

**Case 2612*****Palaemon longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (Crustacea, Decapoda):  
proposed conservation of the specific name**

L. B. Holthuis

*Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Postbus 9517, 2300 RA Leiden,  
The Netherlands*

**Abstract.** The purpose of this application is the conservation of the well known and widely used specific name *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 392) for the White Prawn, *Palaemon longirostris*, by the suppression of the unused senior synonym *Astacus albescens* Pennant, 1812.

In addition *P. longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 392) is threatened by the first reviser action of Heller (1863), who gave the name *P. longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 394) precedence over its homonym published two pages earlier.

---

1. Pennant (1777, p. 18) in vol. 4 of the 4th edition of his *British Zoology* (the first edition in which the Crustacea were dealt with by him), described two species of prawns, both in the genus *Astacus*. One was described and figured (p. 19, pl. 16, fig. 28) under the latin name *Astacus serratus* and given the vernacular name 'Prawn'. At present this species is still known in Britain as the 'Common Prawn', and is currently named *Palaemon serratus* (Pennant, 1777). The other species was named (p. 19) *Astacus squilla* (a new combination for *Cancer squilla* L., 1758) and given the vernacular name 'White', probably meaning White Shrimp or White Prawn; no figure was provided of this species.

2. In the next (5th) edition of his work, Pennant (1812, p. 25) changed his views and used the name *Astacus squilla* for the Common Prawn and gave the new name *Astacus albescens* to the White Shrimp. The description of Pennant's 1777 *A. serratus* and his 1812 *A. squilla* are word for word the same; so are those of his 1777 *A. squilla* and his 1812 *A. albescens*. All the references that Pennant (1777) gave under *Astacus squilla* were retained by him for that species in 1812, as well as the reference that he gave under *A. serratus*. The only reference under *Astacus albescens* in 1812 is to his own 1777 *A. squilla*.

3. The bibliographic references given by Pennant (1777, p. 19) are the following:

Under *A. serratus* he referred only to 'Squilla Crangon. Rondel. 547', which concerns *Penaeus kerathurus* (Forskål, 1775) (family PENAEIDAE), described and figured by Rondelet (1554, p. 547, fig.) in his chapter 'De Squilla crangone'; Pennant thus mistakenly referred Rondelet's species to his *Astacus serratus*, which thereby becomes a composite species;

Under *Astacus squilla*:

- (a) 'Cancer Squilla Lin. Syst. 1051. Faun. Suec. No. 2037'. As shown before (Opinion 564), *Cancer squilla* described by Linnaeus (1758, p. 632; 1761, pp. 495–496) belongs to *Palaemon adspersus* Rathke, 1837. The latter name is



conserved by the Commission through suppression of the specific name *squilla* L.

- (b) 'Squilla Batava. *Seb. Mus.* iii, p. 55, tab. xxi, fig. 9.10'. Pennant made an error here as the species which Seba (1759, p. 55) named 'Squilla marina, batava' was figured on pl. 21, fig. 8 and shows *Crangon crangon* (L.) (family CRANGONIDAE). The animals figured on pl. 21, figs. 9 and 10 were named by Seba 'Squilla mas et femina, ex freto Davisii' and are almost certainly *Eualus macilentus* (Krøyer, 1841) (family HIPPOLYTIDAE).
- (c) 'Squilla fusca. *Baster* ii. p. 30, tab. iii, fig. 5'. Baster's (1762, p. 30, pl. 3, fig. 5) *Squilla fusca* is known at present as *Palaemonetes varians* (Leach, 1814). Baster's name is not available as his book is non-binominal.
- (d) 'Squilla Gibba. *Rondel.* 549'. Rondelet (1554, p. 549, fig.) figured a species of *Palaemon*, almost certainly *P. serratus* judging by the shape of the rostrum.

4. There are no major nomenclatural problems with *Astacus serratus* Pennant, 1777. As pointed out above, however, it is a composite species. Pennant's description and figure are clearly based on the Common Prawn, but his reference to Rondelet shows that he also included *Penaeus kerathurus* (Forskål, 1775) in his species. Therefore to let the name *serratus* be continued to be used in its accustomed sense, I now select as lectotype of *Astacus serratus* Pennant, 1777 the specimen figured by Pennant (1777) on his pl. 16, fig. 28.

5. The valid specific name *serratus* is unanimously accepted by carcinologists, and the species is now generally known as *Palaemon serratus* (Pennant, 1777).

