



Does nomenclatural availability of nomina of new species or subspecies require the deposition of vouchers in collections?

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Abstract

Several species of birds and primates recently described opened a debate in the zoological community on the possibility of naming new species or subspecies without material onomatophores (“name-bearing types”) deposited in collections. The current writing of the *Code* is ambiguous in this respect. We support here the view that such practice is not doing a service to the discipline of taxonomy as illustrations, DNA sequences or “definitions” cannot replace voucher specimens. The latter are and will be badly needed for the proper knowledge of the vanishing biodiversity of our planet. We review arguments pro and con the need to have a Rule in the *Code* requiring the deposition of onomatophores in collections for the proper and valid creation of new nomina in zoological nomenclature. In conclusion, we propose a more drastic Rule in this respect but also the possibility, in some exceptional cases, to apply to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to make nomina available even in the absence of material onomatophores.

Key words: Biodiversity crisis — Nomenclatural availability — Vouchers — Onomatophores — Collections — Illustrations — DNA sequences — Definitions — *Code* — Commission