ASTERIAS HISPIDA PENNANT, 1777, AND URASTER HISPIDA (PENNANT) FORBES, 1840 (ECHINODERMATA, ASTERIDAE): PROPOSED SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS IN FAVOUR OF LEPTASTERIAS MUELLERI (M. SARS, 1846).

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The pre-Linnean name hispida (Linck, 1733 : 31) was adopted by Pennant (1777 : 62, fig. 58) in his description of the nominal species Asterias hispida. Pennant’s type-material cannot be traced, and his description and figure are completely inadequate for identification. Consequently, according to Forbes (1840 : 95), very different species have been referred to Pennant’s hispida. Mortensen (1924 : 80) gives A. hispida Pennant as a synonym of Leptasterias muelleri (M. Sars) without any comments, but in his widely used handbook (1927 : 141), under the discussion on Asterias rubens L., 1758, he states: “Possibly also Asterias hispida Pennant belongs rather to this species than to Leptasterias Müller”. A. hispida Pennant is thus a case of a nomen dubium, and as it has only been used a few times in the last century it also qualifies as a nomen oblitum. It has, however, once in this century been mentioned in a fauna-list (Chumley, 1918) but such a mere listing of the name hardly constitutes use in “primary zoological literature” as defined in recent relevant discussion on Code Article 23b (Bull. zool. Nomencl. 23 : 258).

2. Forbes (1840 : 95–96) re-described the species he considered to conform to Pennant’s species under the binomen Uraster hispida. Whereas Pennant’s A. hispida is a nomen dubium, this does not apply to Uraster hispida (Pennant) Forbes. During a recent study of old and new records of echinoderms in the Isle of Man it was discovered that the only published record of Leptasterias muelleri; “under rocks round Castletown Bay” (Bruce, Colman & Jones, 1963 : 240), is exactly the same locality as mentioned by Forbes (1840 : 96) for Uraster hispida: “Among limestone rocks at Castletown, Isle of Man”. Forbes’ description of U. hispida conforms with Irish Sea specimens of L. muelleri, and the British localities given fit very well with what is known today about the distribution of L. muelleri. This new evidence presents a strong case for considering U. hispida (Pennant) Forbes, 1840, as a senior synonym of L. muelleri (M. Sars, 1846). The specific name hispida is still available and Forbes’ re-description and use of the name clearly has priority and thus constitutes a serious threat to the well established L. muelleri.

3. Leptasterias muelleri (M. Sars) as published in the binomen Astere-acanthion Müller was first published as a nomen nudum (M. Sars 1844 : 169), but has a good foundation in the adequate description (M. Sars 1846 : 56, pl. 8, figs. 38 and 39) and in the syntypes preserved in the Zoological Museum, Univ. Oslo, Norway. It serves as the type-species of the genus Leptasterias Verrill, 1866. The specific name muelleri (mostly spelt mülleri) has been widely used in all recent works on echinoderms.

To avoid confusion and to maintain stability of nomenclature, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is therefore asked:
(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the following names for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy:
(a) the specific name *hipsida* Pennant, 1777, as published in the binomen *Asterias hispida*;
(b) the specific name *hispsida* Forbes, 1840, as published in the binomen *Uraster hispida*;
(2) to place the names suppressed in (1) (a) and (b) above on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology;
(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology, the specific name *muelleri* M. Sars, 1846, as published in the binomen *Asteracanthion Müller* (type-species of *Leptasterias* Verrill, 1866);
(4) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology, the generic name *Leptasterias* Verrill, 1866 (: 350) (gender: masculine), type-species, by original designation, *Asteracanthion muelleri* Sars, 1846.

**References**


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