6. It is the name of Pennant's second species that causes difficulties. Pennant's (1777, pp. 19–20; 1812, pp. 25–26) description is as follows: 'L[obster] with a snout like the prawn [= *Palaemon serratus*], but deeper and thinner; and feelers longer in proportion to the bulk; the sub-caudal fins rather larger; is at full growth not above half the size of the former. Inhabits the coasts of *Kent*; is sold in *London* under the name of the *white shrimp*, as it assumes that color when boiled'. The fact that Pennant (1777) assigned the species to *Cancer squilla*, and his comparison of it with *Palaemon serratus* suggests it is a Palaemonid prawn. The morphological description by Pennant also fits a Palaemonid prawn, but gives very few clues as to the identity of the species; it might refer to practically any of the British PALAEMONINAE. Gurney (1923, p. 111) said that *Palaemon longirostris* is abundant in Norfolk and 'known to local fishermen as the "Jack Shrimp" or "White Prawn" '; it is caught there for bait. In S.W. France, in the area of the Gironde estuary, the species is named 'la crevette blanche' and is caught with shrimp nets (Sorbe, 1983, p. 258). Also, in the Netherlands the species is caught and used for bait. The species is thus of some economic importance and may have reached the London markets in Pennant's time. The name White Shrimp and Crevette Blanche are given to the species because, unlike *Palaemon elegans* Rathke, 'this species turns an opaque white when dead' (Smaldon, 1979, p. 36) and does not acquire the usual red colour when boiled.

7. It seems almost certain that the *Astacus albescens* described by Pennant (1812) is the same as *Palaemon longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 392), and that the junior specific name *longirostris* should have to make way for its senior synonym *albescens*. The specific name *albescens* Pennant, 1812, also is older than the names of most other British Palaemonids (*variens* Leach, 1814; *adpersus* Rathke, 1837; *elegans* Rathke,



1837). Only *serratus* Pennant, 1777, is older, but that is the only species of which we can be fully certain that it is different from *A. albescens*.

8. As the name *albescens* Pennant, 1812 has not been used for any species since it was established, it is a typical example of a forgotten name; its junior synonym *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837, has been used almost exclusively for the species for at least 60 years. Also, the other names cited in para. 7 are all well established and currently in general use, and they have already been placed on the Official List: *varians* Leach, 1814, *adpersus* Rathke, 1837, and *elegans* Rathke, 1837 (Opinions 470 (1957) and 564 (1959); *Opinions and Declarations rendered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature*, 16: 129 and 20: 337). Therefore the suppression of *albescens* is requested here in the interest of nomenclatural stability.

9. It also seems appropriate to now place the specific names *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 392) and *serratus* Pennant, 1777 on the Official List.

10. Furthermore, it is requested to place on the Official Index the name *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 394). The history of this name is in itself quite complicated. The problems started with the fact that H. Milne Edwards (1837) in the second volume of his *Histoire naturelle des Crustacés* described two new species of *Palaemon* (pp. 392 and 394) with the latin name *Palaemon longirostris*. The first of these is our white prawn, the type material of which came from the mouth of the river Garonne near Bordeaux, S.W. France. The other *P. longirostris* came from the mouth of the river Ganges in India. H. Milne Edwards (1840, p. 638) discovered his error and in an erratum changed the name of the Indian species ('T. 2, p. 394, ligne 11, *au lieu de* Palémon longirostre, *P. longirostris*, lisez: Palémon stylifère, *P. styliferus*'). The word *styliferus* probably is a grammatical error for *stylifer*, which is the masculine form of the latin word for stylet-bearing (*stylifer*, *stylifera*, *styliferum*). As, however, H. Milne Edwards did not give the derivation of the name, its spelling cannot be changed. His vernacular name 'stylifère' cannot be considered as giving the derivation, as the vernacular names in his book are not always a direct translation of the latin name, e.g. in vol. 2, p. 330, it says 'Ecrevisse commune — *Astacus fluviatilis*'. There is therefore no need to change the currently used spelling *styliferus* for the name in question.

11. H. Milne Edwards (1840) is usually considered the first reviser, reserving the name *longirostris* for the European species and giving the name *styliferus* to the Asiatic one. However this is not formally correct, as in 1840 he cited only a single name and did not mention the other, and so does not fulfil the requirements for the first reviser as set out in the Code. The actual first reviser to give the European *P. longirostris* precedence over the Asiatic was Rathbun (1902, pp. 50–51), who had rediscovered H. Milne Edwards' 1840 action, which had been overlooked by previous authors.

