

*PROCYON BRACHYURUS* WIEGMANN, 1837, AND *PROCYON OBSCURUS* WIEGMANN, 1837: PROPOSED SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS (MAMMALIA, CARNIVORA). Z.N.(S.) 1640

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The purpose of this application is to request the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific names *brachyurus* Wiegmann, 1837, as published in the combination *Procyon brachyurus*, and *obscurus* Wiegmann, 1837, as published in the combination *Procyon obscurus* (*Archiv für Naturgesch.* 3 (1) : 369–370), and concomitantly to ensure that the specific names *Procyon maynardi* Bangs, 1898 (*Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington* 12 : 92, April 30), *Procyon minor* Miller, 1911 (*Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington* 24 : 4, January 28), and *Procyon gloveralleni* Nelson and Goldman, 1930 (*Jour. Mamm.* 11 : 453, November 11) are conserved.

2. In 1950, Goldman (*N. Amer. Fauna* 60 : 1–153, November 7, 1950) revised the raccoons, *Procyon*, of North and Middle America. From the West Indies he listed *Procyon maynardi* Bangs, 1898 (*ibid.*), having its type-locality on New Providence Island, Bahamas; *Procyon minor* Miller, 1911 (*ibid.*), having its type-locality at Pointe-à-Pitre, on Guadeloupe Island, Lesser Antilles; and *Procyon gloveralleni* Nelson and Goldman, 1930 (*ibid.*), having its type-locality on the island of Barbados, Lesser Antilles, West Indies.

3. In Goldman's text (pp. 4–5) and in his bibliography (revised by H. H. T. Jackson), of the above-mentioned publication, references to the early publication by Wiegmann (*loc. cit.*) are given. Following the bibliography-reference (p. 105) an annotation states: "An early review of the genus in which five species are recognized, two of these, *Procyon brachyurus* (p. 369) and *Procyon obscurus* (p. 370) described as new. Neither of these seems to be clearly identifiable."

4. Hall and Kelson (*The Mammals of North America*, p. 890, 1959) noticed the name *P. brachyurus* Wiegmann and listed it, perhaps as a synonym, under a commonly used name *Procyon minor* Miller, 1911. Furthermore, they quoted the type-locality listed by Wiegmann ("Antillae?"), and they stated that the taxon "may be referable to this species [*P. minor* Miller]."

5. Hall and Kelson (*loc. cit.*) evidently demurred to apply the rules of priority and replace a commonly used name having a precise type-locality with a long unused name having a problematical type-locality.

6. However, in addition to the description of *P. brachyurus* (Wiegmann, *loc. cit.*) there are also several other passages concerning *brachyurus* Wiegmann mentioned earlier in his publication. In fact, an earlier description of *brachyurus* is written in the introductory part of his publication (*op. cit.*, 354).

Of significance is a passage written concerning *brachyurus* also in the introductory part (p. 355) as follows:

"Sie stammen aus der Menagerie eines Hr. Boisset, und haben auf der Etiquette, wahrscheinlich nach Aussage des früheren Besitzers, Westindien



als Vaterland angegeben. Ist dieser Augabe zu trauen, so hätten wir in die Art den von Hans Sloane erwähnten Waschbaren der Antillen\*."

And in the foot-note the following is of great interest:

"\* Hans Sloane (*Nat. Hist. of Jamaica* p. 329) sagt: *The Raccoons are commonly here in the Mountains and live in hollow fiddle-wood trees, from whence they make paths to seek sugar canes, which is their chief, if not only sustenance.*"—Hierbei ist aber nicht außer Acht zu lassen, daß Sloane Ray's *Synopsis* citiert dessen Beschreibung theils aus eigener Anschauung, theils aus Markgraf's Beschreibung des *Coati* zusammengewebt ist. Das Vorhandensein einer *Procyon*-Art in Westindien ist nach dieser Quelle immer nur problematische."

In summary, the type-specimen was probably obtained in the West Indies, but writings of Sloane and Ray raised doubts as to the occurrence of the raccoon in the West Indies. We now know that *Procyon* occurs in the West Indies, and, therefore, the question-mark may be omitted from Wiegmann's type-locality of *brachyurus* (concerning *P. obscurus*, the type-locality is "in tieferes Dunkel").

7. There are two possible courses of action that may be followed to obviate the aforementioned problem. First, the name *brachyurus* Wiegmann, 1837, may be considered a senior synonym of *minor* Miller, 1911, or of a name of either of the other two taxa of raccoons inhabiting islands of the West Indies. Wiegmann's type-locality could be, then, considered as the Antilles, or restricted to any of the islands inhabited by raccoons in the West Indies. Such procedure necessitates a nomenclatural change, bringing forth a state of confusion.

8. Another course of action would involve using the plenary powers to suppress the name *brachyurus* Wiegmann, 1837, which action would preserve the stability of the currently used West Indian names, all used for 34 years or longer. The name *obscurus* Wiegmann, 1837, might be also suppressed to ensure future nomenclatural stability, inasmuch as the type-locality is unknown.

9. For the reasons set forth in this application, I now request the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:—

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific names *brachyurus* Wiegmann, 1837, used originally in the combination *Procyon brachyurus*, and *obscurus* Wiegmann, 1837, used originally in the combination *Procyon obscurus*, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;
- (2) to place the following specific names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
  - (a) *maynardi* Bangs, 1898, as published in the combination *Procyon maynardi* [holotype, Mus. Comp. Zool. 7750; type-locality, New Providence Island, Bahamas];
  - (b) *minor* Miller, 1911, as published in the combination *Procyon minor* [holotype, USNM  $\frac{38417}{15481}$  type-locality at Pointe à Pitre, Guadeloupe Island, Lesser Antilles];
  - (c) *gloveralleni* Nelson & Goldman, 1930, as published in the combination *Procyon gloveralleni* [holotype, Mus. Comp. Zool.

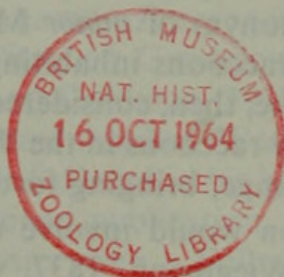


18591; type-locality, Island of Barbados, Lesser Antilles, West Indies];

(3) to place the following specific names, suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology:

(a) *brachyurus* Wiegmann, 1837, as published in the combination *Procyon brachyurus*;

(b) *obscurus* Wiegmann, 1837, as published in the combination *Procyon obscurus*.





Long, Charles Alan. 1964. "Procyon brachyums Wiegmann, 1837, and Procyon obscurus Wiegmann, 1837 : proposed suppression under the plenary powers (Mammalia, Carnivora)." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 21, 318–320.  
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