OPINION 1657

Colias alfacariensis Ribbe, 1905, Colias australis Verity, 1911 and Colias calida Verity, 1916 (Insecta, Lepidoptera): availability of specific names confirmed

Ruling

(1) Under the plenary powers it is hereby ruled that the following specific names are deemed to be available:
   (a) alfacariensis Ribbe, 1905, as published in the combination Colias hyale ab. alfacariensis;
   (b) australis Verity, 1911, as published in the combination Colias hyale hyale australis;
   (c) calida Verity, 1916, as published in the combination Colias hyale calida.

(2) The name alfacariensis Ribbe, 1905, as published in the combination Colias hyale ab. alfacariensis, is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

History of Case 2617

An application to confirm the availability of the specific name alfacariensis Ribbe, 1905 was received from Drs S.E. Whitebread (Maispracherstrasse 51, Magden, Switzerland), L. Rezbanayai-Reser (Naturmuseum Luzern, Luzern, Switzerland) & H. Geiger (Zooloogisches Institut, Bern, Switzerland) on 8 July 1987. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 45: 29–32 (March 1988). Notice of the case was sent to appropriate journals.

Comments in support from Drs E.J. Reissinger (Kaufbeuren, Germany) & S. Wagener (Bocholt, Germany) and Mr W.G. Tremewan (The Natural History Museum, London, U.K.), together with an opposing comment from Prof L.B. Holthuis (Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum, Leiden, The Netherlands), were published in BZN 47: 129–131 (June 1990). A comment from Dr O. Kudrna (Bad Neustadt-Salz, Germany), published in BZN 47: 130, supported the use of the name alfacariensis, but ascribed authorship to Berger (1948).

The issues in this case were summarised by Dr P.K. Tubbs (Executive Secretary of the Commission) in BZN 47: 131–132. Before the unambiguous recognition in 1944–45 of this butterfly as an independent species the names alfacariensis, australis and calida had been applied in 1905, 1911 and 1916 respectively. As mentioned in the application and published comments, the first uses of each of these names do not strictly meet the provisions of the present Code, but each is available from various subsequent publications.

It was noted on the voting papers (cf. BZN 45: 30; 47: 131) that Berger (1944, 1945) had used alfacariensis Ribbe, 1905 in the first descriptions of the taxon as being a species distinct from Colias hyale. Both alfacariensis and australis Verity, 1911 have been in current use; calida Verity, 1916 had not been used in recent years (see BZN 47: 129, para. 5) but could be applied to Italian populations if desired on taxonomic grounds. It was suggested that the various proposals which had been published could be consolidated by ruling that alfacariensis Ribbe, 1905, australis Verity, 1911 and
calida Verity, 1916 were all available names. Adoption of this pragmatic course appeared the only way of achieving a consensus view and so ending 40 years of instability. Since they are junior subjective synonyms it was proposed that australis Verity, 1911 and calida Verity, 1916 should not be placed on the Official List of Specific Names.

Decision of the Commission
On 6 March 1991 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the revised proposals outlined above. At the close of the voting period on 6 June 1991 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes — 26: Bock, Cocks, Cogger, Corliss, Dupuis, Hahn, Halvorsen, Heppell (in part), Kabata, Kraus, Lehtinen, Macpherson, Mahnert, Martins de Souza, Minelli, Mroczkowski, Nielsen, Nye, Ride, Savage, Schuster, Starobogatov, Thompson, Trjapitzin, Uéno, Willink

Negative votes — 2: Bayer and Holthuis.

Heppell commented: ‘I vote for the original proposals only, and against ruling australis Verity, 1911 and calida Verity, 1916 to be available. No explanation is provided with the voting paper as to whether the published proposals were superseded with the approval of the applicants. If the names australis and calida are deemed to be available, they should be placed on the Official List (Article 77c (ii) of the Code), and the argument that these names are junior subjective synonyms is irrelevant. This case again indicates the inadequacy of Article 45g. The criterion for judging the rank of a taxon below species level should be not the category term used by the original author but whether the named taxon represents a population and not merely variant individuals. A name applied to a population would then only be infrasubspecific if it was published as an addition to a trinomen’. [Note by the Executive Secretary: normally all names that have been the subject of Commission rulings are placed on the relevant Official Lists, although the valid (senior) subjective synonyms of the specific names of type species, rather than those names themselves, are listed. In the present case australis and calida are junior subjective synonyms of alfacariensis, and it was to avoid confusion that it was proposed, and accepted by the Commission majority, that these names should not be placed on the Official List of Specific Names].

Original references
The following is the original reference to the name placed on an Official List by the ruling given in the present Opinion:
alfacariensis, Colias hyale, Ribbe, 1905, Societas Entomologica, XX Jahrgang (18): 137.

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