12. In the meantime, however, Heller (1863, p. 265) had proposed the replacement name *Palaemon edwardsii* for the European *P. longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 392). He did this 'da eine schon früher von Say beschriebene Art als *P. longirostris* bezeichnet ist'. However, Say (1818) never described *Palaemon longirostris*. Heller's statement is clearly caused by the fact that H. Milne Edwards (1837, p. 394), immediately after giving the name *P. longirostris* (for the Asiatic species), incorrectly referred to his footnote (2), which runs as follows: '(2) Say. Crustacea of the United States. Journ. of Sc. of the Acad. of Philadelphia, vol. V, p. 248'. On p. 248 of Say's (1818) publication *Palaemon vulgaris* is described, and it is clear that footnote (2) in H. Milne Edwards' text should have been placed with that species which immediately follows



*P. longirostris*. Heller (1863), evidently without consulting Say's (1818) paper, was of the erroneous belief that Say had introduced the name *P. longirostris* for the Asiatic species. Heller's action could be construed as a first reviser action, and, if so, the name *longirostris* should go to the Indian species. This would be most unfortunate, as the name *styliferus* has been used for the Indian species by all authors since 1903; it is an economically important species and is dealt with in numerous scientific and non-scientific papers.

13. In order to leave not the least doubt as to the validity of the name *P. longirostris* for the European species, it seems best to suppress the name *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards (1837, p. 394) for the Indian species.

14. No action is required for the names *Palaemon* and PALAEMONIDAE as both have already been placed on their respective Official Lists in Opinion 564.

15. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers:

(a) to suppress the specific name *albescens* Pennant, 1812, as published in the binomen *Astacus albescens*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;

(b) to suppress the specific name *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 394), as published in the binomen *Palaemon longirostris*, for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;

(2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:

(a) *longirostris* H. Milne-Edwards, 1837 (p. 392), as published in the binomen *Palaemon longirostris*;

(b) *serratus* Pennant, 1777, as published in the binomen *Astacus serratus*;

(c) *styliferus* H. Milne Edwards, 1840, as published in the binomen *Palaemon styliferus*;

(3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the following names:

(a) *albescens* Pennant, 1812, as published in the binomen *Astacus albescens* and as suppressed in (1) (a) above;

(b) *edwardsii* Heller, 1863, as published in the binomen *Palaemon edwardsii*, a junior objective synonym of *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 392);

(c) *longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837 (p. 394), as published in the binomen *Palaemon longirostris*, and as suppressed in (1) (b) above.

## References

- Baster, J. 1765. *Opuscula subseciva, observationes miscellaneas de animalculis et plantis quibusdam marinis, eorumque ovariis et seminibus continentia*, vol. 2, 150 pp. Bosch, Haarlem.
- Gurney, R. 1923. Some notes on *Leander longirostris* M. Edwards, and other British Prawns. *Proceedings of the Zoological Society, London*, 1923: 97–123.
- Heller, C. 1863. *Die Crustaceen des südlichen Europa*, 336 pp. Braumüller, Wien.
- Linnaeus, C. 1758. *Systema Naturae*, ed. 10, vol. 1, 824 pp. Salvius, Holmiae.
- Linnaeus, C. 1761. *Fauna Suecica*, ed. 2, 578 pp. Salvius, Holmiae.
- Milne Edwards, H. 1837. *Histoire naturelle des Crustacés*, vol. 2, 532 pp. Roret, Paris.
- Milne Edwards, H. 1840. *Histoire naturelle des Crustacés*, vol. 3, 638 pp. Roret, Paris.
- Pennant, T. 1777. *British Zoology*, ed. 4, vol. 4, 136 pp. White, London.



- Pennant, T.** 1812. *British Zoology*, ed. 5, vol. 4, 379 pp. Walker et al, London.
- Rathbun, M. J.** 1902. Japanese stalk-eyed crustaceans. *Proceedings of the U.S. National Museum*, 26: 23–55.
- Rondelet, G.** 1554. *Libri de piscibus marinis, in quibus verae piscium effigies expressae sunt*, 583 pp. Bonhomme, Lyon.
- Say, T.** 1818. An account of the Crustacea of the United States (Part 5). *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, 1 (2): 235–253.
- Seba, A.** 1759. *Locupletissimi rerum naturalium thesauri accurata descriptio et iconibus artificiosissimis expressio per universam physices historiam*, vol. 3, 212 pp. Janssonius van Waesberge, Amsterdam.
- Smaldon, G.** 1979. British coastal shrimps and prawns. *Synopsis of British Fauna* (n. series), vol. 15, 126 pp.
- Sorbe, J. C.** 1983. Les Décapodes Natantia de l'estuaire de la Gironde (France). Contribution à l'étude morphologique et biologique de *Palaemon longirostris* H. Milne Edwards, 1837. *Crustaceana*, 44: 251–270.



Holthuis, L. B. 1988. "Palaemon longirostris H. Milne Edwards 1837 Crustacea Decapoda Proposed Conservation Of The Specific Name." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 45, 120–124. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.598>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/44486>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.598>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/598>

#### **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>.