

OPINION 870

HIPPOCAMPUS ERECTUS PERRY (1810) (PISCES): REFUSAL TO SUPPRESS UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS

RULING.—The use of the plenary powers to suppress the specific name *erectus* Perry (1910), as published in the binomen *Hippocampus erectus*, is hereby refused.

HISTORY OF THE CASE (Z.N.(S.) 1753)

The present case was submitted to the office of the Commission by Dr. Myvanwy M. Dick in April 1966. Dr. Dick's application was sent to the printer on 22 April 1966 and was published on 16 October 1966 in *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **23** : 178. Public Notice of the possible use of the plenary powers in the present case was given in the same part of the *Bulletin* as well as to the other prescribed serial publications (Constitution Art. 12b; *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **21** : 184) and to two specialist serials. The proposals were supported by Dr. David Miller and opposed by Prof. C. Richard Robins (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **24** : 80) and the Nomenclature Committee of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **24** : 280).

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

On 12 June 1968 the Members of the Commission were invited to vote under the Three-Month Rule on Voting Paper (68)21 either for or against the proposals set out in *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **23** : 178. At the close of the prescribed voting period on 12 September 1968 the state of the voting was as follows:

Affirmative votes—six (6), received in the following order: Lemche,* Uchida, Mayr, Eisenmann,* Binder, Brinck.

Negative votes—fifteen (15): China, Holthuis, do Amaral, Tortonese, Starobogatov, Simpson, Obruchev, Jaczewski, Vokes, Forest, Melville, Alvarado, Sabrosky, Ride, Munroe.

Voting Papers not returned—one (1): Evans.

Commissioner Bonnet returned a late affirmative vote, and Commissioners Mertens and Kraus returned late negative votes.

The following comments were made by Commissioners in returning their votes:

Dr. H. Lemche (1.vii.68): "It is evident from all the comments on this case that the identity of *erectus* cannot be properly established and causes confusion. The remaining problems do not seem to need action by the Commission. I vote for the proposals except for para. (3)."

Mr. E. Eisenmann (11.vii.68): "I vote for proposals (1) and (2) (the suppression of *erectus* Perry), but against (3) (placing *hudsonius* De Kay on the Official List) for the reason given by the Nomenclature Committee of Amer. Soc. Ichthy. and Herpet., that *erectus* may be a synonym of another form than *hudsonius*."

* In part, see comments below.

Prof. E. Binder (22.viii.68): "Since authors can pretend, with equal likelihood, to identify *H. erectus* with any of several species (*H. hudsonius*, *punctulatus*, *kinkaidi*), the name is obviously a *nomen dubium* and a source of confusion and instability in nomenclature, and should be suppressed. This judgment does not depend on the real identity of *H. erectus*, it is a judgement in nomenclatorial technique, not in taxonomy, and as such it falls within the competence of the Commission."

Mr. R. V. Melville (23.viii.68): "The published comments on this case show that it is not yet ready for consideration by the Commission. It must first be made clear (a) whether *Hippocampus erectus* Perry, 1810, is a *nomen dubium* or not; (b) whether it threatens the stability of a junior synonym in general current use or not; and (c) if so, which name is threatened. No vote can properly be taken until these points are settled."

Dr. W. D. L. Ride (10.ix.68): "Contrary to Mrs. Dick's statement in her application for suppression, the name *H. erectus* Perry is in use today. But this usage is much less secure than Robin implies. Contrary to Robin's statement, Ginsburg did not identify it certainly with any particular species. Ginsburg (p. 517) 'doubtfully' placed it in synonymy with *punctulatus* saying (p. 561) that it 'agrees most nearly with the present subspecies, but may also apply to other seahorses'; later, in explaining why he did not employ *erectus* as a valid name, he says (p. 566) 'there is no means now of determining with absolute certainty what *erectus* actually represents' and mentions *kinkaidi* and *hudsonius* as possibilities. There is certainly instability here, but the name is in use and no case has been made that this instability cannot be removed by the selection of a neotype and preserving its present usage or some other. If this is regarded as undesirable then a fresh case should be made out on these grounds for the use of the plenary powers; but until the name is either fixed in usage or suppressed instability will remain."

CERTIFICATE

We certify that the votes cast on Voting Paper (68)21 were cast as set out above, that the proposal set out in that Voting Paper has not been adopted, and that the decision so taken, being the decision of the International Commission, is truly recorded in the present Opinion No. 870.

R. V. MELVILLE
Secretary

International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

W. E. CHINA
Assistant Secretary

London

14 October 1968



International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. 1969. "Hippocampus erectus Perry (1810) (Pisces): refusal to suppress under the plenary powers." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 25, 212–213.

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