Case 3239

Geostiba Thomson, 1858 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, the prevailing usage of the generic name Geostiba Thomson, 1858 for a widespread and well-known genus of Holarctic and Oriental rove beetles (family Staphylinidae, subfamily Aleocharinae). The name is threatened by very limited use since 1952 of the senior objective synonym, Evanystes Gistel, 1856.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Staphylinidae; Aleocharinae; Geostiba; Geostiba circellaris; rove beetles; Holarctic; Oriental.

1. Gistel (1856, p. 387) established a genus of rove beetles (now placed in family Staphylinidae, subfamily Aleocharinae) and named it Evanystes. He included eight nominal species in the genus, among them Evanystes circellaris (Gravenhorst, 1806). This name was originally published in the binomen Aleochara circellaris Gravenhorst, 1806 (p. 155). Gistel did not designate a type species for the genus Evanystes. Blackwelder (1952, p. 163) subsequently designated Aleochara circellaris Gravenhorst, 1806 as the type species of Evanystes and listed Evanystes as the senior synonym of Geostiba Thomson, 1858.

2. Thomson (1858, p. 33) established a rove beetle genus and named it Geostiba. He included only one nominal species, Homalota circellaris, in the genus. Although he did not cite the author of this name, Thomson clearly had in mind Aleochara circellaris Gravenhorst, 1806, which has been accepted by subsequent authors as the type species by monotypy of Geostiba (see Article 67.7).

3. Although the name Evanystes is a senior objective synonym of Geostiba, it is the name Geostiba that has had prevailing usage. To the best of my knowledge, the name Evanystes was not used after its original publication until Blackwelder (1952) designated the type species of Evanystes. Since Blackwelder (1952) the name Evanystes has had some limited use in Eastern Europe, mostly by L. Adam and his colleagues (e.g. Adam, 1996).

4. On the other hand, the name Geostiba has been used by more than 10 authors in more than 25 works (e.g. Pace, 1977; Seevers, 1978; Lohse & Smetana, 1988; Zerche, 1988; Assing & Wunderle, 1996; Assing, 1999; other records of use have been submitted to the Commission Secretariat). A search of the Zoological Record database for the years 1978–2001 produced 39 papers by 16 authors who used the name Geostiba as a valid name.

5. The Code seeks to preserve the stability of established names by ensuring that a younger name in prevailing usage is not displaced by an older but little used name.
(see Article 23.2). However Article 23.9.1 cannot be automatically applied in the present case as the senior synonym, *Evanystes*, has been used as the valid name for this group of rove beetles by Blackwelder (1952) and a few others.

6. The genus *Geostiba* currently includes about 350 species and subspecies, which are distributed in the Holarctic and Oriental regions. In this situation, strict application of the Principle of Priority and use of the senior synonym *Evanystes* over the junior name *Geostiba* would greatly destabilize staphylinid nomenclature.

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

1. to use its plenary power to suppress the generic name *Evanystes* Gistel, 1856 for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
2. to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Geostiba* Thomson, 1858 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy *Aleochara circellaris* Gravenhorst, 1806;
3. to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *circellaris* Gravenhorst, 1806, as published in the binomen *Aleochara circellaris* (specific name of the type species of *Geostiba* Thomson, 1858);
4. to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Evanystes* Gistel, 1856, as suppressed in (1) above.

Acknowledgements
I thank Lee H. Herman (American Museum of Natural History, New York) and Izyaslav M. Kerzhner (Zoological Institute, St. Petersburg) for their comments. This work was supported by National Science Foundation P.E.E.T. grants DEB-9521755 and DEB-9978110 to Steve Ashe, and by the Russian research program “Universities of Russia (project 07.01.056)”.

References

Acknowledgement of receipt of this application was published in BZN 59: 70.

Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).

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