(See also BZN 52, 228–233)

The following are amongst the comments which have been received. Further comments are invited; they should be sent as soon as possible to the Executive Secretary of the Commission. All comments received by 31 May 1996 will be fully considered by the Code Editorial Committee, whether or not they have been published in the *Bulletin*.

(1) I.M. Kerzhner & Ya.I. Starobogatov

*Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg 199034, Russia*

We have discussed the Discussion Draft of the new Code with several taxonomists working in our Institute, and offer some comments. Further remarks have been given to the Commission’s Editorial Committee and include points of detail with which we agree.

The overriding general comment is that stability in the Code itself is of extreme importance. There is a risk that the views of a few enthusiastic but unrepresentative reformers may become imposed on the whole community. Endless changes disorient zoologists, greatly impede their work and add to instability of nomenclature. It is well known that new nomenclatural rules are only very slowly assimilated by zoologists.

Numerous new requirements proposed in the Draft are good as Recommendations, or as working conventions for editors of journals, but if they are incorporated in the Code a significant proportion of names and nomenclatural acts published after 1996 will be unavailable for purely formal reasons. A random check of recent issues has shown that even in prestigious English-language journals no less than 15–35% of new names would not conform to these requirements! In addition, in many cases it is not easy to conclude whether or not the requirements have been met. The situation will surely not change drastically after 1996. If such a Code is adopted, many zoologists will simply not adhere to it and its international recognition will greatly decrease.

Our comments below mostly refer to the ‘major’ changes mentioned in the Explanatory Notes attached to the Draft, but examination shows that some other, seemingly minor, changes are actually major, in that they affect the availability or validity of names and nomenclatural acts, mostly with retroactive effect.

A general remark is that the Draft does not include, even as Recommendations, proposals for regulation of the nomenclature of taxa above the rank of superfamily (see for example Starobogatov (1991), BZN 48: 6–18); the possibility of appending such Recommendations to the Code should be discussed.

Some specific points are as follows.

1. **Mandatory indication that a new nominal taxon is new.** This (Article 16e) is essentially a good proposal, but it needs careful examination. In the current literature practically all cases when a new nominal taxon is not indicated as such are 'unintentional' premature establishments, either by the author or his colleagues
because their papers appear in an unexpected sequence, or by persons unaware that the taxon has not yet been published. If the Commission agrees to eliminate such cases, the Code should prescribe a statement (in any form) that the taxon is new, and that the publication does not contain expressions (e.g. ‘in litt.’, ‘in press’) showing that it was not intended to establish a new name in it. There are special cases in which we think new names should not be rejected only for the formal reason that they have not been explicitly marked as being new. These include taxa based on misidentifications (sometimes called ‘nom. nov.’), or by upgrading of infrasubspecific names (sometimes called ‘stat. nov.’, or not indicated at all).

2. **Mandatory use of the terms ‘holotype’ or ‘syntypes’.** We disagree. Under the proposal (Article 72c) a new species name accompanied by ‘Described from many specimens collected in Europe; the holotype is in my collection’ will be available, while one with even the most detailed locality and other information ‘based on the male specimen now in the ... Collection’ would not. ‘*Aus bus* sp. n. (= *Aus xus* Dupont, 1915 as misidentified by Black (1957); syntypes the specimens used by Black (not examined, original locality unknown)’ would be available, but *Aus bus* sp. n. would be unavailable if accompanied by the statement ‘based on the two males and three females illustrated by Black (1957), which have been examined by the author and are in the ... Museum’.

3. **Mandatory typification of ichnotaxa at genus-group level.** We agree with this proposal (Article 16d): it is a failure of the current Code not to require type species for them.

4. **Mandatory designation of the type genus of a new family-group taxon.** We disagree with Article 16c. The type genus is nearly always obvious from the family-group name itself. Hardly anybody would reject a name such as ‘*AIDAE* fam. n., containing *Aus, Bus* and *Cus*’, just because *Aus* was not designated ‘type genus’.

5. **Mandatory comparison with named taxa.** We disagree. Under the proposed wording of Article 16a, a new name accompanied by ‘similar to *Aus bus* [to which it is actually not similar] but differs in coloration [even if it does not]’ will be available, while the highly useful statement ‘easily distinguished from the other species of the genus (see Black, 1957) by the presence of a tubercle on the pronotum, 2-segmented tarsi (3-segmented in other species), and yellow head’ would be insufficient for availability. Moreover, for a new monospecific genus (which may even represent a new monotypic family or order, which is not exceptional in palaeontology), authors will be forced to give a purely formal comparison of the new species with some other [named] obviously unrelated species of another genus (family, order). Otherwise, not only the species but also the higher rank nominal taxa based on it would be unavailable.

6. **Mandatory use of the Latin alphabet in diagnoses of new taxa.** Clearly many little-known languages use this alphabet. However, the main languages are English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, and if only these languages were those ‘permitted’ practically all papers (including those published in China and Japan) establishing new taxa would meet the requirement. However, a serious exception is the former U.S.S.R.; although the situation in Russia is changing rapidly, too soon a change (e.g. before the year 2000) would create difficulties and affect works ‘in press’. We consider this should be taken into account if the proposal (Article 16b) is proceeded with.
7. Mandatory registration of new names in the Zoological Record. We strongly disagree with Articles 8e and 11b. The Zoological Record is compiled with exceptional care and completeness, and its importance is very high. Nevertheless, we can give examples from the past of works in well-known journals which have not been scanned within five years; of names placed in wrong families or orders, where they could hardly be found by specialists; of available names listed as nomina nuda, and vice versa; and so on. It is inevitable that such cases cannot be totally excluded in the future. The Draft implies that before using names first published after 1996 zoologists (including non-taxonomists!) would need to verify whether they had been registered in the Zoological Record. This procedure would not only be time-consuming but, for workers outside major centres, often very difficult. In our opinion the advantages of compulsory registration are much less than the disadvantages.

