A Proposal to Amend Article 14.1
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(63) A proposal to amend Article 14.1

Gerry Moore¹

(63) Replace the first sentence of Art. 14.1 with:

“In order to avoid disadvantageous nomenclatural changes entailed by the strict application of the rules, and especially of the principle of priority in starting from the dates given in Art. 13, this Code provides, in App. II and III, lists of names of families, genera, and species that are conserved (nomina conservanda) and must be retained as useful exceptions.”

Under the current wording of the Code there is conflicting language between Art. 14 (conservation of names) and Art. 56 (rejection of names) regarding the kind of nomenclatural instability they seek to prevent. Art. 14.1 limits conservation of names to those cases addressing “disadvantageous changes in the nomenclature of families, genera, and species ...”, while Art. 56.1 permits the rejection of any name that would “cause a disadvantageous nomenclatural change”. Thus, under the Code any name can be rejected but only names affecting the nomenclature of families, genera, or species can be conserved.

This conflict in the wording of Art. 14.1 and Art. 56.1 creates problems regarding proposals such as Prop. 1316 (Cheek & al. in Taxon 46: 781-783. 1997) that seek to conserve the name and type of a species in order to prevent disadvantageous nomenclatural changes at the infraspecific level caused by the misapplication of the autonym. Proposals that seek conservation of a name are governed by Art. 14 (see Nicolson & Greuter in Taxon: 110-111. 1994), and technically the current wording of Art. 14.1 prevents the conservation of a species name in order to prevent disadvantageous nomenclatural changes at the infraspecific level.

Changing the wording of Art. 14.1 to the language proposed here would make the definition of “disadvantageous nomenclatural change” similar to that of Art. 56 and would therefore place proposals like Prop. 1316 on firmer footing. This change would also provide an avenue by which infrageneric and infraspecific names in use today but adopted prior to the Sydney Code of 1983, the first Code giving autonyms full priority over the names that established them (Art. 11.6 of the Tokyo Code), could be maintained. In other words, adoption of the language proposed here for Art. 14.1 would allow proposals conserving the names (and types) of genera and species in order to achieve nomenclatural stability at the infrageneric and infraspecific levels, respectively. Thus, this proposal seeks to bring the technical language of the Code more in line with the overall goal of the Code to avoid “name changes for purely nomenclatural reasons”, without proposing the more radical approach of permitting conservation of names at ranks other than family, genus, and species.

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