



Nomenclatural availability of putative scientific generic names applied to the South American cichlid fish *Apistogramma ramirezi* Myers & Harry, 1948 (Teleostei: Cichlidae)

SVEN O. KULLANDER

Department of Vertebrate Zoology, Swedish Museum of Natural History, PO Box 50007, SE-104 05 Stockholm, Sweden.

E-mail: sven.kullander@nrm.se

Abstract

Mikrogeophagus Meulengracht-Madsen, 1968 is the oldest available generic name that has *Apistogramma ramirezi* as type species. *Papiliochromis* Meulengracht-Madsen, 1975 is an objective junior synonym of *Mikrogeophagus*. *Papiliochromis* Kullander, 1977 is an objective junior synonym of *Mikrogeophagus* and an objective junior synonym and homonym of *Papiliochromis* Meulengracht-Madsen, 1975. The name *Microgeophagus* used in an aquarium book by Frey 1957 is a *nomen nudum* because it was not used as a valid name. Many usages of *Microgeophagus* are erroneous subsequent spellings of *Mikrogeophagus*. *Pseudogeophagus* used by Hoedeman 1969 and *Pseudoapistogramma* used by Axelrod 1971 are *nomina nuda*. *Mikrogeophagus*, *Microgeophagus*, *Pseudogeophagus*, and *Pseudoapistogramma* were proposed with a direct or inferred reference to a non-existent publication about the behaviour of *A. ramirezi*. The case of *A. ramirezi* suggests that ornamental fish magazines may be unreliable sources of nomenclatural information.

Key words: aquarium magazines, *Microgeophagus*, *Mikrogeophagus*, *Papiliochromis*, Zoological Nomenclature

Introduction

The South American cichlid fish *Apistogramma ramirezi* was described in a short notice in an ornamental fish magazine, without indication of an author (Anonymous 1948). It is likely that the author was the editor of the journal, William T. Innes, who wrote a significant part of the content of his magazine and who corresponded with fish taxonomists. The article clearly indicates George S. Myers and Robert R. Harry as authors of the name, and they are universally recognized as the formal authors of *A. ramirezi* (Robins & Bailey 1982). A formal description by Myers and Harry, based on specimens from the ornamental fish trade followed soon afterward (Myers & Harry 1948). There were concerns about inadvertent descriptions of *A. ramirezi* very early. Myers & Harry (1948) wrote that the species was already commercialized as “Ramirezi”, that they could not find any use of the name making it available, and that they used the name *ramirezi* only in order to avoid confusion. Obviously their effort was in vain.

Since then *A. ramirezi* has become an important component of the ornamental fish trade. It was used in behaviour studies (Wickler 1956a) and maintenance and spawning behaviour were also reported in ornamental fish literature (e.g., Axelrod 1971). In 1957 it was associated with a different generic appellation, *Microgeophagus*, in an aquarium book by the German aquarist and author Hans Frey (Frey 1957). This name was rarely used, but in 1971 Axelrod (1971) used *Microgeophagus* in a widely distributed popular book about breeding ornamental fishes. At about the same time, Klee (1971), in an ornamental fish magazine, published a strong rejection of *Microgeophagus* and advocated with *in litteris* support from Myers that *A. ramirezi* should be assigned to the genus *Geophagus* Heckel.

After a long period of tranquility, Kullander (1977) described a new genus, *Papiliochromis*, with *A. ramirezi* as type species. Kullander (1977) mentioned *Microgeophagus* as an unavailable name, but did not detail on it, and referred to Klee (1971), Wickler (1956a, 1960), and Scheel (1972) for studies with data supporting the establishment of a new genus. Kullander (1980) redescribed *A. ramirezi* in *Papiliochromis* and provided a species bibliogra-