

Nomenclature Committee (Fauna)

MINUTES OF THE NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE MEETING (FAUNA)  
Johannesburg (South Africa), 30 March (18h20-19h25) and 31 March 2004 (18h05-19h20)

[As the list of persons present apparently did not circulate through the entire room, some persons may inadvertently have been left out. Please indicate to the member of the Nomenclature Committee (NC, fauna) if you were present and your name does not appear on the list; and we will make the necessary changes.]

**Present:\***

Marinus S. Hoogmoed, Member of the Nomenclature Committee (Fauna)  
Ron Orenstein, IWC (rapporteur)  
Thomas Althaus, Switzerland (Chairman of the Animals Committee)  
Mike Griffin, Namibia (Regional representative of Africa)  
Rodrigo Medellin, Mexico (Regional representative of North America)  
Charif Tala, Chile  
Ferdia Marnell, Ireland  
Harald Martens, Germany  
Hesiquio Benitez, Mexico  
Eréndira García, Mexico  
Jose Bernal, Mexico  
Henk Eggink, Netherlands  
Chris Schürmann, Netherlands  
Carlos Ibero, Spain  
Alison Littlewood, United Kingdom  
Peter Paul van Dijk, IUCN-TFTSG  
Jaques Berney, IWMC  
Amanda Vincent, Project Seahorse  
Harriet Gillet, UNEP-WCMC  
Peter Dollinger, WAZA  
David Morgan, CITES Secretariat  
Tom de Meulenaer, CITES Secretariat

**1. Opening**

The NC member opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

**2. Agenda**

The NC member proposed to add a subpoint to point 5 (d) of the Agenda on birdwing butterflies. This was agreed upon. The Secretariat asked whether sharks would be considered. The NC member noted that few sharks are listed and that there was no need for special discussion. If need be NC could give advice on this point if requested by the Animals Committee (AC).

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\* **[Explanatory note of the member of NC** (made while compiling the minutes): although the documents for this meeting had been labeled NC4 Doc. XX, it should be noted that this certainly is not the fourth meeting of NC, as the present NC member (fauna) has chaired meetings in Caracas 1998, Tananarive 1999, Shepherdstown 2000, Hanoi 2001, San José 2002 and Geneva 2003. Before that time he has attended meetings in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1996, which were chaired by his predecessor Steve Edwards. The numbering now used probably goes back to documents available on the website, although minutes have been prepared of the Shepherdstown meeting as well.]

### 3. Minutes of previous meeting (Geneva, 19 and 20 August 2003)

In the header of the document the year 2003 should be added after August.

Amanda Vincent was of the opinion that considerable confusion had arisen with respect to seahorse nomenclature. According to her, NC had adopted the 32 species that feature in the Project Seahorse manual and another species described recently. She was of the opinion that species described by Kuitert were not to be accepted. Project Seahorse (under contract with the Secretariat) had prepared identification material for those 33 species and not for the additional 'Kuitert' species. She also noted that more species had been described by the same author. She elaborated that the reliability of these descriptions was not very high and that most should be synonymised with existing taxa, although a few might be valid species. The NC member observed that indeed the Manual and the additional species described by members of Project Seahorse would be the basis, but that the 'Kuitert' names (despite their apparent doubtful quality) had to be added as long as they had not been formally synonymised in a publication. He also explained that this was what was meant by the last sentence of paragraph 5 a). The names have been validly published and cannot be neglected. The NC member agreed with Amanda Vincent that, based on what she said, it certainly appeared that the 'Kuitert' names are dubious, but that a scientific publication supporting the statements was needed. Amanda Vincent asked for verification from the rapporteur of the previous meeting. [This contact has been made and the Geneva rapporteur (Tim Inskipp) noted that the text in the draft minutes was exactly as he had prepared it and that the last sentence meant exactly what the NC member had said: when the 'Kuitert' names are subjected to review and synonymised, they can be deleted and relegated to the proper synonymy]. Amanda Vincent remained of the opinion that a different conclusion had been reached than worded in the draft minutes.

Jaques Berney noted that a person had the right to correct minutes as to statements, but not concerning conclusions reached. None of the other persons present was able to shed further light on this issue, and it was decided not to make any changes to the text.