8. Automatic conservation of junior synonyms, subsequent spellings and some family-group names. We agree with the procedures proposed in Articles 23j, 33d and 35e, which make it easier to protect established usage and hence promote stability.

9. Misidentified type species. We agree with the proposal in Article 70b that names should be applied as required by the correctly identified species, because this is the prevailing practice, but not with the opposite solution mentioned in the Explanatory Notes and in Article 41a.

10. Lectotype designations after 1996. We agree that only the term ‘lectotype’ should be used, but not with the conditions proposed in Article 74a, such as the requirements for ‘revisionary work’, statements of authors’ reasons, and statements of characters differentiating the species from others in the same genus [impossible in monospecific genera].

11. Status of neotypes following rediscovery of original type material. We disagree with the proposal (Article 75j) that the neotype should automatically stand as the name-bearing type; in our opinion the original material should have preference, and in the rare cases where the two are not conspecific (or consubspecific) the case should be referred to the Commission. At present in about half the cases of neotype designation in the Heteroptera the original type material is rediscovered shortly afterwards, merely having been overlooked by curators.

12. Abandonment of gender agreement between generic names and adjectival epithets. We strongly disagree. Gender endings do not present an obstacle to information retrieval, by computer or otherwise. Nearly all adjectives fall within a few groups (-us, -a, -um; -er, -ea, -eam; -is, -is, -e, -ster, -stris, -stre). With regard to generic names, Neave’s Nomenclator Zoologicus shows that two-thirds end in -us, -a or -um, and the gender of a further 10% (-ops, -oides, -soma, etc.) is specified in Article 31 of the Code. The genders of most remaining names can easily be found by reference to the grammatical tables appended to the Code or to dictionaries, or by analogy with names of known gender with the same ending. It is true that for some names the gender is obscure or controversial, but these are exceptional.

If grammatical gender agreement is set aside there will be many problems. For example, zoologists might have to remember that in the genus Aus one species is called ater, another nigra and a third rubrum, while in Bus the same epithets are used as atra, niger and rubra. Instead of bearing in mind a few grammatical rules, workers will have to memorize numerous epithets with arbitrary endings. It will be difficult to
determine what is the 'generally used' ending for the numerous epithets which are currently or recently used in more than one combination. Even more chaos, accompanied by time-consuming or impracticable searches of old literature, would be introduced by the suggestion in Article 31b that original endings should be restored in all cases.

Botanists do not apparently have difficulties with gender (and at present even retain Latin diagnoses!). Education would be preferable to connivance in ignorance, and it might be desirable to consider how the grammatical explanations in the Code could be improved.

13. Criteria of publication. We particularly approve the substitution of the words 'printing on paper' in Article 8 for the 'conventional printing in ink on paper' of the current Code.

14. Abstracts of meetings as publications. The proposal in Article 9(12) that abstracts intended only for meeting participants should not be treated as valid publications is a good idea, but the criterion is difficult to apply since copies of such abstracts often end up in libraries.

15. Formation of family-group names from entire generic names. We agree, but only in cases where it is necessary to avoid homonymy. As with gender (para. 12 above), it is not difficult to determine the correct grammatical stem of a generic name.

16. Criteria for availability of names. The criteria are divided into two categories, 'general' and 'special' conditions, and this leads to lengthening and complicated wording of several Articles. The 'special' conditions relate to actions by the Commission (Opinions and adopted Lists), and this can be stated simply; otherwise for conformity we will need to subdivide further matters (e.g. general and special conditions of type fixation).

17. Availability of family-group names. Articles 13a and 13b remove the current requirement that a family-group name first published after 1930 must be accompanied by a description or indication. This is a major change, which will affect many names which have been considered unavailable; however, it is contradicted by Article 13f(1) as this appears in the Draft.

(2) Curtis W. Sabrosky
205 Medford Leas, Medford, New Jersey 08055, U.S.A.

I have compared the Draft with the current Code (3rd edition) word for word. There are many little changes in words or wording, tightening and tidying rules, recommendations and examples, which generally improve the Code. Some proposals do seem unnecessary, or merely for the sake of change (or at least I cannot figure out a reason for them). I have given details of these, and of many minor matters such as cross-referencing errors, to the Editorial Committee. Some further comments follow.

Hyphenation of names of coordinate groups. The current Code follows standard English usage for compound names, placing a hyphen between two nouns used together as a unit modifier (e.g. 'a family-group name'), but omitting the hyphen when the two nouns stand alone (e.g. 'names of the family group'). The use of two nouns without a hyphen as a compound name is common practice (country home, body louse, skin cancer), as in the Draft itself (type species, case ending). However,

**View This Item Online:** https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/44798  
**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.6803  
**Permalink:** https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/6803

**Holding Institution**  
Natural History Museum Library, London

**Sponsored by**  
Natural History Museum Library, London

**Copyright & Reuse**  
Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.  
License: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/  
Rights: https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions

This document was created from content at the Biodiversity Heritage Library, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org.