

Correction of a case of homonymy in the genus *Zonurobia* (Acari: Pterygosomatidae)

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Short note

ABSTRACT

A case of homonymy in the genus *Zonurobia* is corrected by proposing *Zonurobia circularis limpopoensis* as a replacement name for *Zonurobia circularis transvaalensis* Lawrence, not *Zonurobia transvaalensis* Lawrence.

Keywords *Zonurobia*; Pterygosomatidae; homonymy

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Introduction

In proposing the genus *Zonurobia* for some mite parasites of South African lizards, Lawrence (1935) included 9 new species including *Z. circularis* (p. 11) and *Z. transvaalensis* (p. 15). He included an additional 5 “varieties” under *Zonurobia circularis*: *capensis*, *laticornis*, *longipilis*, *spiniventer*, and *transvaalensis*. Each was accompanied by the statement “n. var.”. *Zonurobia transvaalensis* was separately described and cited as “n. sp.”. The two taxa named “*transvaalensis*” were from different hosts and localities, so it is clear from his treatment that he regarded them as different taxa. According to Article 52 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN), these names are homonyms.

Bedford (1936) gave subspecies rank to all of Lawrence’s “varieties” without discussion (consistent with current ICZN Article 45.6.4), but in an apparent attempt to correct the homonymy between the two taxa named “*transvaalensis*” within *Zonurobia*, proposed “*Z. transvaalica* nom. nov.” for the species *Z. transvaalensis* Lawrence, 1935, perhaps because the new species name appeared later than the subspecies name in the work. Lawrence’s original names are cited as: “*Zonurobia circularis transvaalensis* Lawrence”, and “*Zonurobia transvaalica* (Lawrence)”. The use of parentheses in this case is not correct, and the latter replacement name should be attributed to Bedford. This is consistent with Articles 10.2 and 45.6.4.1 of the ICZN, which allows names originally proposed as “varieties” before 1961 to be treated as subspecies.

Jack (1964), in discussing morphological characters among species of Pterygosomatidae, made reference to *Z. transvaalensis* and placed this species in a group different from the five cited subspecies of *Z. circularis*. This clearly refers to *Z. transvaalensis* Lawrence (= *Z. transvaalica* Bedford). The subspecies “*transvaalensis*” of *Z. circularis* was curiously not mentioned.

Jack (1971) reviewed the genus *Zonurobia*, redescribing all of Lawrence’s original taxa and followed Bedford (1936) and Jack (1964) in treating his varieties as subspecies. He regarded the subspecies *capensis* and *laticornis* as just variants of *circularis*, although not formally placing the names in synonymy. He changed the spelling of *Z. circularis transvaalensis* to *transvaalense* without comment. Since the ending “-ensis” forms a Latin adjective of masculine or feminine gender, and the ending “-ense” is the neuter form of the word, this does

Received 28 April 2020

Accepted 29 June 2020

Published 17 July 2020

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Academic editor
Małgorzata Joanna

DOI
10.24349/acarologia/20204383

ISSN 0044-586X (print)
ISSN 2107-7207 (electronic)

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not constitute establishment of a new name for the subspecies. The generic name “*Zonurobia*” was formed from the then name for the host family, Zonuridae (now Cordylidae) and is feminine in form, so the spelling “*transvaalensis*” is correct. Jack also cited both Lawrence (1935) and Bedford (1936) in using the name *Z. transvaalica* for the full species but followed Bedford (1936) in attributing it to “(Lawrence) 1935”.

Bertrand *et al.* (2000) again referred to Lawrence’s subdivisions of *Z. circularis* as “variétés” and noted that further study would be required to clarify their status.

Fajfer (2012), in her checklist of Pterygosomatidae parasitic on reptiles, cited only the original combinations used by Lawrence, i.e. “*Z. circularis* var. *transvaalensis*” and “*Z. transvaalensis*”.

Taxonomy

The species group names, *Zonurobia circularis transvaalensis* Lawrence, 1935 and *Zonurobia transvaalensis* Lawrence, 1935, are homonyms. ICZN Article 57.7 mandates that when there is homonymy between a species name and a subspecies name within the same genus, the species name has priority, meaning the subspecies name is to be changed. This is the opposite of the situation described above. To rectify the situation, I propose the following:

1. *Zonurobia circularis limpopoensis* OConnor, nom. nov. for *Zonurobia circularis transvaalensis* Lawrence, 1935, not *Zonurobia transvaalensis* Lawrence, 1935. The new name derives from the South African province of Limpopo, formerly part of the old Transvaal province, where the type locality of the subspecies (Olifant river) is located.
2. *Zonurobia transvaalensis* Lawrence, 1935 = *Zonurobia transvaalica* Bedford, 1936 (New Synonymy).
3. Following Bedford (1936), the subdivisions within *Zonurobia circularis* should be referred to as subspecies and as available names rather than as varieties. This avoids confusion with the current ICZN, which regards modern names indicated as “varieties or forms” as unavailable.

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