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Two replacement names and a note on the author of the shrew family Soricidae (Mammalia)

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In the course of long-term revisionary studies of the fossil and living taxa of the Soricidae G. Fischer, 1817 (Hutterer 1995), and during work for a chapter of the new edition of the world checklist of mammals (Wilson & Reeder in prep.), a number of taxonomic and nomenclatural problems were encountered. These also include two cases of homonymy, which are discussed here and for which replacement names are proposed in accordance with article 60 of the code (ICZN 1999).

1. Replacement name for *Stirtonia* Gureev, 1979

The genus *Limnoecus* Stirton, 1930 currently includes two taxa, *L. tricuspis* Stirton, 1930 and *L. niobrarensis* Macdonald, 1947 (Harris 1998). James (1963) who compared the type specimens of both taxa concluded that *L. niobrarensis* was a synonym of *L. tricuspis*, a view not shared by Repenning (1967). Gureev (1979) concluded that both species were not closely related and he placed *L. niobrarensis* in a new genus *Stirtonia*. From the descriptions of both taxa given by Stirton (1930), Macdonald (1947) and James (1963) I am inclined to concur with Gureev (1979). However, the name proposed by him in honour of the North American palaeontologist R. A. Stirton is not available but preoccupied by *Stirtonia* Hershkovitz, 1970, a genus of fossil primate (Hershkovitz 1970, Hartwig 2002). This homonymy was also recognized by McKenna & Bell (1998). I therefore propose here a replacement name that retains the intentions of the late A. A. Gureev:

Stirtonisorex nom. nov., for *Stirtonia* Gureev, 1979 (type species: *Limnoecus niobrarensis* Macdonald, 1947: 123, Soricidae, Miocene sediments of Niobrara River, Nebraska, U.S.A.), not *Stirtonia* Hershkovitz, 1970: 6 (type species: *Humunculus tatacoensis* Stirton, 1951, Primates, Late Miocene of Colombia, Quebrada Tatacoa, upper Río Magdalena Valley). The genus is of male gender. Includes so far only one species, *Stirtonisorex niobrarensis* (Macdonald, 1947).

2. Replacement name for a West African giant shrew

Heim de Balsac (1968) named a large forest shrew from Mt Nimba (Guinea) *Crociodura odorata guineensis*, but the epithet was preoccupied by *Crociodura occidentalis guineensis* Cabrera, 1903, although this homonymy was overlooked until recently. From the same region he recorded what is now called *C. olivieri* (Lesson, 1827), under which name also currently the two other taxa are synonymized (Hutterer 1995). Recently I was able to study new specimens from the Tai National Park (Ivory Coast) collected by P. Barrière (University of Rennes). They seem to support Heim de Balsac's (1968) view of a sympatric occurrence of two species of giant shrews in West Africa. I identified one specimen from the Tai Forest as *C. olivieri*, but a second specimen resembled *Crociodura goliath* Thomas, 1906, a very large shrew confined to the Congo Basin (Hutterer 1995). The Tai specimen differs from *C. goliath* only by slightly smaller size and a shorter pelage (a long, rat-like pelage is typical of *C. goliath*). A subsequent examination of a 16s rRNA sequence of this specimen (Quéroil et al. 2003) revealed a high genetic distance compared to samples of *C. goliath* from the Congo Basin, suggesting species status for both populations. Heim de Balsac's (unavailable) name *guineensis* was proposed for the West African population. Because only one specimen was available for the genetic study, and because specimens from Central and West Africa closely conform in their phenotype, I tentatively retain the West African form in *C. goliath* and propose to call it henceforth:

Crocidura goliath nimbasilvanus nom. nov., for *Crocidura odorata guineensis* Heim de Balsac, 1968: 384, Ziela, Mt Nimba, Guinea, not *Crocidura occidentalis guineensis* Cabrera, 1903: 22, Cape San Juan, Rio Muni (Equatorial Guinea). The holotype was figured by Heim de Balsac (1968: 383).

3. Authorship of the family name

The name Soricidae has usually been credited to Fischer von Waldheim, 1817, a tradition kept in many checklists and handbooks. In 1993 Gordon Corbet pointed out to the editors and authors of “Mammal species of the world” that Fischer attained his noble title only after the publication of his 1817 paper. This was adopted in the 1995 reprint of the world list (Wilson & Reeder 1995) but has received little attention by palaeontologists and neontologists yet.

Johann Gotthelf Fischer (1771–1835) was born in Waldheim, a small village in Saxony, Germany. After college in Freyberg he went to the University of Leipzig where he gained his doctorate in medicine. He later became professor of natural history at Mainz. In 1804 he was called to be a professor of natural history and director of the Natural History Museum at the Moscow Academy. In Russia he founded the Imperial Society of Naturalists of Moscow and became one of the leading zoologist of his time (Essig 1931, Mearns 1992). During that time he published his 1817 paper in which he named the Soricidae, Erinaceidae, and Talpidae, among others. All these family taxa should bear G. Fischer, 1817 as the correct author.

In 1835 Fischer was elevated to the nobility, and he adopted the title von Waldheim because of his affection for the village in Saxony where he was born. He died in Moscow in October 1853 at the age of eighty-two.

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