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1. In Opinion 1604 (June 1990; BZN 47: 166–167) the caecilian generic name Epicrium Wagler, 1828 was suppressed in order that the derived family-group name Epicriidae Fitzinger, 1843 should not stand as a senior synonym of the widely accepted Ichthyophiidae Taylor, 1968. However, Prof Alain Dubois (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris) subsequently pointed out (BZN 48: 152–154) that Epicrium was a valid genus with its own type species, and not, as had been supposed, a replacement name for Ichthyophis Fitzinger, 1826. I accordingly proposed (BZN 48: 154–155) that the suppression of Epicrium should be revoked, and that Ichthyophiidae be given precedence over Epicriidae Fitzinger. The latter proposal reflects the views expressed by Wilkinson & Nussbaum (BZN 45: 207–209) and Smith (BZN 46: 134) but not by Dubois (BZN 48: 153–154); however, Prof Dubois has since suggested that Epicriidae Fitzinger should be rejected because it is a junior homonym (see below).

2. Dr P.T. Lehtinen and Prof R. Schuster mentioned (BZN 47: 166) that the name Epicriidae Berlese, 1855 (p. 129) is in use for a family of mesostigmatid mites, and is a junior homonym of the unused Epicriidae Fitzinger, 1843. The type genus of the mite family is Epicrius Canestrini & Fanzago, 1877 (p. 131); this was proposed for the species E. geometricus, which is a subjective synonym of Gamasus mollis Kramer, 1876 (p. 82). Prof Dubois (in litt., November 1991) has given a list (prepared by Dr Michel Naudo of the Laboratoire de Zoologie (Arthropodes), Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris) of 20 references using Epicriidae Berlese at family or superfamily rank; these include André (1949), Baker & Wharton (1968), Krantz (1970), Trägårdh (1942) and Woolley (1988). It is evident that this family name should be conserved, and the simplest way of doing this is to take the whole name of Epicrium as the stem so that Fitzinger’s amphibian name would become Epicriumidae; it is unlikely to be used at family rank, as pointed out by Smith (BZN 48: 336). The spelling in proposals (1)(b) and (4)(b) on BZN 48: 155 should be amended accordingly.

3. Two further points remain. The first concerns the type species of Epicrium Wagler, 1828. As I reported on BZN 48: 154, Wagler originally published two specific names in association with Epicrium, i.e. hypocyana ‘Hasselt’ (with a reference given to Boie, 1827) and his new name hasseltii, and made it clear that these were for the same species, based on van Hasselt’s specimen. No reason was given for the proposal of hasseltii. Strictly speaking, Epicrium thus contained one taxonomic but two nominal species, the names of which are objective synonyms. On BZN 48: 153 (para. 3) Prof
Dubois gave *E. hasseltii* as the type by monotypy, while on p. 155 I stated the same for *Caecilia hypocyana* Boie, 1827. The latter is the valid name, and I now propose that *C. hypocyana* be designated the type species.

4. The second point concerns the spelling of *Ichthyophiidae* Taylor, 1968. It has always been spelled in this way, and was so placed on the Official List in Opinion 1604. On BZN 48: 335–336 Prof. H.M. Smith suggested that the correct spelling should be *Ichthyophiidae*, since in Attic (Athenian) Greek the genitive of *ophis* (= snake) was *opheos*. Cannatella (1990) pointed out, however, that in other major dialects (e.g. Doric and Ionic) of Greek the genitive *ophios* was used, and that the Code (Article 11b(iv) and Glossary) does not distinguish between dialects of ‘ancient Greek’. There are many family-group names spelled *-OPHIIDAe* which are based on generic ones ending in *-ophis*, and it would be very destabilizing to change them (with varying degrees of acceptance in the literature) to the form *-OPHIDAE*.

5. In addition to the proposals on BZN 48: 155 the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is asked:

1. to use its plenary powers to rule that for the purposes of Article 29 the stem of the generic name *Epicrium* Wagler, 1828 is *EPICRiUM*;

2. to designate *Caecilia hypocyana* Boie, 1827 as the type species of *Epicrium* Wagler, 1828;

3. to amend the proposals on BZN 48: 155 to conform with those above;

4. to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Epicrius* Canestrini & Fanzago, 1877 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy *Epicrius geometricus* Canestrini & Fanzago, 1877 (a junior subjective synonym of *Gamasus mollis* Kramer, 1876);

5. to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *mollis* Kramer, 1876, as published in the binomen *Gamasus mollis* (senior subjective synonym of *Epicrius geometricus* Canestrini & Fanzago, 1877, the type species of *Epicrius* Canestrini & Fanzago, 1877);

6. to place on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology the name *EPICRIIDAE* Berlese, 1885 (type genus *Epicrius* Canestrini & Fanzago, 1877);

7. to confirm that the original spelling of *ICHTHYOPHIIDAE* Taylor, 1968 is correct.

Additional references


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