

**Comment on the proposed conservation of the names *Geopeltis* Regteren Altena, 1949, *Geoteuthis* Münster, 1843, *Jeletzkyteuthis* Doyle, 1990, *Loligosepia* Quenstedt, 1839, *Parabelopeltis* Naef, 1921, *Paraplesioteuthis* Naef, 1921 and *Belemnotheutis montefiorei* Buckman, 1880 (Mollusca, Coleoidea)**

(Case 2987; see BZN 53: 253–260; 54: 104, 184–185)

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We welcome Dr Riegraf's support in BZN 54: 184–185 for our proposed conservation of various coleoid names.

Riegraf proposes the suppression of the name *Atramentarius* Buckland & Agassiz in Buckland, 1838. This name is an MS name of Buckland's. To the best of our knowledge, it appears in print only in Agassiz's (1838) footnote cited by Riegraf, and in a brief reference by Quenstedt (1849, p. 504) who does not himself use the name elsewhere. We therefore agree with Riegraf's proposal for the suppression of *Atramentarius*. We support also his proposal that *Belemnotheutis* Pearce, 1842 and the name of its type species *Belemnoteuthis* [sic] *antiqua* Pearce, 1847 be placed on the Official Lists, and the incorrect subsequent spelling *Belemnoteuthis* Pearce, 1847 on the Official Index.

**Comments on the proposed conservation of the specific and subspecific names of *Trigonocephalus pulcher* Peters, 1862 and *Bothrops albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934 (Reptilia, Serpentes) by the designation of a neotype for *T. pulcher***

(Case 2921; see BZN 54: 35–38, 245–249)

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Schätti & Smith (BZN 54: 35–38) submitted a proposal to the Commission in an attempt to resolve the taxonomic confusion surrounding two species of pitviper (Squamata: Viperidae: Crotalinae) that occur in northern South America. One of these has a green dorsum with dark transverse bands, occurs on the Amazonian versant of the Andes in Ecuador and Colombia, and is arboreal. The other species (hereafter referred to as the western species) has a dorsum with a brown ground color, occurs on the Pacific side of the Andes in Ecuador and Colombia, and is terrestrial. Peters (1862) described the upper Amazonian species as *Trigonocephalus pulcher*, the holotype of which (specimen ZMB 3868) is housed in the Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt-Universität in Berlin. However, Boulenger (1896) mistakenly applied the name *pulcher* to the western species.

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1. In their proposal for Case 2921, Schätti & Smith ask the Commission to use its plenary powers to set aside the existing holotype (ZMB 3868 in the Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt-Universität in Berlin) for *Trigonocephalus pulcher* Peters, 1862 and to allow the designation of a neotype.

2. In two insightful comments, Kuch (BZN 54: 245–249) and Gutberlet & Harvey (above) have opposed this proposal and pointed out a number of weaknesses in it. Their conclusion was that no action by the Commission was required, and that the western species should bear the name *campbelli*, and the eastern species the name *pulcher*. I am in full agreement with the factual basis of their argument, in particular the availability of the name *campbelli* Freire, 1991, and the historically ambiguous usage of the name *pulcher* Peters, 1862; the reader is referred to Kuch's comment for details on the literature regarding this problem.

3. Designation of a neotype for *Bothrops pulcher* (Peters, 1862) is unacceptable as the holotype remains in existence; a holotype is also in existence for *B. campbelli* Freire, 1991, the name of which is available for the species from which the neotype of *pulcher* would be selected under Schätti & Smith's proposal.

4. However, it is my view that following the course of action proposed by Kuch and Gutberlet & Harvey, i.e. no intervention by the Commission, would lead to considerable instability and confusion, in that the name *pulcher*, which is frequently used for the western species, would become the correct name of the eastern species for which the well-established, unambiguous name *albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934 is already available.

5. Kuch and Gutberlet & Harvey are correct in saying that the name *pulcher* has, in many publications, been associated with an explicit or implicit range designation of the Amazonian (eastern) versant of the Andes. Their interpretation is that the authors of these publications were referring to the eastern species described as *pulcher* by Peters (1862), unless evidence to the contrary was presented. However, with the exception of Noguchi (1909), I am not aware of a single publication since Peters (1862) in which the name *pulcher* is accompanied by a description or key which unambiguously refers to the eastern, Amazonian species described by Peters (1862). On the other hand, in at least seven publications (Boulenger, 1896; J.A. Peters, 1960; J.A. Peters & Orejas-Miranda, 1970; Pérez-Santos & Moreno, 1988, 1991; Campbell & Lamar, 1989, 1992) the use of the name *pulcher* is accompanied by descriptions, data and/or illustrations which unambiguously refer to the western species (even though the indicated distribution corresponds to that of the eastern species in Peters, 1960 and Peters & Orejas-Miranda, 1970). Several of these works are highly influential. In particular, the publication by Campbell & Lamar (1989) is likely to remain for many years the standard text on Neotropical pitvipers. The consequence is that the name *pulcher* has, in recent years, become increasingly strongly associated with the western species, and not the eastern species described by Peters (1862). Clearly, the use of the name *pulcher* is thus tainted with a long history of ambiguity and confusion. I therefore agree with Kuch's comment that preserving this name for the western species through designation of a neotype, as proposed by Schätti & Smith, would not benefit nomenclatural stability or prevent confusion.

