Case 2637

*Buthus* vittatus (currently *Centruroides* vittatus; Arachnida, Scorpionida): proposed recognition of Wood (1863) as author of the specific name and designation of a neotype, and *Centrurus* hentzi (currently *Centruroides* hentzi) Banks, 1904: proposed conservation of the specific name

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the stabilization of names of North American scorpions which have in the past been misidentified. Say (1821) is commonly cited as the author of *Centruroides* vittatus, a Texas species, but he gave the name *vittatus* to the Florida scorpion now known as *C*. *hentzi* Banks, 1904. The Texas species was described by H. C. Wood (1863), who misidentified it as *Scorpio carolinianus* Beauvois, 1805 and gave *Buthus* vittatus Say in synonymy.

1. Say (1821, p. 61) described *Buthus* vittatus from the coastal islands of Georgia and Florida. Supposedly deposited in the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, the types of *Buthus* vittatus cannot be located (Dr A. E. Bogan, Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, pers. comm.). Say apparently took them with him to a commune in New Harmony, Indiana, where they were destroyed by fire (Ms E. Benamy, Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, pers. comm.).

2. Wood (1863, p. 363), thinking that he was dealing with *Scorpio carolinianus* Palisot de Beauvois, 1805, listed *Buthus* vittatus Say, 1821 as a junior synonym of *Buthus carolinianus*. Wood was describing specimens of a new species from Texas and had never seen specimens of *S. carolinianus* or *B. vittatus*. While Pocock (1902, p. 24) recognized that Wood had misidentified the Texas species by referring it to *Scorpio carolinianus*, he (p. 25), Ewing (1928, p. 19) and Comstock (1940, p. 27) continued to recognize the Texas species as *Centruroides* vittatus (Say, 1821), a much less apparent misidentification.

3. Although lacking several important taxonomic characters, the original description of *B. vittatus* Say, 1821 is sufficient to determine the identity of the taxon. The fact that Say had collected the type series from the coastal islands of southern Georgia and northern Florida further indicates that he had described the taxon currently known as *Centruroides hentzi* (Banks, 1904), as this is the only species which occurs in that area. The taxon presently recognized as *Centruroides* vittatus is rarely found east of the Mississippi River and certainly is not indigenous to Florida or Georgia.
4. Banks (1904, p. 142) described *Centrurus hentzi* from Florida. The name *hentzi*, in combination with *Centrurus* or *Centruroides*, is that in use for this scorpion, and a list of 13 representative references has been given to the Commission Secretariat. The name *vittatus* Say, 1821 has not been used for the species by authors of recent times who have distinguished the Texas and Florida taxa.

5. The name *vittatus* (with Say, 1821 being cited as the author) has been applied to the Texas species, in combination with *Centrurus* or *Centruroides*, in a very large number of papers: a list of 50 references between 1888 and 1987 and a detailed account are held by the Commission Secretariat.

6. Following the Principle of Priority strictly, *vittatus* Say, 1821 is the senior subjective synonym of *hentzi* Banks, 1904, and the Texas species currently known as *vittatus* should be referred to by its otherwise oldest synonym (*Centruroides chisosarius* Gertsch, 1939, now considered to be merely a color variant of *vittatus* sensu Wood). These changes would greatly upset stability and create confusion.

7. According to the guidelines given in Article 79 of the Code, accepted usage clearly does not warrant the application now of *vittatus* Say, 1821 to the Florida taxon, and *hentzi* Banks, 1904 should continue to be treated as the valid specific name. Usage of the name *vittatus* warrants its continued application to the Texas scorpion. Thus, there is a conflict between the need to suppress *vittatus* Say, 1821 to allow the continued use of *hentzi* Banks, 1904, and the retention of the name *vittatus* for the Texas species.

8. Since the species currently called *vittatus* is different from that so named by Say (1821), and Say’s types have long been destroyed, we propose that the authorship of *Buthus vittatus* be attributed to Wood (1863), since it was he who first described the taxon and applied the name to it (although in erroneous synonymy with *B. carolinianus*). There are specimens in the U.S. National Museum which may have been labelled by Wood, but their type status is doubtful and they are poorly preserved and difficult to recognize. We propose the designation of a neotype of *B. vittatus* sensu Wood.

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

   (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the name *vittatus* Say, 1821, as published in the binomen *Buthus vittatus*, and all uses of that name before that by Wood (1863), for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;
   
   (2) to use its plenary powers to rule that the name *vittatus* Wood, 1863, as published in the binomen *Buthus vittatus*, is an available name;
   
   (3) to use its plenary powers to designate as the neotype of *Buthus vittatus* Wood, 1863 the adult male specimen labelled ‘*Buthus vittatus* Wood, 1863, NEOTYPE, Det. S.A. Stockwell’, from ‘Brackettville, Kinney Co., Texas, 21 May 1984 (S. A. Stockwell)’ which is deposited in the U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C.;
   
   (4) to place the following names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
      (a) *hentzi* Banks, 1904, as published in the binomen *Centrurus hentzi*;
      (b) *vittatus* Wood, 1863, as published in the binomen *Buthus vittatus*, as ruled to be available in (2) above and as defined by the neotype designated in (3) above;
   
   (5) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *vittatus* Say, 1821, as published in the binomen *Buthus vittatus* and as suppressed in (1) above.
References


Comstock, J. H. 1940. *The Spider Book; a manual for the study of the spiders and their near relatives, the scorpions, pseudoscorpions, whip-scorpions, harvestmen, and other members of the class Arachnida, found in America north of Mexico, with analytical keys for their classification and popular accounts of their habits*. 729 pp. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.


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