



RE: Evidence supports taxonomic changes

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Posted by: [ScottThomson](#) at Mon Dec 29 03:59:46 2003 [[Report Abuse](#)] [[Email Message](#)] [[Show All Posts by ScottThomson](#)]

I would like to make a few points.

First up I will acknowledge I have not read the paper as yet (I would like a copy if someone can send a reprint of it) but my comments are more on other facets that have been brought up.

Ignoring names that meet the requirements of the ICZN is not an option. This cannot be done under strict application of the rules as the names if valid are Available and must be used. The alternative is to refute them. So disagree with the names all you like, "Refute or Accept". That is publish a valid refutation of the taxon to which the name applies.

Second I also agree that taxonomic changes should be restricted to specific journals. However I acknowledge that the ICZN does not support this. This is something that I feel should be addressed by the ICZN and I would even go as far as a list of "accepted" journals. However I acknowledge that is possibly being too pedantic.

How names are formulated is irrelevant and they only have to use the "Latin Alphabet" under the rules, not be latinised. One of the species I described was *Elseya nadibajagu* which is aboriginal for "From a long time ago" (its a fossil, 6 million years old). This is not a Latinised name at all, it just uses the Latin Alphabet. I have my own preferences and pet hates (I dislike naming species after people - even though I have done this twice) however, preferences have nothing to do with it. You will never see me complain about what someone calls something as long as its not stupid.

I am the first to agree that taxonomic changes should not be possible without substantial evidence. I too have seen some really shoddy work in so called peer reviewed journals. By people whom I thought would know better. As well as some stuff that should never have been published and in the wrong place.

I consider the ignorance of valid names by so called "professionals" to be as big a crime in taxonomy as those who published the names in the first place. As I said "refute it or accept it" if anyone has that much of an opinion then they can publish a refutation. If not use the name. It is refusal by some, for whatever reason, and use by others that causes so much confusion.

Another example is the genus name "*Macrochelodina*" this name was not used for no valid reason, everyone just assumed it was invalid because Wells and Wellington described it. Yet they were willing to use so many other names from the same publication (after the ten odd years of complaining about it). Iverson et al., 2001 demonstrated it is a valid name for the expansive group of long necks. It was therefore accepted. Basically here is a definable group of turtles. They are separated by a decided gap from other groups as has been demonstrated many times. It has now been shown to have a name. Yet people are still refusing to use it because they do not want to use any Wells and Wellington name? Because its inconvenient if their latest edition of Cogger calls them *Chelodina*. Its not that difficult people.

So my point here is that this argument swings both ways, I think there are plenty of "professionals" that are using the "amature" label as a crutch to their own opinions. That is not science.

Nomenclature is pretty black and white. There are a set of rules. Apply them, if the name is valid, use it, if not reject it. If you don't like it.... well I don't recall that being in the rules.

Cheers, Scott
Carettochelys.com

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