



Nomenclatural availability of nomina of new species should always require the deposition of preserved specimens in collections: a rebuttal to Donegan (2008)

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“This article makes no attempt to refute ethical challenges that collecting is immoral—those are philosophical arguments best left to philosophers. I note only that, as metazoans, humans are heterotrophs that must consume other organisms as food before making any other declarations or prescriptions about the world around them”.

Bruce D. Patterson (2002: 254)

“Ironically but inevitably, key information and analytical rigor is sacrificed when specimens are not”.

Idem, page 258

Abstract

Recently, a paper (Dubois & Nemésio 2007) expressed general views regarding the deposition of vouchers in public collections to serve as onomatophores (name-bearing type specimens), and it was suggested that deposition should be made explicitly compulsory in the *Code*, to avoid the growing number of descriptions that skip this process opportunistically based on some apparent ambiguities of the *Code*. Donegan (2008) made several criticisms to that paper, defending a “liberal approach” of the *Code* concerning the nature of type specimens. Here I present my rebuttal to Donegan (2008), showing point by point that his criticisms are the sum of misunderstandings of the *Code* and of the ideas presented in Dubois & Nemésio (2007), allied to some biased and very subjective personal interpretations. The arguments used to allow description without the deposition of voucher(s) are once more demonstrated to be based on articles of the *Code* that do not serve to this end and the suggestions of amendment of the *Code* presented by Dubois & Nemésio (2007) are shown to adequately accommodate the concerns of conservationists regarding descriptions of species found on the brink of extinction.

Key words: scientific collecting, taxonomy, voucher deposition, zoological nomenclature

Introduction

Donegan (2008) recently published several criticisms to a paper of which I am a co-author (Dubois & Nemésio 2007). In order to contextualize the present discussion I will begin this paper by introducing previous published comments by Mr. T. M. Donegan on the subject of specimens collecting, be it for the purposes of designating type specimens or not. These quotations are not intended to be inflammatory. As the reader will notice after reading this entire paper, this “contextualization” is essential to demonstrate that Donegan’s (2008) opposition to Dubois & Nemésio’s (2007) suggestion to amend the *Code* is strongly biased by subjective feelings on the matter of sacrificing live beings to scientific purposes, and not an objective opposition to what was proposed by Dubois & Nemésio (2007).

It is not the first time that Mr. Donegan advocates the opposition to specimens collecting. He had already published (Donegan 2000) a response to Vuilleumier’s (1998) paper “The need to collect birds in the