

**SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL RELATING TO THE TRIVIAL NAME
"SIRTALIS" LINNAEUS, 1758 (AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION
"COLUBER SIRTALIS") SUBMITTED BY DR. KARL P. SCHMIDT AND
MR. ROGER CONANT**

By GEO. A. MOORE and BRYAN P. GLASS,

(*Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, U.S.A.*)

(Commission's reference Z.N.(S.)433)

(Letter dated 22nd April, 1952)

As members of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, we favor the proposal of Schmidt and Conant over that of Dowling regarding the status of the names *Thamnophis sirtalis* (Linnaeus) and *Thamnophis sauritus* (Linnaeus).

**COMMENTS ON DR. MUIR-WOOD'S TWO PROPOSALS FOR AN
EXTENSION OF THE GROUNDS UPON WHICH NAMES DIFFERING IN
THEIR ORTHOGRAPHY SHOULD BE REGARDED AS IDENTICAL FOR
THE PURPOSES OF THE LAW OF HOMONYMY**

By K. H. L. KEY

(*Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Canberra, Australia*)

(Commission's references Z.N.(S.) 530 and 538)

(Enclosure to a letter dated 7th January 1952)

I refer to the two applications to the International Commission made by Dr. Muir-Wood under the Commission's References ; Z.N.(S.)530 and 538, and published in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, vol. 6, pp. 90-94. These applications propose that the Commission should further extend the grounds upon which names differing in their orthography should be regarded as identical for the purposes of the Law of Homonymy. I am strongly opposed to any such extension.

In my view the mandatory provisions of the *Règles* relating to the formation of names in Zoology are already far too complicated, chiefly because they concern themselves with issues that are completely irrelevant to the aim of providing an easily applied, efficacious system of nomenclature. Among such issues must be included all questions of transliteration and etymology, and of the grammar of the Latin and Greek languages. It is, indeed, a serious reflexion upon the rationality of our system of nomenclature that it should be possible to devote nearly five pages of print to a discussion of whether two names of different spelling should be regarded as identical.

Unfortunately, the *Règles* as they stand provide ample excuse for such discussions. Very simple and perfectly effective rules for the formation of names could be adopted which would remove all necessity for taxonomists to waste their time on matters of this kind. I do not propose, at this stage, to make any formal suggestions along these lines, but it is easy to see the general directions in which simplification should be effected. In the first place, the rule that the Latin alphabet should be used should be rigidly construed, so as to eliminate all diacritic marks, which do not occur in the Latin language. Secondly, any difference in orthography between two names as originally proposed should imply a difference in the names, irrespective of considerations of transliteration, etymology, etc. Thirdly, the only limitations that should be imposed on an author in forming a name are that the name should be binominal, that each of the words composing it should be of more than one letter, and that the first word (the generic name) should be written with a capital initial letter and the second (the specific trivial name) with a small letter, *i.e.* there should be no mandatory provisions relating to transliteration, gender, number, grammatical agreement of adjective with noun, names based on patronymics, etc. Adoption of rules such as these would almost eliminate the vexed question of emendation of wrongly-formed names and would avoid the necessity for taxonomists to concern themselves with fine points of grammar and orthography in foreign and essentially dead languages. Each name would need to be no more than a distinctive combination of letters, preferably pronounceable, of course. Those who wish to employ Latin or Greek constructions would be free to do so, and Recommendations could be included in the *Règles* advocating that and other practices, but no question of emendation would arise from such Recommendations.

I think it is high time that zoologists gave serious attention to the merits of a simple set of rules of this kind, and perhaps no better occasion for starting discussion on the subject will arise than that provided by the publication of Dr. Muir-Wood's two proposals.

I realize that my opposition to the proposal that the presence or absence of diacritic marks should be ignored for purposes of the Law of Homonymy may appear inconsistent with my views that diacritic marks should be disallowed altogether. However the present *Règles* do allow, and indeed require, the use of diacritic marks in certain circumstances, and what I am chiefly concerned to prevent is a further complication of already complicated provisions by the acceptance of yet another category of ostensible differences between names which must nevertheless be ignored for the purposes of the Law of Homonymy.

**ON DR. HELEN MUIR-WOOD'S PROPOSAL RELATING
TO THE TREATMENT TO BE ACCORDED, FOR THE
PURPOSES OF THE LAW OF HOMONYMY, OF NAMES
CONSISTING OF SUCH WORDS AS "JAKOWLEFFIA" AND
"YAKOVLEVIA"**

By JOSHUA L. BAILY, Jr.

(San Diego, California, U.S.A.)

(Commission's reference Z.N.(S.)530)

(Enclosure to letter dated 24th October, 1951)

I am completely in sympathy with this application (Muir-Wood, 1951, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 6 : 90-92) and wish to support it.



Key, Kenneth H L. 1952. "Comments on Dr. Muir-Wood's two proposals for an extension of the grounds upon which names differing in their orthography should be regarded as identical for the purposes of the law of homonymy." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 6, 250–251.
<https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.16046>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/44304>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.16046>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/16046>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.