

Book Reviews

Book Review Editor's Note: We are continuing to use the current currency codes. Thus Canadian dollars are CAD, U.S. dollars are USD, Euros are EUR, China Yuan Remimbi are CNY, Australian dollars are AUD and so on.

Editor's Note. The address of the Birds of Northumberland County website has been changed to <http://www.willowbeachfieldnaturalists.org/Northumberland-County>. This is part of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' website, but the URL above will take you directly to the Birds of Northumberland County. Please note that the URL is case sensitive. From Clive Goodwin.

ZOOLOGY

Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, with Comments Regarding Confidence in Our Understanding – Seventh Edition.

By Brian I. Crother, (committee chair). 2012. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. Herpetological Circular 39. 92 + 5 pages. [Single copies of this circular are available from the Publications Secretary, Breck Bartholomew. P.O. Box 58517, Salt Lake City, Utah 84158-0517 USA. E-mail: ssar@herpllit.com. 14.00 USD].

This checklist was prepared for the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles and issued for the World Congress of Herpetology in Vancouver, British Columbia, in August 2012. It is a revision of the 2008 SSAR Sixth Edition (reviewed by Cook 2008). Its key feature is the inclusion of "Comments Regarding Confidence in Our Understanding". These comments give useful background for taxa where the names on this list are still subjects of continuing disagreement and debate among contemporary herpetologists. Although one choice is preferred for the list, references and short discussions are included for most dissenting alternate views. As well, comments on studies yet unpublished, in progress, or needing to be undertaken to clarify certain outstanding problems in relationships, are also included.

The origin of North American checklists for amphibians and reptiles with "common" [English] names is traced by Yarrow (1882) in the introduction to the current list. In 1956, the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH) formed a committee of herpetologists and published a checklist. It provided standardized common names for use in zoos and popular publications for amphibians and reptiles comparable what had been accomplished long before for birds by The American Ornithologists Union (AOU). In 1977, a SSAR Common and Scientific Names Committee was formed to update the previous ASIH list. It was chaired by Joseph T. Collins with decisions made by committee. It produced editions in 1978 and 1982, however, in 1990, for the third edition, Collins unilaterally changed from committee chairman to author. Subsequently (Collins 1991) he published, in advance of the next edition of the checklist, a recommendation for mass changes by elevating 55 allopatric (geographically not in contact) distinctive subspecies to species

rank in line with the developing evolutionary species concept. This stimulated widespread controversy and debate among herpetologists (Adler 2012: 331–333).

Although Collins was removed as chair of the SSAR after he produced a fourth edition in 1997, (Adler 2012) he followed with a fifth in 2000 and a sixth in 2009. The fifth was re-titled *Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians, Turtles, Reptiles, and Crocodylians* to reflect group concepts that added birds to traditional "reptiles". It restricted the term reptile to lizards and snakes and listed 53 reviewers but no committee. It was published by the Center for North American Herpetology (CNAH) [originally Center for North American Amphibians and Reptiles] which had been founded by Collins. Meanwhile, the SSAR formed a new committee and also issued a fifth (2000), and sixth edition (2008) under the traditional title and classification.

The seventh edition by the SSAR begins with the historical background of amphibian and reptile checklists and useful tabular comparison including the number of species covered in checklists in 1882, 1978, 2012 with the total species 465, 454, to 632 reflecting largely the recent emphasis on the evolutionary species concept, data from DNA, and increased access to little known corners of the world. A guide to proper citation is followed by very useful instructions on forming Standard English Names. Next, a section covers rules on capitalization, formation of descriptive or modifying word, formation and use of group names, formation of English species and subspecies names; literature cited, and acknowledgements. Finally, 71 pages cover and annotate recognized species and subspecies by portions of the committee: Anura (Frogs): Darrel R. Frost, Roy W. McDiarmid, Joseph R. Mendelson III, David M. Green; Caudata (Salamanders): Stephen G.

