COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED VALIDATION OF SIGANUS FORSSKÅL,
1775. Z.N.(S.) 1721
(see volume 25, pages 26–28)

By M. M. Smith (Department of Ichthyology, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa)

The authors state that the purpose of the present application is to validate the use of the alleged generic name Siganus Forsskal, 1775. However they have gone further and seek formal recognition of the genus Scarus Forsskal, 1775. This latter is an important case per se and should perhaps be treated separately.

I fully agree with paragraphs 9 sections 1a, b, 2a, 3a and 4 which validate the generic name Sigamus Forsskal, 1775, type-genus of family Siganidae, and designate Scarus rivulatus Forsskal, 1775, as the type-species.

However with regard to the choice of the type-species of Scarus, may I draw the attention of the International Commission to the following:

For many years tropical Parrotfishes were placed in the family Callyodontidae, type genus Callyodon Gronow, 1763. Scarus Forsskal, 1775 was preoccupied by Scarus Gronow, 1763 for a labrid fish until Opinion 261 published on 10th August, 1954 rejecting all the names published in Gronow’s “Zoophylacium gronovianum” (1763) validated Scarus Forsskal, 1775.

However, the choice of S. psittacus Forsskal, 1775 as the type-species is an unfortunate one. It was originally selected by Jordan and Gilbert (1882), possibly because Günther (1862: 223) indicated it as a widespread, abundant species by synonymizing it with pyrrhostethus Richardson, 1845 now regarded as a synonym of ghobban. Günther was apparently influenced by Rüppell’s figure (1828: Pl. 20) of psittacus which is obviously ghobban, but Rüppell’s description on p. 77 indicates confusion of species.

Forsskal apparently described his fishes from fresh material. The first true parrotfish on his list is ghobban which is an unmistakable fish, easily differentiated from all other species, the characteristic colour alone being remarkably constant. Not only is Forsskal unlikely to have described this species again as psittacus, but his description (copied in part by Rüppell) does not fit ghobban. The latter species for example does not possess the “1, 2 or 3 conical upper canines”.

Klunzinger (1871: 564) rejects the decisions of Rüppell and Günther, synonymizing psittacus Forsskal with forskalii Klunzinger, the latter found to be bataviensis Bleeker, 1857 by Smith (1959: 268).

Schultz (1958: 13, 29, 50) synonymizes psittacus Forsskal, 1775 with harid Forsskal, 1775. Here again it is inconceivable that Forsskal could have described his harid under two different names as the Red Sea harid has a characteristic, easily recognizable shape and colour, and stands out from all other parrotfishes. Also the specimens which Schultz described as harid were not the Red Sea species, but a related one which Smith (1959: 277) renamed schultzi.

These conflicting opinions about the identity of psittacus Forsskal, the type-specimen of which no longer exists, emphasize that the original description lacks sufficient data to determine with any certainty what species it really was. The three suggested: ghobban, harid and bataviensis are now recognized as falling into three different genera, so the identity of the type-species is important not only in relation to its own genus.

Scarus psittacus as shown above, and more fully by Smith (1959: 266–267), can thus only be regarded as a nomen dubium, and as such totally unsuitable to be validated.

I recommend therefore that ghobban, the first parrotfish (as now accepted) listed by Forsskal, be designated as the type-species of Scarus. It is a wide-ranging, unmistakable species, the fish apparently intended by Jordan and Gilbert as the type-species.

I suggest the following emendations:
paragraph 9, section 1 add: (c) to set aside all type designations and selections for the genus *Scarus* Forsskål, 1775, made prior to the Ruling now asked for; and having done so
(d) to designate as the type-species of that genus the species *Scarus ghobban* Forsskål, 1775.

Delete section 2b and replace by:
(b) *Scarus* Forsskål, 1775 (gender: masculine), type-species *Scarus ghobban* Forsskål, 1775.

Delete section 3b and replace by:
(b) *ghobban* Forsskål, 1775, as published in the binomen *Scarus ghobban* (type-species of *Scarus* Forsskål, 1775).

REFERENCES


FORSSKÅL, P. 1775. Descriptiones Animalium . . . Havniæ : 1–164


COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED RULING ON THE INTERPRETATION OF *ANOMIA PECTEN* LINNAEUS, 1758. Z.N.(S.) 1832

(see volume 23, pages 50–51)

By Anthony Wright (*Department of Geology, The Queen’s University of Belfast, N. Ireland*)

As one whose scientific research is principally concerned with a study of the phylum Brachiopoda, and in particular with the Ashgillian Brachiopoda, I wish to lend my support to the application of Dr. Jan Bergström of Lund University, that the ruling of Opinion 224 applying the specific name “pecten” to Dalman’s 1828 plate 1, figs. 6a–d, be set aside in view of Bergström’s demonstration that Dalman’s material is from the Upper Ordovician of Västergötland, whilst Linnaeus’ specimen appears to be from the Silurian of Gotland.

The specimen from the Linnean Collection must clearly be the type in view of the fact that the I.C.Z.N. has already decided that the species described by Lister and referred to by Linnaeus is to be regarded as the lamellibranch *Pterinopecten papyraceus*.

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