

COMMENTS ON THE USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO SUPPRESS
THE SPECIFIC NAME "VENULOSA", LAURENTI, 1768 AS
PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "HYLA VENULOSA". (AS
MODIFIED BY ROBERT MERTENS AND HOBART M. SMITH)
(CLASS AMPHIBIA)

(Commission Reference : Z.N.(S.) 771)

(For the proposals in this case see *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 12 : 287, 307—308)

(Enclosure to letter dated 11th January, 1957)

(a) By WILLIAM E. DUELLMAN

(Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, U.S.A.)

Mertens and Smith have supported my proposals dealing with the use of the Plenary Powers to suppress certain specific names and one generic name of Neotropical Hylidae, except for the suppression of the specific name *venulosa* Laurenti. Each stated that the name *venulosa* is so well known and has been so widely used that it should not be suppressed. The above authors have proposed that the Commission use its Plenary Powers to link the specific name *venulosa* Laurenti with the specific name *zonata* Spix, making the name *zonata* Spix a junior objective synonym of *venulosa* Laurenti. Mertens and Smith believe *zonata* Spix to be the least known of the other species concerned. Their proposal may be nomenclaturally acceptable, but I believe it to be both nomenclaturally and biologically impractical for the reasons given below.

2. The name *venulosa* Laurenti is well known and has been widely used only as a name, not as a specific name in reference to any known population of hylid frogs. The name *venulosa* has been applied to a group of hylid frogs now known to be a generic assemblage of seven species. The literature references are, for the most part, concerned with this combination of seven species. Consequently, the name has been widely used, but not in reference to some given species of frog, and the fact that it has been widely used can hardly be used in support of the proposals of Mertens and Smith that would link the name with a given population of frogs.

3. There is no biological or nomenclatural basis for linking the name *venulosa* Laurenti with the name *zonata* Spix. The name *zonata* Spix is based upon a specimen of hylid frog from the Upper Amazon Basin in Brazil and is applicable to a population of frogs inhabiting the Amazon Basin. The name *venulosa* Laurenti is based upon a plate in Seba that is unidentifiable with any known hylid frog. Each of the seven species in this assemblage, now known as the genus *Phrynohyas*, is well defined with a definite range and a type locality that is known to be exact or approximate. Therefore, there is no just reason for using the name *venulosa* for the population now called *zonata*, nor is there any just reason for applying the name *venulosa* to any of the other populations.

4. There is no evidence for the fact that the *Hyla venulosa* of Laurenti originated from South America, possibly not even the western hemisphere. Wholesale restriction of type localities has served no practical purpose, and in many cases these

restrictions are unwarranted to the extent that the type locality is not within the natural range of the species or subspecies. Such unmerited restriction of type localities, as would be involved in the case of the name *venulosa* Laurenti, can only lead to confusion, not only as regards the nomenclature, but as regards the biology of the species. They should be discouraged by the Commission.

5. The name *zonata* Spix is the type species of the genus *Phrynohyas* Fitzinger. The name *venulosa* Laurenti is the type species of the genus *Acrodytes* Fitzinger. (Both of these genera were proposed on the same page as subgenera of the genus *Phrynohyas*, also proposed by Fitzinger on the same page. The genus and subgenus *Phrynohyas* have line priority over *Acrodytes*.) The use of the Plenary Powers to link the name *venulosa* Laurenti to the name *zonata* Spix, thereby reducing *zonata* to a junior objective synonym of *venulosa*, would place the generic name *Phrynohyas* as a synonym of *Acrodytes*. Since neither generic name was accompanied by a description, but only a named type species, the characteristics of the genus rest upon the description of the type species. *Phrynohyas* is based upon a well-described and figured specimen, whereas *Acrodytes* is based upon the non-informative description of Laurenti, which, in turn is based upon a weird plate in Seba. The linking of the name *venulosa* Laurenti with the name *zonata* Spix would thereby bring about great confusion of the genera and synonymize the one genus that is truly applicable.

6. I believe that the principles of *nomina conservanda*, although applicable, should not be exercised in the present case, for the results will be more confusing than the present state of affairs. On the basis of the reasons given above I cannot agree with the proposals submitted by Mertens and Smith. I feel that the only way to correct the existing state of confusion is for the Commission to use its Plenary Powers to suppress the specific name *venulosa* Laurenti.

7. Few workers have become involved with this nomenclatural problem; expressions of the confusion may be found in Cochran (1955 : 55) and Taylor (1944 : 63—64 and 67, and 1952 : 799—800). The generic and specific status has been discussed at length in the systematic revision of the group by Duellman (1956 : 57—58 and 36—37).

References

- Cochran, Doris M., 1955. "Frogs of Southeastern Brazil" *Bull. U.S. nat. Mus.* 206 : 1—423
- Duellman, William E., 1956. "The Frogs of the Hyliid Genus *Phrynohyas* Fitzinger, 1843" *Misc. Publ. Mus. Zool. Univ. Mich.* 96 : 1—47
- Taylor, Edward H., 1944. "The Hyliid Genus *Acrodytes* with Comments on Mexican Forms" *Kans. Univ. Sci. Bull.* 30(1) (No. 6) : 63—68
- Taylor, Edward H., 1952. "A Review of the Frogs and Toads of Costa Rica" *Kans. Univ. Sci. Bull.* 35(5) : 577—942

(b) By **KARL P. SCHMIDT**

(*Chicago Natural History Museum, U.S.A.*)

(Letter dated 15th January 1957)

It is very gratifying to learn that Dr. Mertens has an alternative proposal to that of Duellman with respect to *Hyla venulosa*, and that it is supported by my valued colleagues, Hobart Smith and Arthur Loveridge. I strongly support Dr. Mertens' plan for the preservation and fixation of this name.

**SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSAL BY DONALD BAIRD ON THE GENERIC
NAMES "ANCHISAURIPUS" LULL, 1904 (CLASS REPTILIA :
THEROPODA [ICHNITES])**

(Commission Reference : Z.N.(S.) 1081)

(For the proposal in this case see *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 12 : 221—224)

(a) By **D. M. S. WATSON**

(*University College, London*)

(Letter dated 3rd December 1956)

I have read the article in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature* by Donald Baird, dealing with the generic name *Anchisauripus* Lull, and suppression of the generic name *Otouphepus* Cushman, and the specific name ascribed to it. I entirely agree that the procedure suggested in paragraph 8 of this paper should be adopted.

(b) By **C. C. YOUNG**

(*Academia Sinica, Peking, China*)

(Letter dated 4th January 1957)

I have pleasure in agreeing about the protection of the generic name *Anchisauripus* Lull, 1904, by suppressing the generic name *Otouphepus* Cushman, 1904; and the suppression of the specific name *magnificus* Cushman, 1904, published in combination with the latter generic name (Class Reptilia : Theropoda [Ichnites]).



Duellman, William E. 1958. "Comments on the use of the Plenary Powers to suppress the specific name *venulosa*, Laurenti, 1768 as published in the combination *Hyla venulosa* (As modified by Robert Mertens and Hobart M. Smith) (Class Amphibia)." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 13, 99–101. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.3545>.

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