

Name _____

Date _____

Comprehension

Smallest Snake

Do you know that Barbados is home to the world's smallest snake? Yes, the tiny creature is also called a blind snake or a thread snake by the local population. The snake does not normally exceed ten centimetres in length when fully grown and has a brown or bronze shiny appearance. It is so small that it can curl up completely in a discarded bottle cap. The thread snake may be found all over the island, from St. Lucy to Christ Church, but more particularly in the rural parishes of St. Joseph and St. Andrew.

Many Barbadians are aware that their island is home to this harmless snake and were quite shocked when, in August 2008, American biologist Blair Hedges announced that he had "discovered" it in Barbados. Barbadians were further incensed to learn that Mr. Hedges had named the reptile "Leptotyphlops carlae" after his wife, Carla.

How then could Mr. Hedges be given credit for discovering this snake? Well, according to established scientific practice, the first person to fully describe a species is said to be the one to discover it and that person is allowed to name it.

Many Barbadians, including local herpetologist Damon Corrie were very much displeased by Mr. Hedges' actions. In fact, Mr. Corrie, the local expert on reptiles was the one who helped the American biologist to locate the snake.

1. Give another name for the world's smallest snake.

2. Which word in paragraph two means the same as "to be greater than"?

3. Where in Barbados are you most likely to see the smallest snake?

4. How do we know that the snake does not hurt people?

5. Who claimed to have discovered the snake?

6. According to paragraph two, why were Barbadians shocked by the announcement in 2008?

7. How do scientists decide who is credited with discovering an animal?

8. Give one word which means "type of animal".

9. After whom is the snake now named?

10. What evidence is there in the passage that shows that the snake is extremely small?
