

# On the need for a journal of phylogenetic nomenclature

Committee on Phylogenetic Nomenclature,

as a part of its Preface, the *International Code of Phylogenetic Nomenclature (ICPN)* contains information on two important projects that are to be done before the Code is officially implemented: preparation of the “companion volume,” tentatively titled *Phylonyms: a Companion to the PhyloCode*, and development of *RegNum*, a registration database (Cantino & de Queiroz, 2010: 11). Here, I suggest one another thing that should be completed before implementation of the Code: development of a *journal* of phylogenetic nomenclature (PN).

A journal is needed for various reasons. Firstly, scientists should have a widely recognized place where they can discuss differing phylogenetic definitions and theoretical issues regarding PN. Even though various aspects of PN are being discussed in different kinds of journals, purely nomenclatural papers, such as those by Gauthier & de Queiroz (2001) or Cantino *et al.* (2007), focusing on phylogenetic definitions of taxon names, are still being published rather rarely. Of course, “prediction is very difficult, especially about the future,” but it is probable that after the *ICPN* is implemented, bringing up the companion volume, registration database that will provide clear information of what names are already phylogenetically defined and what are not, and – most importantly – start of governed phylogenetic nomenclature, the amount of this kind of papers will rise considerably.

As the history of PN shows, scientists disagree on many phylogenetic definitions, and it would be naive to assume that implementation of the *ICPN* will immediately change it, so the Committee on Phylogenetic Nomenclature (CPN) will undoubtedly be faced with many proposals of restricted emendations. Moreover, as Laurin (2008) pointed out, “confusion is often associated with progress, and may be unavoidable for nomenclature to prosper in the new millennium,” thus the start of governed phylogenetic nomenclature might be very demanding for both scientists and the CPN. And because the *ICPN* does not contain any information as to what should scientists do in the case they want to emend a definition, they will probably publish it in different journals or contact the CPN privately. However, this kind of acts, i.e., proposals of emendations as well as the CPN decisions, should be transparent and easily accessible to everyone.

Secondly, phylogenetic nomenclature is clearly surrounded with misinformation. In his abstract from the Second Meeting of the International Society for Phylogenetic Nomenclature held at Yale University, New Haven, Marjanović (2006) stated: “Outside of a few universities and a few subdisciplines, few biologists have heard of, let alone understood, phylogenetic nomenclature.” This statement would be valid today too. People should have access to information on PN, and a journal concentrating on PN and PN only would provide the most important information at one place. If it comes to PN, the International Society for Phylogenetic Nomenclature is the most competent body of knowledge, and due to this fact, people from among the Society can more appropriately select reviewers and provide better reviews than people from among any other university, institution or society.

Thus, it is proposed here to develop a journal that will focus on the following issues:

***Original nomenclatural studies.*** These include nomenclatural revisions (conversions of

preexisting names) as well as establishment of new clade names. In order to satisfy Art. 4 of the *ICPN*, the journal would have to be published in printed version too.

**Proposals of unrestricted and restricted emendations.** These include revisions of previously defined names and propositions of emendations.

**Theoretical articles.** These include proposals regarding the *ICPN* and phylogenetic nomenclature in general.

**Decisions adopted by the CPN.** These include various decisions regarding *ICPN* as well as those regarding emendations that require CPN approval (i.e., restricted emendations).

Of the four issues mentioned above, the second (i.e., proposals of restricted emendations) and fourth (i.e., decisions adopted by the CPN) should probably take place in the journal and the journal only.

If the *ICPN* is to be globally accepted as a code of biological nomenclature, the International Society for Phylogenetic Nomenclature should “advertise” phylogenetic nomenclature as much as it is possible. A journal of phylogenetic nomenclature, which would brought the most important issues together, might be a good start.

My best regards,

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