Tilley (Chair), Richard Highton, David B. Wake; Squamata (Lizards) Kevin D. Quieroz, Tod W. Reeder; Squamata (Snakes): Brian I. Crother (Chair), Jeff Boundy, Frank T. Burbrink, Jonathan A. Cambell, R. Alexander Pyron; Crocodylia (Crocodylians): Brian I. Crother; Testudines (Turtles), John B. Iverson (Chair), Peter A. Meylan, Michael E. Seidel; Alien Species: Fred Kraus. It concludes with a 5-page listing of available SSAR publications.

There is a conspicuous omission of direct reference to the existence of parallel fifth and sixth checklists produced by the CNAH. There are a number of differences in recognition of taxa, the most notable [and rejected] in the SSAR list is Collins and Taggart (2008) resurrection of generic names for Fox Snakes (*Mintonius*) [see Crother et al. 2011] and “Woodland Rat Snakes” (*Scotophis*) [see Pyron et al. 2009] which were accepted in Collins and Taggart (2009) but remain included in *Pantherophis* in the SSAR list.

This list has been adopted as their official list by Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR), the Herpetologists League (HL), the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (ASIH), Canadian Association of Herpetologists (CAH), Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network (CARCNet), and Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC). As well, more informally, Canadian federal and provincial reports on amphibians and reptiles generally follow the SSAR list. However, having two standard English lists has been confusing for many and thus weakened their effectiveness to promote public utilization.

A companion volume to the 2012 SSAR checklist in English is a list of French names is covered in a separate publication (Green 2012).

FRANCIS R. COOK

Curator Emeritus and Research Associate, Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa. Ontario K1P 6P4

References

- Adler, K.** Editor. Contributions to the History of Herpetology. Volume 3. Issued to commemorate the 7th World Congress of Herpetology Vancouver, British Columbia 2012. Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles. 564 pages.
- Collins, J. T.** 1991. Viewpoint: A new taxonomic arrangement for some North American amphibians and reptiles. *Herpetological Review* 22(3): 41–42.
- Collins, J. T., and T. W. Taggart.** 2008. An alternative classification of the New World rat snakes (genus *Pantherophis* [Reptilia: Squamata: Colubridae]). *Journal of Kansas Herpetology* 26: 16–18.
- Collins, J. T., and T. W. Taggart.** 2009. Standard Common and Current Scientific Names for North American Amphibians, Turtles, Reptiles, and Crocodylians. Sixth Edition. Publication of The Center for North American Herpetology, Lawrence, Kansas. iv + 44 pages.
- Cook, F. R.** 2008 [2009]. [Book review]. Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, with Comments Regarding Confidence in Our Understanding, Sixth Edition. *Canadian Field-Naturalist* 122(4): 357–358.
- Crother, B. I., M. E. White, J. M. Savage, M. E. Eckstut, M. R. Graham, and D. W. Gardner.** 2011. A Reevaluation of the Status of the Fox Snakes, *Pantherophis gloydi* Conant and *P. vulpinus* Baird and Girard (Lepidosauria). *ISRN Zoology* 2011(436049): 1–15.
- Green, D. M.** 2012. Noms Francais des Amphibiens et des Reptiles d’amerique au Nord du Mexique/Standard French Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico. *Herpetological Circulars*, Society for the Study of Amphibiens and Reptiles, number 40. 63 pages.
- Gibbs, H. Lisle, S. J. Corey, G. Blouin-Demers, K. A. Prior, and P. J. Weatherhead.** 2006. Hybridization between mtDNA-defined phylogeographic lineages of black rat-snakes (*Pantherophis* sp.). *Molecular Ecology* 15: 3755–3767.
- Pyron, R. A., and F. T. Burbrink.** 2009. Neogene diversification and taxonomic stability in the snake tribe Lamproleptini (Serpentes: Colubridae). *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 52(2): 524–529.