

COMMON ERRORS IN THE AUTHORITY OF SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF FISH: A CAUTIONARY NOTE

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RESUM

L'ús de parèntesis amb els autors de noms científics de peixos molt sovint és incorrecte. Per exemple, s'utilitzen *Rutilus rutilus* L. i *Perca fluviatilis* (L.) en lloc dels correctes *Rutilus rutilus* (L.) i *Perca fluviatilis* L., respectivament. La revisió d'una base de dades bibliogràfiques en CD-ROM mostra que fins a un 89 % dels articles que incloïen l'autor cometien aquest tipus d'error en algunes espècies de peixos. Se suggereix que els autors, revisors i consells editorials comprovin més detalladament aquest i altres aspectes similars en els manuscrits.

RESUMEN

El uso de paréntesis con los autores de nombres científicos de peces es muy a menudo erróneo. Por ejemplo, se usan *Rutilus rutilus* L. y *Perca fluviatilis* (L.) en lugar de los correctos *Rutilus rutilus* (L.) y *Perca fluviatilis* L., respectivamente. La revisión de una base de datos bibliográficos en CD-ROM muestra que hasta un 89 % de los artículos que incluían el autor cometían este tipo de error en algunas especies de peces. Se sugiere que autores, revisores y consejos editoriales comprueben más detalladamente este aspecto y otros similares en los manuscritos.

ABSTRACT

The use of parentheses with the authors of scientific names of fish is very often wrong. For instance, *Rutilus rutilus* L. and *Perca fluviatilis* (L.) are wrongly used instead of the correct *Rutilus rutilus* (L.) and *Perca fluviatilis* L., respectively. A review of a CD-ROM bibliographic database showed that up to 89% of papers that included the authority of some fish species, committed this kind of error. Authors, reviewers, and editorial boards are urged to more carefully check these and similar aspects on manuscripts.

Key words: author, fish, nomenclature, scientific name, taxonomy.

According to the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, 1985), the authority of scientific names of species must be written between parentheses when the original specific name is now associated to another genus. However, this practice is often forgotten and misuse is very common. For instance, Prejs (1978), Prejs and Jackowska (1978), Hofer (1979), Niederholzer and Hofer (1979), Jelonek (1986), and Jamet et al. (1990) wrongly quote *Rutilus rutilus* L. instead of *Rutilus rutilus* (L.), while Giles et al. (1990) quote *Perca fluviatilis* (L.) instead of *Perca fluviatilis* L. (note errors in *Scardinius erythrophthalmus* (L.) as well). The inclusion of the authors of the name is optional (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, 1985) and is

not followed in most biological papers; e.g., among the papers on roach (*R. rutilus*) abstracted in the CD-ROM Life Sciences Collection 1990-1992 (Cambridge Scientific Abstracts): 28 quoted (in the title or the abstract) the scientific name with the author, 35 quoted the name without the author, and 10 quoted only the common name (i.e., roach). The equivalent figures for perch (*P. fluviatilis*) were 21, 51, and 8, respectively. The practice of quoting only the common name, probably more limited to articles on physiology or fundamental biology, seems unsuitable, as it complicates the identification of the paper in the database by potentially interested readers.

Unfortunately, the inclusion of the author is very often wrong. A review of a CD-ROM bibliographic database showed an unexpectedly high number of mistakes for recent literature. Of the papers that included the authority, up to 89% were wrong for some fish species (Table 1). Logically, the error of omitting the parentheses was more common than adding them. These statistics urge authors, reviewers, and editorial boards to check these and similar aspects on manuscripts more carefully. A good reference for European fish is Wheeler (1992).

Common name	Scientific name	Author	Number of correct citations	Incorrect author	Number of incorrect citations
European eel	<i>Anguilla angilla</i>	(L.)	12	L.	14
goldfish	<i>Carassius auratus</i>	(L.)	1	L.	8
common carp	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	L.	24	(L.)	1
perch	<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>	L.	20	(L.)	1
roach	<i>Rutilus rutilus</i>	(L.)	18	L.	10
trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	L.	65	(L.)	1

Table 1. Number of papers with correct and incorrect authors for selected fish species in the papers abstracted in the CD-ROM Life Sciences Collection 1990-1992 (Cambridge Scientific Abstracts).

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