

International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature

Supporting the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN)

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Dear Prof. Tsurusaki,

The mandate of the *International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature*, (ICZN) is to provide and regulate a uniform system of zoological nomenclature, maintaining international standards that ensure every animal taxon has a unique and universally accepted scientific name. As most of the world's described taxa are animals, this task is of global importance for communicating about the living world. As you may be aware, the *International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature* (ITZN) was created as scientific charity to support the activities of the *International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature* (ICZN). We write to you in our capacities as Chairman of the ITZN (MD), and as President of the ICZN (JvT) to ask your support for the work of the Commission, through financial support to the Trust.

The ICZN is currently in a dynamic, productive phase (see attached sheet). However, the work of the Commission is under imminent threat because of lack of funding for the ITZN. The principal sources of income for the ITZN are from sales of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* and the *Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature*, external fundraising and from interests on investments. ITZN funds the costs of the Secretariat of ICZN, which is based within the NHM in London. For the past 20 years, ITZN's income has not matched expenditure and investments have been diminishing. Either the financial position is improved, and continuance of the activities of ICZN guaranteed, or the Trust will have to be wound up, which will effectively cease operations for the Commission. This might need to be within a very short time span, maybe as little as one year if the current situation cannot be changed.

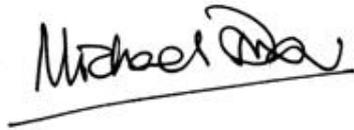
The Secretariat running costs are c. £120,000 per annum (in addition to the subsidy provided by the NHM in supplying space, library access and IT support). We are addressing the immediate threat to the ICZN by proposing an annual subscription scheme from our stakeholder institutions and organisations. We are setting up a global task force of Natural History Collections (NHC) representatives that will establish an equitable, fair distribution of responsibility based on NHC holdings and scientific use. We will follow this in coming years, as the global economy recovers, with a drive to build up an endowment that will generate enough interest to support the work of the ICZN. This will ensure the long-term sustainability of the Trust.

We are aware that we are asking organisations and institutions to subscribe to a service that they have historically enjoyed at no cost, and that institutional willingness and ability to pay will vary widely. A great many institutions worldwide use the services provided by ICZN, and we have looked in the first instance to the major natural history services, museums or their national representatives such as The Union of the Japanese Societies for Systematic Biology (UJSSB), to join the NHM in providing subsidy to ITZN to fund the work of ICZN. The Natural History Museum in Paris (MNHN) and Senckenberg Natural History Collections in Germany have contributed to the ICZN as major supporters (£15,000/year for three years), and others are keen to follow suit. Major supporters may nominate a member to sit on the ITZN Trust. Mid-level institutional supporters such as Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Naturalis in the Netherlands have pledged up to £5000/year for a minimum of three years. Specialist taxonomic organisations also contribute as an indication of their support of our work, as we serve their membership with our outputs. For example, The Malacological Society of London has committed £500/year.

Appeal Patrons: Prof. E.O. Wilson (Harvard University) & Sir David Attenborough

We expect that Japan would want to be in a leadership position to have input in to an ITZN task force, thus we will send further information as soon as possible. In the meantime, we ask that you commit to help find a subscribing Japanese institution to the ITZN, or to coordinate a number of donors to provide Japanese support. There has been consistent use of the Commissions judgments by Japanese scientists, and representation on the Trust and the Commission by a number of your distinguished researchers. Past support for the ICZN has been provided by the Japanese Society of Systematic Zoology, the Ichthyological Society of Japan, and the Arachnological Society of Japan. We expect that further support can be found among other taxonomic societies and from Japanese natural history museums. We are open to discussion of ways your contribution can be targeted for topics of particular concern for Japanese taxonomy, within the work done in the ICZN.

Yours sincerely,



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Please see www.iczn.org for further information on the structure and mission of the ICZN, as well as the finances of the ITZN.

"...the beginning of science is the description and naming of phenomena"
- E.O. Wilson, Appeal Patron, *The future of life*, 2002: xvii

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Recent ICZN highlights:

The landmark amendment to the Code allowing e-only publications for nomenclatural acts has been passed, after a period of considerable public input and careful deliberation (<http://iczn.org/content/electronic-publication-made-available-amendment-code>).

The authoritative web server for all available names in zoology, *ZooBank*, has been relaunched to accommodate the provisions of the amendment with a new, fast, intuitive interface, and input is increasing dramatically (<http://zoobank.org/>).

We have facilitated web-available translations of the current Code in a number of foreign languages to increase access usage by the taxonomic community (http://iczn.org/other_languages).

The ICZN is a key member of the International Committee on Bionomenclature (ICB, <http://www.bionomenclature.net/biocode2011.html>) - which aims to bring all organismal nomenclatural practice into a common discussion arena, and harmonise nomenclatural practice to the greatest degree possible. The ICZN acts as the main host for comments on the draft BioCode (<http://iczn.org/category/biocode/biocode>).

The Commission has worked with a committee of rotifer taxonomists to bring the first potential authoritative List of Available Names (LAN, under Article 79) into the public sphere for input, then vote by the Commission. LANs have the potential to change nomenclatural practice dramatically (<http://iczn.org/lan/rotifer>).

We organized a sell-out event with Sir David Attenborough and Professor Richard Fortey, two titans of natural history communication, speaking on behalf of the ICZN. A video of their talk is available here: <http://iczn.org/category/events/whats-name-attenborough-fortey-animals> . Sir David Attenborough has agreed to join Professor E.O. Wilson and serve as a patron to our fundraising appeal.

We organized a scholarly symposium celebrating Charles Davies Sherborn, whose *Index Animalium* set the cornerstone for biodiversity informatics (<http://iczn.org/category/events/sherborn-symposium>).

We ensure that our public events are available to wider audiences online as well as teaching materials on nomenclature.

The Commission is has considered challenges to names for iconic taxa such as *Archaeopteryx*, *Testudo gigantea*, the giant Aldabra tortoise, *Maculinea*, the Large Blue Butterfly, a conservation icon and *Paradisea*, Birds of Paradise. Our bulletin hosted extensive discussions on possible name-changes of the famous genetics laboratory animal *Drosophila melanogaster*, with considerable attention from the media. The Commission considers input from taxonomic stakeholders around the world, working on animals from protists to vertebrates.

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