Election of the Vice-President of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

The members of the Commission have elected Dr H.G. COGGER as Vice-President. Dr Cogger is from the Australian Museum, Sydney, and was elected to the Commission in 1976. His research concerns the reptiles and amphibians of Australia and the western Pacific region.

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature and its publications

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature was established in 1895 by the III International Congress of Zoology, and at present consists of 28 zoologists from 19 countries whose interests cover most of the principal divisions (including palaeontology) of the animal kingdom. The Commission is under the auspices of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), and its members are elected at open meetings held in conjunction with Congresses of IUBS or of its associated bodies. Casual vacancies may be filled between Congresses. Nominations for membership may be sent to the Commission Secretariat at any time.

The International Code of Zoological Nomenclature has one fundamental aim, which is to provide 'the maximum universality and continuity in the scientific names of animals compatible with the freedom of scientists to classify all animals according to taxonomic judgements'. The latest (Third) Edition was published in 1985 by the International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, acting on behalf of the Commission. Suggested amendments to the Code should be sent to the Secretariat.

Observance of the rules in the Code enables a biologist to arrive at the valid name for any animal taxon between and including the ranks of subspecies and super-family. Its provisions can be waived or modified in their application to a particular case when strict adherence would cause confusion; however, this must never be done by an individual but only by the Commission, acting on behalf of all zoologists. The Commission takes such action in response to proposals submitted to it; applications should follow the instructions on the inside back cover of the Bulletin, and assistance will be given by the Secretariat.

The Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature is published four times each year. It contains applications for Commission action, as described above; their publication is an invitation for any person to contribute comments or counter-suggestions, which may also be published. The Commission makes a ruling (called an Opinion) on a case only after a suitable period for comments. All Opinions are published in the Bulletin, which also contains articles and notes relevant to zoological nomenclature; such contributions may be sent to the Secretariat.

The Commission's rulings are summarised in The Official Lists and Indexes of Names and Works in Zoology; a single volume covering the period 1895–1985 was published in 1987, and a free supplement covering 1986–1988 was issued in 1989. Copies may be obtained from the Secretariat.
In addition to dealing with applications and other formal matters, the Commission’s Secretariat is willing to help with advice on any question which may have nomenclatural (as distinct from purely taxonomic) implications.

The International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature is a charity (non-profit making company) registered in the U.K. The Secretariat of the Commission is at present based in London, and the Trust is established there for legal reasons to handle the financial affairs of the Commission. The sale of publications (Code, Bulletin and Official Lists and Indexes) covers only part of the costs of the service given to zoology by the Commission. Support is given by academies, research councils, associations and societies from a number of countries, and also by individuals, but despite this assistance the level of income remains a severe restraint and donations to the Trust are gratefully received.

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