



Article

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A proposal for the common names for species of *Chiropotes* (Pitheciinae: Primates)

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Abstract

The common English name for the genus *Chiropotes* is currently bearded saki. We propose the use of “cuxiú” as the common name for *Chiropotes* species, arguing that this term not only has deeper cultural and historical roots, but would mesh with the common name currently in use over the vast majority of the genus range. Cuxiú (pronounced “coosh-e-oo”) would be phylogenetically and taxonomically more appropriate, and less ambiguous, than the currently used term, and remove the implied close affiliation between *Pithecia* and *Chiropotes*. Finally, as an indigenously-derived name, it would fit with the common names in use for the other two genera in the sub-family Pitheciinae (uacari, *Cacajao*; saki, *Pithecia*), both of which also have indigenous origins.

Key words: Bearded saki, *Chiropotes*, Cuxiú, Pitheciidae

Pitheciin systematics

Together with *Cacajao* Lesson 1840 and *Pithecia* Desmarest 1804, the genus *Chiropotes* Lesson 1840 forms the Pitheciinae, a sub-family of the Pitheciidae (Groves 2005). In current English usage (e.g. IUCN 2011), monkeys of the three genera are generally referred to as sakis (*Pithecia*), uacaris (*Cacajao*), and bearded sakis (*Chiropotes*). The terms for the former two genera are derived from indigenous names for the monkeys (Barnett 2004), whereas the latter is the English form of the equivalent name in German, “Bartsaki”, which was coined by Hick (1968).

Common names generally use salient visual characters both to distinguish between species (Barnett 2004), and to provide a verbal grouping for visually similar animals (Yoon 2009; Atran & Medin 2010). Aside from the