6. For the eastern species, the name *albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934 is available, with *alticolus* Parker, 1934 as a subjective junior synonym. The name *albocarinatus* has not been used for any other species, and therefore does not give rise to any confusion.

7. The result of a rejection of the proposal by Schätti & Smith would be that the eastern species, currently widely known under the unambiguous name *albocarinatus*, would have this substituted with the highly ambiguous, tainted name *pulcher*, which has become increasingly associated with the western species. This strict interpretation of the Principle of Priority would, in my view, lead to quite unnecessary and highly undesirable confusion, which would be further exacerbated by current uncertainty about the generic classification of both species.

8. Kuch believes that no appeal for the conservation of *albocarinatus* is justified, as the senior name *pulcher* has been used at least four times for the eastern species since 1947. However, two of these references (J.A. Peters, 1960; J.A. Peters & Orejas-Miranda, 1970) provide descriptions which clearly refer to the western species, although they indicate an eastern distribution; the other two references (Klemmer, 1963; U.S. Navy Department, Office of Naval Intelligence, 1968) provide no information other than distribution, leaving the question of which species was being referred to open to discussion. Given the influential nature and wide availability of the publications of Boulenger (1896) and J.A. Peters (1960), and the relative obscurity of the original description of *pulcher* by Peters (1862), it seems likely that many subsequent authors meant the western form described under the name *pulcher* by Boulenger (1896) and J.A. Peters (1960), and copied the erroneous locality indication from J.A. Peters (1960). Furthermore, all four of these publications also include separate accounts of the eastern species under the unambiguous names *albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934 and *alticolus* Parker, 1934, suggesting that none of the authors regarded *pulcher* as conspecific with *albocarinatus* and *alticolus*. Consequently, I regard the inference that they were in fact referring to the eastern species as described by Peters (1862) as unproven, and the hypothesis that they were following Boulenger (1896) and Peters (1960) in referring to the western species as *pulcher*, albeit with erroneous locality information, as equally probable. The name *albocarinatus* has been used as valid for the eastern species on at least 22 occasions since 1947, as noted in Kuch's comment. In the absence of any post-1947 publications irrefutably associating the name *pulcher* with the eastern species, as evidenced by descriptions, morphological data or illustrations, I conclude that there are no obstacles to the conservation of the name *albocarinatus* under Article 79. The Code states explicitly that 'The Principle of Priority is to be used to promote stability and is not intended to be used to upset a long-accepted name in its accustomed meaning through the introduction of an unused name...' (Article 23b). In this case, a strict interpretation of the Principle of Priority would not just lead to a well-known, unambiguous name (*albocarinatus*) simply being supplanted by a senior name (*pulcher*) rarely used for the species, but would lead to further confusion because the senior name has been used extensively for another species. This clearly contravenes the intent of the Code.

9. The Commission is accordingly asked:

- (1) to reject the proposal of Schätti & Smith for the designation of a neotype for *Trigonocephalus pulcher* Peters, 1862;
- (2) to suppress the name *pulcher* Peters, 1862, as published in the binomen *Trigonocephalus pulcher*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;

(3) to place the following names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:

(a) *albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934, as published in the binomen *Bothrops albocarinata*;

(b) *campbelli* Freire, 1991, as published in the binomen *Bothrops campbelli*.

The consequence of this would be that the western species would bear the unambiguous name *campbelli* Freire, 1991, as defined by the holotype INHMT 1956 in the collection of the Instituto Nacional de Higiene y Medicina Tropical 'Leopoldo Izquieta Pérez' in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The name *almawebi* Schätti & Kramer, 1993, is a junior subjective synonym of *campbelli* Freire, 1991. The eastern species would bear the name *albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934, which is defined by holotype (MCZ 36989 in the collection of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts) with *alticolus* as its junior subjective synonym.

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### Additional reference

Pérez-Santos, C. & Moreno, A.G. 1988. *Ofidios de Colombia*. 576 pp. Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali, Torino.

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In this case there are now three solutions in front of us in solving the problem of uniform name application: (1) keeping the specific name of *Trigonocephalus pulcher* Peters, 1862 for the eastern species in conformance with the identity of the type, and adopting *campbelli* Freire, 1991 for the western species, as suggested by Drs Kuch (BZN 54: 245-249) and Gutberlet & Harvey (above); (2) keeping Boulenger's application of *pulcher* to the western species, and using *albocarinatus* Shreve, 1934 for the eastern species, as proposed in the application submitted by Dr Schätti and myself; or (3) suppressing *pulcher* completely, thus using *albocarinatus* for the eastern species and *campbelli* for the western, as suggested by Dr Wüster (above). Which solution provides the most stable and universal nomenclature?

Each has at least some following already. The information provided at present by various commentators leads me to the conclusion that the Boulengerian application of *pulcher* has had the greatest following, in spite of the fact that at least some misinterpretations have plagued most commentators.

However, if that conclusion is valid, then the steps proposed in the application should be taken to ensure pertinence of the name *pulcher* to the western species (i.e. designation of a neotype in that sense) and hence *albocarinatus* to the eastern species. Regardless, the ultimate decision should be based on the majority perception of the solution that would be least disturbing to nomenclatural stability.