

OPINION 2309 (Case 3429)

CHARILAIIDAE Dirsh, 1953 (Insecta, Orthoptera): proposed precedence over PAMPHAGODIDAE I. Bolívar, 1916 not granted

Abstract. The Commission has not supported the request to give the name CHARILAIIDAE Dirsh, 1953, for a group of African grasshoppers, precedence over the senior name PAMPHAGODIDAE I. Bolívar, 1916.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Orthoptera; CHARILAIIDAE; PAMPHAGODIDAE; grasshoppers; Africa.

Ruling

It is hereby ruled that the application to give the name CHARILAIIDAE Dirsh, 1953, for a group of African grasshoppers, precedence over the senior name PAMPHAGODIDAE I. Bolívar, 1916 is not approved. No names are placed on the Official Lists or Indexes in this ruling.

History of Case 3429

An application to conserve the usage of the name CHARILAIIDAE Dirsh, 1953 for a group of African grasshoppers by giving it precedence over the senior name PAMPHAGODIDAE I. Bolívar, 1916, was received from David C. Eades and Lesley S. Deem (*Illinois Natural History Survey, Champaign, IL, U.S.A.*) on 28 June 2007. After correspondence the case was published in BZN **65**: 20–23 (2008). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. No comments were received on this case.

Decision of the Commission

On 1 March 2009 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN **65**: 21–22. One Commissioner split his vote, so that proposals 4(b) and 4(d) FAILED, while all other proposals were approved by a majority of Commissioners (11 FOR, 10 AGAINST) but failed to meet the two-thirds majority required for approval. In accordance with the bylaws, the proposals in BZN **65**: 21–22 were sent for a revote on 1 June 2012. At the close of the voting period on 1 September 2012 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes – 2: Kullander and Zhou.

Negative votes – 21: Alonso-Zarazaga, Ballerio, Bogutskaya, Bouchet, Brothers, Fautin, Grygier, Halliday, Harvey, Kojima, Krell, Kottelat, Lim, Lamas, Minelli, Pape, Rosenberg, Štys, van Tol, Yanega and Zhang.

Winston abstained.

Ng, Patterson and Pyle were on leave of absence.

In the first round of voting the Commissioners commented as follows. Voting AGAINST, Alonso-Zarazaga explained that the authors did not achieve, in his opinion, a full demonstration that CHARILAIIDAE was in prevailing usage. Some of the

references they quoted were of exactly the same kind as that mentioned in their para. 7: 'a list contained within a single sentence' which only demonstrated that authors copy each other. Moreover, the authors mentioned the Orthoptera Species File Committee as the main source for recommendations in Orthopteran names. They were a source as any other, not the ultimate reference. Bisby's references were annual issues of the same database. Both names had been described in the 20th century, and Dirsh, a reputed specialist, missed the taxon described by another reputed specialist, I. Bolívar. Alonso-Zarazaga felt that priority should be applied here as the main principle of the Code, since the taxa had no economic, medical or veterinarian interest. He suggested that since no comments had been received, this indicated that orthopterologists were not interested in this question. He also noted that the name should be correctly written Bolívar, not Bolivar, as written in the application. Also voting AGAINST, Bouchet said he was not very impressed by the list of references given as evidence that the name CHARILAIIDAE had become widely accepted: four references were by the author of the name CHARILAIIDAE himself, three were by one of the authors of the application, which left seven more references by seven different authors. Species 2000 (Bisby et al., various editions), ITIS, GenBank, GBIF and Tree of Life were all interconnected, and if PAMPHAGODIDAE were restored as the valid name this usage would cascade from one database to the next. So this left fewer than ten references in favour of CHARILAIIDAE, versus three (Johnston, 1956; Kevan, 1961; Vickery, 1997) in favour of PAMPHAGODIDAE. Bouchet felt that priority should apply. Also voting AGAINST, Kottelat said the priority of PAMPHAGODIDAE had been known since 1961, but for 48 years the Code had not been followed and the Commission is now asked to endorse the resulting situation. The application did not mention the consequences of strictly following the Code besides adjusting to a new name, something which taxonomists were used to doing. The application did not mention why changing the name of this small family of five species would create problems for taxonomists. He said he assumed that only taxonomists were concerned because the application mentioned neither non-taxonomic references nor any of non-taxonomic significance. The only point Kottelat could see would be the near homonymy with PAMPHAGIDAE, which he again felt was something that taxonomists were used to. Voting AGAINST, Ng noted that the family was very small with very few genera and species and had neither commercial nor other significance. His feeling, therefore, was that the change in family name would not have an impact on biologists in general. While he said he respected the views of the specialist group concerned, he also noted that no one had written in to support or endorse the application. He would therefore prefer to be conservative and strictly follow the Principle of Priority here.

In the second round of voting the Commissioners commented as follows. Both Alonso-Zarazaga and Bouchet voted AGAINST and said their comments from the first round of voting still applied. Halliday explained that he voted AGAINST because he did not believe there was sufficient evidence that reversal of precedence was justified. He felt that the authors had not shown that a simple application of the Principle of Priority would be damaging, except to a small handful of specialists. These were exactly the people who should be able to adapt quickly to the use of the correct valid name for this taxon. Also voting AGAINST, Harvey said he saw no exceptional circumstances in this case that would warrant the reversal of

precedence. The family was very small, with only five species in four genera, and apparently little known outside of taxonomic circles. Also voting AGAINST, Kojima said that there was little evidence was weak supporting significant prevailing usage of CHARILAIIDAE Dirsh, 1953 over PAMPHAGODIDAE I. Bolívar, 1916. Consisting of only five species in four genera, use of PAMPHAGODIDAE instead of CHARILAIIDAE for this group might not cause nomenclatural instability that required using the plenary power. Also voting AGAINST, Štys explained that he felt Principle of Priority was preferable. Also voting AGAINST, Lamas explained that in the first vote he had voted for the proposals but now, after having considered the comments made by Alonso-Zarazaga, Bouchet, Kottelat and Ng, he had changed his opinion and voted AGAINST. He believed strict priority should be followed here.

No names are placed on Official Lists and Indexes by the ruling given in the present Opinion. The issue is left open for subsequent workers to follow the precepts of the Code or to make new proposals to the Commission.