REQUEST FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CONUS FERGUSONI G.B. SOWERBY III, 1873, UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS (GASTROPODA: CONIDAE).
Z.N.(S.) 2239

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For many years malacologists have used the binomen Conus fergusononi G.B. Sowerby III, 1873: 145, based on “several specimens collected at Panama by Mr Ferguson” for a common and distinctive species of Panamic cone shell (the term “Panamic” indicates the Pacific side of the isthmus). However, a review of the identity of certain poorly known species of Conus reveals that C. fulvocinctus Crosse, 1872: 214, described from the B. Thomas collection, “Habitat ad littora Africae occidentalis”, is a senior synonym of C. fergusononi.

2. Conus fulvocinctus Crosse has previously been considered a valid species of West African distribution (Tomlin, 1937; Wagner and Abbott, 1967). These authors apparently based their identifications on Crosse’s (1872) citation of West Africa as the type-locality. However, examination of a photograph (courtesy of the British Museum, Natural History) of the holotype of C. fulvocinctus indicates that the type-locality is erroneous since the holotype of C. fulvocinctus is a specimen of the species later described as C. fergusononi G.B. Sowerby III. The only West African species that C. fulvocinctus is even remotely similar to is C. ambiguus Reeve. There is little possibility that the holotype of C. fulvocinctus is conspecific with C. ambiguus Reeve. The following differences in shell morphology were noted in a comparison of the photograph of the holotype of C. fulvocinctus to a series of C. ambiguus (25 specimens collected from Senegal, Cape Verde Islands, and Angola). The largest specimen of C. ambiguus that I have seen or that has been mentioned in the literature was 51 mm long and most specimens are 25–45 mm long. The holotype of C. fulvocinctus is well over 70 mm long, a size that is commonly reached and exceeded by C. fergusononi. Further the holotype of C. fulvocinctus and specimens of C. fergusononi do not have the scattered spiral ridges on the body whorl and the well developed spiral cords on the spire whorls which are present in C. ambiguus. The spire whorls of the latter are marked by irregular brown flammules or blotches whereas those of C. fulvocinctus are not so
marked. The holotype of *C. fulvocinctus* has a light brown band below the shoulder. Indistinct bands such as this are commonly found on specimens of *C. fergusoni* of this size (Nybakken, 1970). While *C. ambiguus* may have irregular areas of brown on an otherwise white shell none of the specimens I have examined or seen figured in the literature have these brown areas restricted to a band below the shoulder.

3. *Conus fulvocinctus* has been used as a valid name at least twice in the last fifty years (see Tomlin, 1937 and Wagner and Abbott, 1967) and cannot be said to be a *nomen oblitum*. However, the name is functionally obsolete since it has never been correctly associated by subsequent authors with the Panamic cone shell upon which it was based.

4. The binomen *Conus fergusoni*, however, has been consistently applied to the Panamic species from the time Sowerby proposed the name up to the present time (see Abbott, 1974; Dall, 1910; Emerson and Old, 1962; Hanna, 1963; Hanna and Strong, 1949; Hill, 1959; Keen, 1958; Marsh, 1968; Melvin, 1966; Nybakken, 1970; Sowerby, 1887 for instance). Although I was not able to locate the holotype of *C. fergusoni*, Sowerby's description and figure are consistent only with the Panamic species and subsequent authors have undoubtedly identified the species correctly.

5. Since the name *C. fergusoni* has been universally applied to the Panamic species and since the revival of the forgotten name *C. fulvocinctus* for the Panamic species would disrupt nomenclatural stability in a genus already badly beset with nomenclatural problems, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is requested:

(1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the specific name *fulvocinctus* Crosse, 1872, as published in the binomen *Conus flavocinctus*, is not to be given priority over the specific name *fergusoni* G.B. Sowerby III, 1873, as published in the binomen *Conus fergusoni*, by anybody who believes those two names to be synonyms;

(2) to place the specific name *fulvocinctus* Crosse, 1872, as published in the binomen *Conus fulvocinctus*, on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology with an endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the specific name *fergusoni* G.B. Sowerby III, 1873, as published in the binomen *Conus fergusoni*, by anybody who believes the two names to be synonyms;

(3) to place the specific name *fergusoni* G.B. Sowerby III, 1873, as published in the binomen *Conus fergusoni*, on
the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology with an endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the specific name *fulvocinctus* Crosse, 1872, as published in the binomen *Conus fulvocinctus*, by anybody who believes the two names to be synonyms.

REFERENCES


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