Thomas Althaus noted that the draft minutes were rather detailed in some places, but that nothing could be found concerning the discussions that took place about the functioning of NC. He noted that NC4 Doc. 2 and NC4 Doc. 3 would not be on the table if that discussion had not taken place. The NC member agreed and proposed to add an item h) to point 5 which reads as follows: " h) There was much discussion on the functioning, structure and terms of reference of the Nomenclature Committee."

This was agreed, and the minutes were adopted with the amendments.

### 4. Discussion of documents NC4 Doc. 2 NC4 Doc. 3 concerning working practices of the Nomenclature Committee

The NC member introduced document NC4 Doc. 2 and noted that this also had been presented to the meeting of NC (flora) in Windhoek in February 2004. Both members of NC had come to the conclusion that apparently a simple document in plain language was necessary to explain the role and functioning of NC and had produced the present document. The NC member (flora), Noel McGough, had informed the member (fauna) that the document had been received favourably in Windhoek and that no change had been proposed to it. However, the former had informed the latter that the participants in the Windhoek meeting thought that a revision of the Terms of Reference of NC was needed and that had resulted in NC4 Doc. 3.

Ron Orenstein noted that there is some confusion about the use of the term "Standard Reference" in paragraph 22 of document NC4 Doc. 2 and suggested that a new name should be used after the adoption of Resolution Conf. 12.11, whereby the Checklist of CITES species compiled by UNEP-WCMC is agreed to be the standard reference for species included in the Appendices. The NC member agreed and coined the term "Basic References". He also noted that there was a problem concerning the status of "Standard References" on the flora side, and that the matter should be further discussed with his botanical colleague. Harriet Gillet informed the meeting that the botanists perceive a problem if new checklists on orchids etc. could not be referred to as "Standard References".

The Secretariat said that the UNEP-WCMC checklist is referred to as the "Standard Reference" for species included in the Appendices in Resolution Conf. 12.11. The checklists for CITES-listed flora mentioned by Harriet Gilliet could also be referred to as "Standard References", but this would require an amendment of the Resolution (the references on which the "Standard References" are based could be called "Basic References").

Jaques Berney noted that there had been some criticism on the change in format, but that the checklist is based on references. In Windhoek it was suggested that the "old" standard references could be in an annex to the nomenclature Resolution. The Resolution should be revised to include the "old" references.

Amanda Vincent noted that there were cases in which the UNEP-WCMC list pre-empted NC recommendations, as was discussed in Geneva.

Peter Dollinger indicated some typographical errors, which were noted and will be changed in the document before it will be presented officially to the Secretariat to be dispersed to the Parties as a Notification.

After this the discussion on NC4 Doc. 3 was opened. This document originally arose at the NC meeting (flora) in Windhoek and amendments had been added at the last minute by Mexico, which was the reason for the late posting on the website. The proposed Mexican amendments to the document as produced in Windhoek show up in document NC4 Doc. 3 as underlined text. The NC member (fauna) noted that many of the elements asked for already had been covered voluntarily by NC in their report to CoP12. As to regional representation on the NC he pointed out that invitations for meetings always have been very open and that everybody with knowledge or interest in the matter was welcome. Thresholds never had been constructed, but participation of regional members of AC generally had been low, although at this meeting 3 regional representatives were present. Amanda Vincent noted that many discussions can be held, but in the end it is the NC members who make proposals to CoP. She believed that nomenclature was a matter of opinion. Thomas Althaus noted that for a long time, there had been no agenda, now there is one, but documents arrive very late, although there is a requirement to know well in advance whether you need to bring specialists and which ones. "Decisions" of NC may touch on implementation of the Convention, and Parties want to know what they are getting into in time.

The NC member noted that NC does not take decisions but only makes proposals to CoP, which makes decisions based on information provided. The report of NC to CoP is presented to the Secretariat before the deadline of CoP documents and thus is available to the Parties well in advance. Apparently, Parties have not paid significant attention to what is written in the NC document. Parties are of course free to reject recommendations of NC.

Thomas Althaus suggested that these matters may be too specialized for management officials to understand; a Party could reject recommendations for practical reasons.

The NC member reiterated that the consequences of the acceptance of proposals of NC were clearly explained in the NC report to CoP12. The case of Central American *Amazona* was a special one and the consequences of adoption of the NC proposal were specifically explained to Costa Rica and Mexico, who revised their proposal consequently.

