

A new subgenus for *Nyctagina Cockerellae*.

By the characters mentioned, *Nyctagina Cockerellae* A. Nelson (Proc. Biol. Soc., Washington, XVI, p. 29), seemed to me to differ generically, but I am willing to follow Professor Nelson's decision to the contrary. *N. Cockerellae* forms, however, at least a distinct subgenus or section, which may be called *Roswellia*.—T. D. A. Cockerell.

On the name of the common American Eel

The name of the common American eel is now generally conceded to be *Anguilla chrysypa* Rafinesque, and the reference is given as "The American Monthly Magazine and Critical Review, Vol. II, p. 120 (Dec., 1817)," the article in which it is contained being entitled "First Decade of New North American Fishes, by C. S. Rafinesque."

Messrs. Jordan and Evermann, in the "Fishes of North and Middle America" (Bulletin 47, U. S. Nat. Mus. Vol. I, p. 348, 1896), give the derivation as from χρυσός, gold, and υπό, below. But on referring to the original article, we find that Rafinesque spells the word "*chrisypa*," the derivation for the word in this form being χρίσις (from χρίω) meaning an anointing, a besmearing, and υπό, below. In his account of the eel, he gives the vernacular names, referring to it as "Gold-Eel, Silver-Eel, Lake-Eel, Gold-Breast, etc." It is from this last mentioned name that the confusion doubtless arose.

Although there is no way of ascertaining which of these derivations is correct, whether Rafinesque really meant to turn the name "Gold-Breast" into Greek and made a slip, or whether he intended to refer to the slimy character of the fish, it seems best to retain the original spelling as given by him, as it is just as plausible as that adopted, and we are not now in a position to make really certain which idea he entertained, as all that he has left us is the name *chrisypa*.

As regards the name *bostoniensis* of Le Sueur, on looking up the reference (Jour. Phil. Acad. I, p. 81) we find that it was given in a paper entitled "A short description of five (supposed) new species of the genus *Muraena* discovered by Mr. Le Sueur in the year 1816," which was read before the society on August 19th, 1817. As Rafinesque's name is dated in his article December, 1817, *bostoniensis* would seem to have priority over *chrisypa*. But we find that Le Sueur's name was not published until 1821, whereas Rafinesque's appeared in 1817.

Therefore, the name of the common American eel should stand as *Anguilla chrisypa*, Rafinesque.—Austin H. Clark.



Clark, Austin Hobart. 1903. "On the name of the common American eel."
Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington 16, 52–52.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/19609>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/94413>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Internet Archive

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

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>.