Mistakes in the formation of species-group names for Neotropical bats: *Micronycteris* and *Sturnira* (Phyllostomidae)

**SERGIO SOLARI**

1. Instituto de Biología, Universidad de Antioquia, A.A. 1226, Medellín, Colombia
2. Nomenclature Committee, American Society of Mammalogists, Lawrence, KS 66044, USA
3. E-mail: ssolari@matematicas.udea.edu.co

**Key words:** *Micronycteris*, *Sturnira*, original spellings, nomenclature, Phyllostomidae

Nomenclatural rules for creating species, genera, and family group names are found in the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN, 1999), hereinafter referred to as the Code. The Nomenclature Committee of the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM) offers advice on its interpretation for fellow mammalogists. Over the last few years, I have become aware of certain inconsistencies and mistakes in the formation of species-group names (names of species and subspecies) based on personal names and applied to Neotropical bats of the family Phyllostomidae. Therefore, it is important to discuss these mistakes in the context of a proper use of those Nomenclature rules.

My intention here is to provide guidance for authors describing new species and for subsequent users of the names created thereby. The formation and subsequent changing of names are subject to rules which are sometimes ignored or misapplied. In particular, I will be discussing certain aspects of what does and does not constitute ‘incorrect original spellings’ that may properly be subject to emendation. Herein, I present examples involving names based on modern personal names and for species of Neotropical bats of the genera *Micronycteris* Gray 1866 (Phyllostominae) and *Sturnira* Gray 1842 (Stenodermatinae).

Pirlot (1967) described a subspecies of *Micronycteris* from western Venezuela, and named it *M. megalotis homezi*. After introducing the new name, the author made clear his gratitude to Professor J. Homez and to M[onsieur] A. Homez (owners of the property where Pirlot caught the type specimen; p. 265). The status of this taxon was essentially ignored for almost 30 years, until Simmons and Voss (1998) reported additional specimens from French Guiana and validated use of the name at the species level. However, Ochoa and Sanchez (2005) reviewed the bats which had been referred to in the literature as *M. megalotis* (Gray), *M. minuta* (Gervais), and *M. homezi*, and concluded that *homezi* was a junior synonym of *minuta*.

Peterson and Tamsitt (1968) described a new species of *Sturnira* from northwestern South America, which they named *S. aratathomasi*. In their introduction (p. 1), the authors made it clear that it was their intention to honor the contributions of Mr. Maurice Thomas and Dr. Andrew Arata, both of Tulane University, who had obtained the specimen. A similar instance occurred when McCarthy et al. (2006) described a new species from the Chocó of Ecuador and Colombia, and named it after Karl F. Koopman and John E. Hill (p. 102), as *S. koopmanhilli*.

The current edition of the Code (ICZN, 1999) has detailed criteria for formation of new species-group names. These are given in Art. 31, including names formed from personal names. Thus, Art. 31.1.2 states that a species-group name formed directly (without being Latinized) from a modern personal name is to be formed by adding any of the four specific endings as is appropriate. However, the Code (Art. 32.5) does not explicitly designate names with incorrect endings as constituting incorrect original spellings which are subject to emendation. However, there are cases in which such emendation has been done (e.g., Groves, 1993; *Aotus nancymai* Hershkovitz 1983 to *A. nancymaee*, after Nancy Ma, a woman). The issue is debatable (see Brandon-Jones et al., 2007; Dubois, 2007) but, in the interest of long-term stability, the original spelling should be preserved when there is no evidence of...