Rodrigo Medellin explained that Mexico has been working on NC4 Doc. 3 because of their concern about structure and working of the NC; they seek to make it a more active and transparent group with regional input. As an initial step they do not only want regional input, but this input must be ensured. It might be done by incorporating the AC members, but this may not be very practicable and they may not have the expertise. However, each region should propose a member for the NC, preferably a taxonomist. Participation of Parties that may be affected by adoption of a new list should be ensured by some formal procedure. He indicated that many Parties feel that their concerns have not been properly responded to. They want to have clear guidelines, setting out specifically how minutes are compiled and distributed, they should be crystal clear, and so should means of input into the NC. Mexico propose terms of reference to ensure this. He (Rodrigo Medellin) had high hopes that he could leave the meeting having made a good start.

Peter Dollinger was less concerned about regional representation. He would have liked to see documentation well in advance of CoP to assist it in making its decision. New references should be introduced and explained.

The NC member responded that Resolution Conf 12.11 already says that the Secretariat should communicate reference lists to Parties, but Peter Dollinger stated that the lists do not have comments.

The NC member stated that there is a limit to what NC can do, it can only indicate what it sees as possible consequences, and it has done so. To clarify the implication of the adoption of new checklist references is not in the terms of reference, and paragraph (f) of NC4 Doc. 3 could be seen as a voluntary NC action. NC can take many of the points made in NC4 Doc.3 into account in its report and some are easy to realize. NC has asked for regional representatives for years, but there was a very low response. NC would like to utilize regional representatives on AC and on the Plants Committee (PC) as much as possible, but this is a highly technical area, requiring people who are knowledgeable about nomenclature.

Ron Orenstein agreed that the report to CoP should set out consequences of proposals. In response to discussion about how best to provide information to Parties about changes, he suggested that new editions of the UNEP-WCMC Checklist be annotated to track changes between editions. The NC member wanted to leave this to the Secretariat as he considered this a technical matter.

Harriet Gillett noted that the Checklist cannot be annotated, but that UNEP-WCMC could produce a document with explanations indicating changes.

Peter Dollinger remarked that changes may not be “hidden”, but that Parties may not be clear on the changes and their consequences or implications. The NC member said that NC will try to present the consequences as the NC learns them.

Amanda Vincent noted that it is far from clear how taxonomic evidence brought by experts is taken into account by the member (fauna) of NC. What kind of input can specialists have to the NC?

Mike Griffin pointed out that not every region has specialists in this area, for certain groups there may only be one expert in the world. Specimens often have to be sent overseas for identification.

Jaques Berney noted that the NC members have done tremendous work and that it would be difficult to replace them. Preparation and communications to the Parties need work. Discussion on the report of NC to CoP, especially where it concerns changes, should be referred to Committee I which deals with biological matters, and not be dealt with in Plenary. He expressed doubts whether NC (2 persons only) can be considered a real committee and possibly it would be better if the NC members were advisors to AC and PC, who then can decide what goes forward to the CoP. This might require preparation long in advance, but there is no need to be completely up-to-date. The group as here present functions more like a working group of AC. At the request of the NC member he explained that it was not possible to have a real committee and the present structure was installed long ago.

Thomas Althaus agreed with Mike Griffin that experts on nomenclature are rare and they may even be absent in AC. He repeated that Parties must understand what they are voting about and that the information must be presented in a form that non-specialists can understand. That is the aim of NC Doc.3. He continued by stating that there are “hidden” changes in the Appendices when new references are accepted. Co-Chair of NC stated that NC always has attempted to respect the original intent of proposals and would like to have an example of “hidden” changes. Thomas Althaus mentioned *Naja naja* and *Brachypelma*. The NC member explained that this came about by following the original intent of the proposals. *Naja naja* was once thought to occur from India to South-east Asia, but it is now restricted to India. The other South-East Asian populations are different species that are now listed because the intent of the original listing proposal was to cover all cobras in South-east Asia. To continue using only *Naja naja*, would mean that the original intent of the listing proposal would not be followed. Thomas Althaus stated that by accepting new references, new names have been added to the Appendices and that this requires changes in some Parties national legislation when it refers to species names.

Rodrigo Medellin asked for a "time-out" and stated that this was a clear example of how previous meetings of NC have been going and that Mexico will continue to work towards a solution of this vital issue.

