Palythoa heideri Carlgren, 1954, objective synonym and valid name for the zoantharian currently known as Palythoa singaporensis Pax & Müller, 1956 (Cnidaria: Hexacorallia: Zoantharia: Sphenopidae)

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Abstract. The species-group name Palythoa singaporensis Pax & Müller, 1956, for a species of zoantharian from Singapore has to be replaced by its senior objective synonym Palythoa heideri Carlgren, 1954.

Key words. Anthozoa, Brachycnemina, Palythoa, nomenclature

INTRODUCTION

The species-group name Palythoa singaporensis Pax & Müller, 1956, has been applied to a species of sphenopid zoantharian from Singapore (Reimer & Todd, 2009: 104; Reimer et al., 2014: 19). It is herein determined that the species-group name Palythoa heideri Carlgren, 1954, is a senior objective synonym of Palythoa singaporensis Pax & Müller, 1956. As both names were proposed after 1900, Article 23.9 of the ‘International Code of Zoological Nomenclature’ (hereafter the Code, ICZN, 1999: 27, 28) cannot be applied to conserve the junior name. The only recourse would then be to apply to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to conserve the junior name.

However, as the taxon currently known as Palythoa singaporensis Pax & Müller, 1956, is not one of major commercial, medical, or research interest, we feel that a straightforward application of the Principle of Priority (Article 23.1 of the Code, ICZN, 1999: 24, 25) is the best action to take. The name Palythoa heideri Carlgren, 1954, thus becomes the valid name for the taxon hitherto known as Palythoa singaporensis Pax & Müller, 1956.

MISAPPLICATION OF A WEST INDIES NAME TO A SINGAPORE SPECIES

Heider (1899a: 280–287, pl. 27, figs. 22–29; 1899b: 130–137, pl. 27, figs. 22–29) identified material collected from a “Korallenbank von Singapore” as being conspecific with Gemmaria variabilis Duerden, 1898. Gemmaria variabilis Duerden, 1898, is a species described from the West Indies.

Carlgren (1954: 591, 592) stated “Palythoa heideri ? n[omen]. n[ovum]. … ? Gemmaria variabilis v. Heider 1899 p. 130 … Remarks: I have with hesitation identified the species with v. Heider’s Gemmaria variabilis, a species certainly not identical with Duerden’s variabilis. The species examined by v. Heider was from Singapore”. It is clear that Carlgren (1954: 591, 592) was explicitly renaming Gemmaria variabilis sensu Heider (1899) from Singapore as Palythoa heideri. The conditional proposal (as evidenced by the “?”) does not affect the availability of the name.

Palythoa heideri and Palythoa singaporensis were thus new names given respectively by Carlgren (1954: 591, 592) and Pax & Müller (1956: 233, footnote) for material from Singapore identified as Gemmaria variabilis Duerden, 1898, by Heider (1899a: 283; 1899b: 130). The apparent discrepancy in the page citations of Heider’s (1899) work is explained by the fact the Heider’s work which first appeared in ‘Zeitschrift für Wissenschaftliche Zoologie’ (vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 269–288) was reprinted with different pagination in ‘Arbeiten aus dem Zoologischen Institut zu Graz’ (vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 119–138). The text of Heider (1899a) is identical to Heider (1899b).

**Palythoa heideri Carlgren, 1954: The correct name**

As both *Palythoa heideri* Carlgren, 1954, and *Palythoa singaporensis* Pax & Müller, 1956, were based on the same material as that of Heider (1899a: 283; 1899b: 130) from Singapore, both names are objective synonyms. Being proposed two years earlier, *Palythoa heideri* Carlgren, 1954, has priority over (and is the correct name for) *Palythoa singaporensis* Pax & Müller, 1956. The taxonomic validity of *Palythoa heideri* Carlgren, 1954 (formerly *Palythoa singaporensis* Pax & Müller, 1956), is currently uncertain and is still being studied (see Reimer et al., 2015). Nevertheless, it is still felt that the objective synonymy and priority of both names should be discussed so that the correct name can be used if and when the validity of this taxon is confirmed.

**Literature Cited**

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