OPINION 1856

Lycognathophis Boulenger, 1893 (Reptilia, Serpentes): conserved

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Reptilia; Serpentes; snakes; Seychelles; Lycognathophis.

Ruling

(1) Under the plenary powers the name Scopelophis Fitzinger, 1843 is hereby suppressed for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy.

(2) The name Lycognathophis Boulenger, 1893 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy Psammophis seychellensis Schlegel, 1837, is hereby placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.

(3) The name seychellensis Schlegel, 1837, as published in the binomen Psammophis seychellensis (specific name of the type species of Lycognathophis Boulenger, 1893), is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

(4) The name Scopelophis Fitzinger, 1843, as suppressed in (1) above, is hereby placed on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.

History of Case 2877

An application for the conservation of the generic name Lycognathophis Boulenger, 1893 was received from Prof Hobart M. Smith (University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A.) and Dr Van Wallach (Center for Vertebrate Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.) on 12 February 1993. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 51: 330–331 (December 1994). Notice of the case was sent to appropriate journals.

Comments in support from Prof Hidetoshi Ota (University of the Ryukyus, Nishihara, Okinawa, Japan), Prof Ronald A. Nussbaum (Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.) and Prof Edmond V. Malnate (Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.) were published in BZN 52: 186 (June 1995). A note of support from Prof Edwin L. Bell (Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.), Dr A. Dale Belcher (Albuquerque Biological Park, Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A.), Dr Donald G. Broadley (Natural History Museum, Centenary Park, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe), Dr Joseph T. Collins (Natural History Museum, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A.) and Dr Raymond F. Laurent (Fundación Lillo, Tucumán, Argentina) was published at the same time.

A further comment in support from Prof Lauren E. Brown (Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, U.S.A.) was published in BZN 52: 271 (September 1995).

Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 1995 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 51: 331. At the close of the voting period on 1 March 1996 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes — 23: Bayer, Bock, Cocks, Cogger, Corliss, Dupuis, Hahn, Halvorsen, Heppell, Holthuis, Kraus, Macpherson, Mahnert, Martins de Souza, Minelli, Nielsen, Nye, Ride, Savage, Schuster, Starobogatov, Stys, Trjapitzin

Negative votes — 3: Bouchet, Kabata and Lehtinen.
Bouchet commented: ‘Dowling (1990) and the application itself demonstrate that the name Lycognathophis Boulenger, 1893, although in current use, ‘has appeared in relatively few publications’. Priority should apply’.

Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists and an Official Index by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

Lycognathophis Boulenger, 1893, Catalogue of the snakes in the British Museum (Natural History), vol. 1, p. 317.


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