## 5. Preparation of Checklists

- a) The NC member stated that NC has a budget for the preparation of checklists for the lizard genera *Uromastix* and *Phelsuma*. A small booklet by T. Wilms (2001): Dornschwanzagamen. Lebensweise. Pflege. Zucht (ISBN 3-9806214-7-2 contains all the elements of a checklist. It is a recent review of the genus and is generally accepted by the herpetological field. Harald Martens informed the meeting that the German SA has recently sent a checklist of *Uromastix* to UNEP-WCMC based on this same booklet, with input from others. The NC member thinks that reference to a published work is preferable and will suggest this book as the new basic reference for *Uromastix* to CoP. There were no comments from the meeting.
- b) The genus *Phelsuma* is still a problem because no revision has been published. The NC member noted that Dr. F. Glaw from Munich has recently produced identification manuals for this genus and he suggested asking Dr. Glaw to prepare a checklist with synonyms. Since the last revision in 1980, many new species have been described.
- c) Mammals. A new edition of Wilson & Reeder, the present basic reference for mammals, has been announced for several years, but it does not seem that publication will happen before 2005. Some discussion ensued about the availability of electronic versions, but the NC member preferred to wait for a new publication. Peter Dollinger warned that the new list must first be examined before deciding whether or not to adopt it. The meeting agreed. Parties should be notified when the new edition is available, so those with a real interest can look at it.
- d) Birdwing butterflies. The NC member had been advised by Secretariat the previous Friday that d´Abrera has published a new edition of his 1975 birdwing butterflies book. The annotation "sensu d´Abrera" (meaning 1975) in the Checklist thus has become ambiguous and should be removed. The NC member agreed with this point of view and intends to suggest to the CoP to remove the annotation. This was agreed upon.
- e) Another matter is whether the new book by d´Abrera should be the new basic reference. Tim Inskipp of UNEP-WCMC will be asked to have a look at it, compare it to the old edition and give his opinion about its usefulness as a new basic reference. Some discussion ensued about whether all possible synonymies should be put in. Ron Orenstein remarked that using a book may be a matter of convenience, rather than a judgment. The NC member answered to a remark about new species continuously being described that NC has been adding newly described species in groups that are entirely covered by CITES (e.g. Primates, Cetaceans) to the list because some countries had problems applying CITES to these species if the names were not specifically mentioned in the CITES Checklist.

## 6. Any other business

Harriet Gillet of UNEP-WCMC reminded the meeting of the fact that for the last checklist UNEP-WCMC had provided authors' names, but were asked by the Secretariat (based on costs) to take them out. UNEP-WCMC wants to avoid any problems concerning this with the new checklist after CoP 13. The NC member stated that the author's name is an integral part of the scientific name and therefore would prefer to see them incorporated. Jaques Berney remarked that the Secretariat always has done without the author names. He also noted that author names never should be used on export or import documents because that could cause problems. This was agreed upon by several others, and the NC member concluded that the inclusion of author names does not seem to be a good idea and he will not make such a proposal. Peter Dollinger noted that the ID manual does contain the author names, as does the WCMC website.

Ron Orenstein suggested that the Committee examine the 3rd edition of Howard and Moore as a possible future reference for birds. The NC member made it clear that he did not want to propose a change of bird checklist to CoP13, considering the turmoil NC had gone through since the last changes at CoP12.

Peter Paul van Dijk informed the meeting about a number of nomenclatural changes within CITES-listed turtles, some of them concerning new descriptions, others upgraded from subspecies to specific status and changes in generic position. Also there is a lot of activity in Mediterranean tortoises of the genus *Testudo*. The NC member was aware of most of these, but asked that more details be provided in writing. [In the meantime the information has been received].

Rodrigo Medellin opined that this was another example of the need to boost the transparency of NC. NC should recommend that regions look at new references to flag problems.

Mike Griffin asked whether it is possible to have more than one reference at a time. The NC member answered that this is possible when they are complementary, e.g. in *Tupinambis*.

Mike Griffin noted that apart from Wilson & Reeder there is another world list on mammals, by Corbett & Hill, and wanted to know whether we have to choose between it and Wilson & Reeder. The NC member said that we would need mammal taxonomists to advise on this, but does not think this exercise is necessary until the new edition of Wilson & Reeder is available. Mike Griffin was of the opinion that the basic reference should include synonyms from "competing" checklists.

## **7. Closure**

The first part of the meeting was closed on 30 March 2004 at 19h25, the second part on 31 March was closed at 19h20.