

OPINION 2120 (Case 3240)***Vespertilio nanus* Peters, 1852 (currently *Pipistrellus nanus*; Mammalia, Chiroptera): specific name given precedence over *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus* Rüppell, 1842**

Abstract. The Commission has ruled that the specific name of *Pipistrellus nanus* (Peters, 1852) for the African Banana bat (family VESPERTILIONIDAE) is conserved by giving it precedence over the senior subjective synonym *Pipistrellus africanus* (Rüppell, 1842).

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Chiroptera; VESPERTILIONIDAE; *Pipistrellus nanus*; *Pipistrellus africanus*; Banana bat; Africa.

Ruling

- (1) Under the plenary power it is hereby ruled that the name *nanus* Peters, 1852, as published in the binomen *Vespertilio nanus*, is given precedence over the name *africanus* Rüppell, 1842, as published in the trinomen *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.
- (2) The following names are hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *nanus* Peters, 1852, as published in the binomen *Vespertilio nanus*, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *africanus* Rüppell, 1842, as published in the trinomen *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
 - (b) *africanus* Rüppell, 1842, as published in the trinomen *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus*, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name *nanus* Peters, 1852, as published in the binomen *Vespertilio nanus*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.

History of Case 3240

An application to conserve the name *Vespertilio nanus* Peters, 1852 by suppression of the senior synonym *Vespertilio pipistrellus africanus* Rüppell, 1842 was received from Meredith Happold (*School of Botany and Zoology, Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T. 0200, Australia*) on 11 March 2002. After correspondence the case was published in BZN **60**: 42–44 (March 2003). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. Two comments opposing the application were published in BZN **61**: 48, 314–315. The second comment, by V. Van Cakenberghe, put forward an alternative proposal to give *V. nanus* precedence over *V. pipistrellus africanus* rather than to suppress the latter name. Dr Happold welcomed this proposal.

Decision of the Commission

On 1 December 2004 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the alternative proposals published in BZN **61**: 315. At the close of the voting period on

1 March 2005 the votes were as follows: 16 Commissioners voted FOR the proposals, 4 Commissioners voted AGAINST, 1 Commissioner ABSTAINED, Evenhuis, Kerzhner and Ng were on leave of absence; no vote was received from Böhme.

Voting against, Bouchet said that the problem was essentially a taxonomic one which should be left to taxonomists to solve and that priority should apply when the two names were considered to be synonyms.

Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on an Official List by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

africanus, *Vespertilio pipistrellus*, Rüppell, 1842, *Museum Senckenbergianum*, **3**: 156.
nanus, *Vespertilio*, Peters, 1852, *Naturwissenschaftliche Reise nach Mozambique auf Befehl seiner Majestät des Königs Friedrich Wilhelm IV. in den Jahren 1842 bis 1848 ausgeführt. Zoologie, 1. Säugethiere*, p. 63.