Two of the adults made use of their caudal spine to defend themselves when caught by hand. The four specimens were found in soft soil, less than ten centimeters under the surface. They were preserved and deposited at the Direction de la Faune et de la Chasse, DFC, in Libreville (2 unnumbered specimens, but accompanied with a label with locality data) and at the Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique (2 specimens, IRSNB 16780 and IRSNB 16784). The gardener himself suggested that the species might have been imported with the flower pots; this locality is also situated just a few hundred meters from Libreville’s harbour

(Port-Môle). Another specimen was found by one of us (JPB) on the morning of 11 February 2004 in the leaf litter of a garden in the residential Quartier La Sablière, in the northwestern part of Libreville. The natural soil of this garden (0°28'29''N, 9°23'46''E) situated less than 40 meters from the sea is sand, but it had been covered several years ago by imported earth for gardening purposes. This latter specimen was also deposited at the DFC. JPB had already caught an adult specimen (not preserved) in 1987 in the Quartier Quaben, in the center of Libreville. It was found among rotten paper on the ground inside a delapidated house (0°24'38''N, 9°25'54''E). All five examined specimens have 20 scale rows around midbody. Although it is clear that this species is already long established and widespread in the capital city Libreville, these specimens represent a new genus and species record for Gabon (Frétey and Blanc, 2004). On the Atlantic coast of Africa, the species was formerly known only from Dakar, Abidjan, Annobon Island and Douala (Jesus et al., 2003; LeBreton, 1999; Roux-Estève, 1974; Trape, 1990; Trape and Mané, 2002). *Ramphotyphlops braminus* is the fifth typhlopid species so far recorded from Gabon, after *Rhinotyphlops caecus*, *Rhinotyphlops* sp., *Typhlops angolensis* and *T. congestus* (Frétey and Blanc, 2004; Pauwels et al., 2002a&b; Roux-Estève, 1974). The present new records are part of the results of surveys sponsored by WWF Ecoregion Program. We thank Els Cornelissen (MRAC, Tervuren), André Kamdem Toham and Prosper Obame Ondo (WWF-CARPO, Libreville), Jean-Pierre Vande weghe (ADIE, Libreville), Lucien Obame (IRAF, Libreville), Georges Coulon and Georges Lenglet (IRSNB, Brussels), Richard Oslisly (WCS Gabon) and Amadou Konare (Libreville) for their kind help.

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