

CAPYS HEWITSON (1865), (LEPIDOPTERA, LYCAENIDAE),
PROPOSED CONSERVATION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS:
A RESTATEMENT OF THE CASE. Z.N.(S.)1748

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In October 1966 (*Bull. zool. Nom.*, vol. 23, pp. 165–166) an application to the Commission was published by the late N. D. Riley, 'Scoptes Hübner 1819 V. Capys Hewitson 1864 (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE), a case of a forgotten name'. No comment was received concerning this application, but shortly afterwards, article 23b, the article implicated in the application, was the subject of an investigation by a special committee appointed by the Council of the Commission. No further action was taken by the Commission on Riley's application.

2. In his original application, Riley did not formulate proposals for action by the Commission. In a comment supporting the four outstanding requests affecting butterfly generic names, C. F. Cowan (*Bull. zool. Nom.*, vol. 30, pp. 133–134) laid before the Commission proposals for concluding the application, and these are now incorporated into the present text.

3. Hübner [1819], in his well known *Verzeichnis bekannter Schmetterlinge* introduced the generic name *Scoptes* (p. 111) for a heterogeneous group of three species which he called *Scoptes alpheus* Cram, 182, E.F.; *S. protumnus* Linn. Syst. Pap. 258; and *S. crotopus* Cram. 390. G.H. In the same work Hübner also placed *protumnus* (under its synonym *petalus* Cram, 243. C.D.) in his new genus *Thestor* (l.c. p. 73) and *crotopus* in his new genus *Euselasia* (l.c. p. 24).

4. In 1864 Hewitson (*Ill. Diurn. Lep.*, vol. 1, p. 59) introduced the generic name *Capys* and included in it one species only, namely *Papilio alpheus* Cramer, which automatically became its type species by monotypy.

5. Five years later Butler (1869, *Cat. Diurn. Lep. Fabricius Brit. Mus.*, p. 176) in a footnote to *Scoptes* Hübner, adds 'Capys of Hewitson'. Butler in this work refers only one species, namely *Alpheus* Cramer, to *Scoptes* but makes no statement at all as to whether or not he regarded *alpheus* as the type species of *Scoptes*. His action cannot be construed as fixing *alpheus* as the type species of *Scoptes*.

6. Scudder in 1875 (*Proc. American Acad. Arts Sci. Boston*, vol. 10, p. 267) in his *Sketch of the Generic Names of the Butterflies*, recited these facts, but did not select a type species for *Scoptes*, considering, for reasons that no longer hold good, that this was unnecessary.

7. Riley was unable to discover any subsequent action by any author that could possibly be accepted as fixing the type species of *Scoptes*, and could only find two other quotations of the name in the whole of the subsequent literature. The first is by Kirby (1871, *Syn. Cat. Diurn. Lep.*, p. 337) who quotes it as a synonym of *Axiocerses* Hübner (1819, l.c., p. 72); the second by Aurivillius (1898, *Rhop. Aeth.*, p. 335, 337) who treats it as a partial synonym of both *Capys* Hewitson and *Leptomyrina* Butler 1898, to both of which it is considerably senior.

8. The question at issue therefore is to decide which of the three nominal species originally included in *Scoptes* by Hübner should be selected as its type species, bearing in mind the desirability of causing the least possible disturbance to the other generic names involved.

9. If *crotopus* is selected, then *Scoptes* becomes a subjective synonym of *Euselasia*, one of the better known genera of RIODINIDAE, and a first reviser choice becomes necessary as between these two names, since according to Hemming (1937, Hübner, vol. 2, p. 198, 253) both these Hübnerian names were published 'early in 1819'; and in all probability a certain amount of taxonomic research would also be necessary.

10. If *protumnus* is selected, then *Scoptes* becomes an objective synonym of *Thestor*, which has *protumnus* as its type species and is a very well-known Lycaenid generic name, already the subject of considerable misuse. Here again, and for precisely the same reason, a first reviser choice would be necessary.

11. If *alpheus* is selected, then, *Scoptes* becomes an objective senior synonym of *Capys* Hewitson, which also has *alpheus* as its type species and is the current name, and has been for 100 years, for a well known genus of South African Lycaenidae.

12. Whichever of these courses is adopted there will be a risk of disturbance of long accepted practice (first and second choices), or an actual disturbance (third choice). As the consequences of the latter may be avoided by the Commission acting under its plenary powers, the Commission is hereby requested:

(1) to use its plenary powers:

(a) to set aside all type species designations for the nominal genus *Scoptes* Hübner [1819], and having done so to nominate *Papilio alphaeus* Cramer [1777], (*Uitl. Kapellen*, vol. 2 (16), p. 31, pl. 182, figs. E.F.) as type species of that genus:

(b) to suppress the generic name *Scoptes* Hübner, [1819], for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;

(2) to place the generic name *Capys* Hewitson (1865) (gender masculine), type species, by monotypy, *Papilio alpheus* Cramer, [1777], on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;

- (3) to place the specific name *alpheus* Cramer, [1777], as published in the binomen *Papilio alpheus* (type species of *Capys* Hewitson (1865)), on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;
- (4) to place the generic name *Scoptes* Hübner [1819], and as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.

A list of ten references to the use of *Capys* Hewitson, 1864 by five different authors within the last fifty years is held at the Commission's office.



Penrose, A. 1984. "Capys Hewitson (1865), (Lepidoptera, Lycaenidae), proposed conservation under the plenary powers: a restatement of the case. Z. N. (S.) 1748." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 41, 119–121.

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