

International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature Fundraising Lecture

Thursday 16 December at 7.00 pm Ondaatje Theatre, Royal Geographical Society, London

What's in a name?**Sir David Attenborough and Prof. Richard Fortey on animals**

With his delight and enthusiasm for biodiversity, Sir David shares some of his favourite encounters with animals. Prof. Fortey explains why scientific names are more than just labels, with stories of trilobites and field adventures.

See the ICZN website for information on tickets.

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Contributions to the Discussion on Electronic Publication V**Introduction**

This is the fifth instalment of comments on the ICZN proposed amendment on electronic-only publication, which would allow publication of nomenclatural acts on exclusively electronic media to be valid and available. The proposed amendment is available in the *BZN* **65**: 265–275, online at <http://iczn.org/epub> and further discussion at <http://iczn.org/content/availability-electronic-publication>. We have sought input from all stakeholders in this process, including taxonomists, publishers, archivists, database experts and the wide range of users of nomenclatural information. The IUBS has approved the principles underlying the proposed amendment.

The date for the Commission's vote has not yet been set. We will initiate a new method for making comments available online on the ICZN website in advance of the print copy of the *BZN*, thus we will welcome further contributions on this topic in the near future. We also encourage continued debate through listservers (e.g. ICZN listserver (<http://list.afriherp.org/mailman/listinfo/iczn-list>) and Taxacom (<http://mailman.nhm.ku.edu/mailman/listinfo/taxacom>)) and the various journals that have published the proposed amendment.

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(1) Gerhard Haszprunar and Stefan Schmidt

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As editors of our house journal *Spixiana* and the *Journal of Hymenoptera Research* we would like to make a comment and recommendation regarding the acceptance of

electronic-only publication of nomenclatural acts. We fully support the Commission's pioneering work in proposing an amendment to the Code, as published in the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, *Zootaxa* and several other journals in October 2008. We also agree that electronic-only publication of such acts must be allowed following the adoption of this amendment.

There is little doubt that in just a few years hard copy publication of *Spixiana* and the *Journal of Hymenoptera Research* will probably cease altogether, as is the case with several existing journals. We also fully support the proposal that mandatory registration of all electronic-only published acts in the ZooBank register should be required before any such acts can be considered valid. We are more than willing to implement mandatory registration on all acts published in our journal. We would hope that retrospective registration of all previous acts back to Linnaeus (1758) will follow shortly.

We are concerned that the proposed amendment was published 18 months ago, and yet the amendment is still under discussion. We strongly support the adoption of this amendment, we congratulate the Commission and the Commission Secretariat on this initiative, and we recommend rapid action to implement the amendment into the current Code.

(2) Lyubomir Penev (ZooKeys)

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With this letter, ZooKeys (www.pensoftonline.net/zookeys) wants to express its unequivocal support for the proposed amendment to the Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN, 2008) to allow electronic-only publication of nomenclatural acts. We have expressed our opinion in several fora and in personal conversations with the Executive Secretary and several ICZN Commissioners. Let us, however, highlight once again the steps ZooKeys has undertaken since its inception less than two years ago to support e-only publications and development of e-based publishing, dissemination and archiving of taxonomic information.

ZooKeys was the first taxonomic journal to implement several important innovations towards e-publishing, such as:

- (1) Mandatory registration of all newly described taxa in ZooBank.
- (2) Mandatory open access to published contents.
- (3) Mandatory archiving of new taxon names with the Encyclopedia of Life (including text descriptions), Globalnames.org, Wikispecies and others.
- (4) Mandatory indexing of published specimen record datasets through the GBIF infrastructure.
- (5) Development of protocols and methods for publication of datasets and interactive key files.
- (6) Development of XML-based work flow to implement the TaxPub XML schema (an extension of the National Library of Medicine DTD) allowing automated dissemination, indexing and archiving of published content (see also www.plazi.org).

At the same time, ZooKeys continues to produce a full-colour, high-resolution printed version, for those libraries or private customers who prefer to have the journal in print.

The reasons for our strong support of the proposed amendment may be summarised as follows:

(1) Advances in digital printing technology mean that the line between electronic and paper publishing is becoming obscured. In a growing number of cases, it is virtually impossible to know whether certain provisions of the Code concerning paper copies and library archiving have been met (Krell, 2009).

(2) Presence of paper copies does not guarantee stable preservation anymore because the risk that a few printed copies will get lost is much higher than that of a properly published, disseminated and archived e-publication.

(3) Dissemination of e-publications is incomparably more efficient than that of the printed versions. Proper archiving of electronic content by the journal coupled with wide circulation mean that news of new nomenclatural acts can be spread almost instantaneously through email lists, RSS feeds, and other electronic means. Dissemination of electronic documents within the taxonomic community is at least as good a guarantee of archival preservation as those specified for paper publications in the current Code.

(4) Publications available in electronic form can be disseminated around the world with much greater ease and efficiency than paper-only publications. This is particularly important because the world's most complete science libraries tend to be located far from the greatest concentrations of biodiversity.

(5) Recently developed standards and technologies for data publishing, with leadership from TDWG and GBIF, could make printed documents and perhaps even PDFs irrelevant to taxonomic publishing, possibly within just a few years.

(6) We anticipate that new generations of taxonomists will tend to decrease their reliance on paper publications. Future taxonomists will expect access to all contemporary and to most historical literature from their institutional computers. Satisfying this expectation will make taxonomic contributions more efficient to produce and easier to use.

(7) Curtailing consumption of paper saves nature!

Our support for e-only publications should be considered valid if four preconditions are clearly met:

(1) Mandatory registration of nomenclatural acts in ZooBank including most important aspects of the act: name, author, publication metadata, type specimen/species.

(2) Requirements for archiving of e-only publications in a limited number of internationally recognised, ISO-certified archives. Our strong recommendation is for PubMedCentral because (i) they are supportive of taxonomy through developing their TaxPub NLM DTD extension, (ii) PubMedCentral and PubMed are closely interlinked with NCBI and GenBank, and (iii) their archiving requirements are strict enough to guarantee long-term preservation of published information.

(3) Recommendation for deposition and dissemination of published nomenclatural acts, as well as data on type material, to a list of internationally recognised, general or taxon-based aggregators.

(4) Recommendation for all nomenclatural acts to be published open access, or to be made open access within six months after publishing.

The list of people who supported ZooKeys' opinion can be seen at <http://pensoftonline.net/zookeys/Letter>.

References

- ICZN (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature)**. 2008. Proposed amendment of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature to expand and refine methods of publication. *Zootaxa*, **1908**: 57–67 (also published in: *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, **95**: 874–881; *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*, **154**: 848–855; *African Invertebrates*, **49**: 1–11; *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, **65**: 265–275; *Journal of Crustacean Biology* (2009), **29**: 275–280).
- Krell, F.-T.** 2009. ZooBank and the next edition of the Code – challenges and new developments in the 250th year of zoological nomenclature. *Aquatic Insects*, **31** (Suppl. 1): 269–282.