



Species names based on photographs: debate closed

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Discussions of current issues of broad interest in zoological taxonomy are encouraged in *Zootaxa* (Zhang 2007). One recent topic examines species names based on photographs without preserved specimens. This is not a new topic: as Ceriaco *et al.* (2016) correctly noted, this topic was previously discussed about a decade ago in *Zootaxa* (Dubois & Nemésio 2007; Donegan 2008), and was soon followed by a series of opinions and rebuttals when the critically endangered species Galápagos pink land iguana—*Conolophus marthae* Gentile & Snell, 2009—was named without a preserved holotype (Donegan 2009; Nemésio 2009a,b; Dubois 2009; Gentile & Snell 2009; Minelli 2009).

The recent debates of photograph-based species names in *Zootaxa* (e.g. Amorim *et al.* 2016; Ceriaco *et al.* 2016; Cianferoni & Bartolozzi 2016) were in responses to articles published elsewhere (e.g. Marshall & Evenhuis 2015; Pape 2016) and/or in *Zootaxa* (e.g. Chaladze 2017; Faúndez 2017; Thorpe 2017). These include arguments for and against photograph-based species names, as well as calls for the improvement of the Code articles (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature 1999) concerning this topic. In this issue, two more papers on this topic are published (Garrouste 2017; Rogers *et al.* 2017). These are edited by our editor for nomenclature Prof. A. Minelli (Italy) who feels that it is time to close this debate. I fully agree with him and now close this series of debates.

It should be noted here that a special issue of *Bionomina* in 2017 was dedicated to this topic (Aguiar *et al.* 2017; Dubois 2017a,b; Epstein 2017; Grandcolas 2017; Löbl 2017; Orrico 2017; Raposo & Kirwan 2017). That specialist journal for nomenclature is a better forum than *Zootaxa*, if there is further interest in this topic.

It is also timely to close this debate because the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (2017) has just published “Declaration 45” to clarify the related texts in the “International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, fourth edition” (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature 1999). I quote two important points that clearly address the issues in this debate:

“Whenever feasible, new species-group taxa should be established on the basis of at least one preserved type specimen.”

“Establishing new species-group taxa without preserved name-bearing type material is permissible under the Code, but is discouraged unless justified by special circumstances, such as when capture or preservation of specimens is not feasible for technical reasons or for conservation concerns, or when specimens must be destroyed to reliably diagnose a new species.”

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