Case 2806

Zanclea costata Gegenbaur, 1856 (Cnidaria, Hydrozoa): proposed conservation of both generic and specific names

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the generic and specific names of Zanclea costata Gegenbaur, 1856, familiar in the nomenclature of hydroids and hydromedusae. The names are threatened by the unused or seldom-used senior subjective synonyms Acrochordium Meyen, 1834, and Mnestra and M. parasites, both of Krohn (1853).

1. Meyen (1834, p. 165, pl. 28, fig. 8) established the new generic and specific names Acrochordium album for a hydroid found on pelagic Sargassum natans in the vicinity of the Azores. The generic name was considered to be a junior synonym of Coryne Gaertner, 1774 (p. 40) by J.L. R. Agassiz (1862, p. 185), Bedot (1905, p. 40) and Stechow (1923, p. 36). Acrochordium has not been used as valid since it was founded.

2. I re-examined the original description of Acrochordium album Meyen, 1834 and noted (Calder, 1988, p. 69) that it is a stolonal athecate hydroid with numerous capitate tentacles scattered over an elongate hydranth. Based on the description and illustrations provided by Meyen I concluded that it was congeneric with Zanclea Gegenbaur, 1856 (p. 229), rather than with Coryne Gaertner, 1774, and possibly conspecific with Zanclea costata Gegenbaur, 1856 (p. 229, pl. 8, fig. 4), the type species of Zanclea by monotypy. The name Z. costata was based on a medusa from the Mediterranean.

3. The infrequently used generic name Mnestra was established by Krohn (1853, p. 281) for the single species Mnestra parasites Krohn, 1853 (p. 281), also from the Mediterranean. This name was based on a medusa now known to have been deformed through parasitization by juvenile stages of the nudibranch mollusc Phylliroe bucephala Péron & Lesueur, 1810 (see Ankel, 1952, p. 118 and Rees, 1953, p. 219; Krohn thought, incorrectly, that the medusa was parasitic on the mollusc). Krohn's taxon is regarded as conspecific with Zanclea costata Gegenbaur, 1856 (see Rees, 1953, p. 221; Picard, 1957, p. 6; Martin & Brinckmann, 1963, p. 207; Bouillon, 1985, p. 121). Although valid under the Code, the name Mnestra parasites has always been used in the context of parasitized medusae. Both the generic name Mnestra and the specific name parasites have been unused as valid since Kramp (1961, p. 53) noted that M. parasites was 'probably identical' with Zanclea costata.

4. The generic name Zanclea Gegenbaur, 1856 has been extensively used in the nomenclature of both hydroids and hydromedusae for more than a century (see, for example, J.L.R. Agassiz, 1862, p. 344; Bouillon, 1985, p. 121; Calder, 1988, p. 69; His
Majesty the Showa Emperor Hirohito, 1988, p. 61; Petersen, 1990, p. 141). A representative list of five additional important works in which the name has been used, published between 1953–1991, is held by the Commission Secretariat (these works also include references to the widely used specific name costata Gegenbaur, 1856). The family name ZANCLEIDAE, established by Russell (1953, p. 98), is also currently in widespread use. Replacement of Zanclea with either of the little-known earlier subjective synonyms Acrochordium Meyen, 1834 or Mnestra Krohn, 1853 would cause considerable disturbance to hydrozoan nomenclature. I propose that the latter two names be suppressed.

5. Picard (1957, p. 6, footnote) recognized that the names Mnestra and M. parasites, both of Krohn (1853), had priority over Zanclea and costata but adopted Gegenbaur’s (1856) names in the expectation that the Commission would not allow Zanclea and costata to be abandoned. However, Picard never submitted a case to the Commission to settle the matter.

6. In addition to Mnestra parasites, I have previously discussed (Calder, 1988, p. 70) three other possible senior subjective synonyms of Zanclea costata: Acrochordium album Meyen, 1834, Coryne sessilis Gosse, 1853 (p. 208, pl. 14, figs. 1–3) and Tubularia implexa Alder, 1856 (p. 439). The name T. implexa Alder (December 1856) is now known to have been published later than Z. costata Gegenbaur (July 1856); moreover, there is evidence suggesting that it is a different species (see Rees & Roa, 1966). Taxonomic questions remain about Z. alba (Meyen), Z. sessilis (Gosse) and Z. implexa (Alder), however, and the relationships of these three to Z. costata Gegenbaur are unsettled. In discussing the genus Petersen (1990, p. 141) concluded that ‘the delimitation of Zanclea species is presently in a state of chaos’. Accordingly, I consider it inadvisable to request the suppression of specific names other than parasites in this case.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the following names for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy:
   (a) the generic names:
      (i) Acrochordium Meyen, 1834;
      (ii) Mnestra Krohn, 1853;
   (b) the specific name parasites Krohn, 1853, as published in the binomen Mnestra parasites;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name Zanclea Gegenbaur, 1856 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy Zanclea costata Gegenbaur, 1856;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name costata Gegenbaur, 1856 (specific name of the type species of Zanclea Gegenbaur, 1856);

(4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
   (a) Acrochordium Meyen, 1834, as suppressed in (1)(a)(i) above;
   (b) Mnestra Krohn, 1853, as suppressed in (1)(a)(ii) above;

(5) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name parasites Krohn, 1853, as published in the binomen Mnestra parasites and as suppressed in (1)(b) above.
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