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CATEGORIES OF SPECIES NAMES IN ZOOLOGY

By Dr. HOBART M. SMITH

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It is a remarkable fact that zoological taxonomists have persisted for many years in maintaining an oversimplified classification of names for animals, in spite of the diverse kinds of names revealed by the Rules and Opinions of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. For nearly two hundred years taxonomists have commonly referred to species names, or subspecies names, or names not qualifying as either, with rare reference to the fact that these names can differ widely in the application of rules to them. Only one category of the several that exist has been popularly recognized (*nomina nuda*), yet it is clear that not all other names are on a par with each other. Some are valid, some invalid; they may

be available or not; there are synonyms and homonyms; some are clearly diagnosed, others not. Names in these and other categories are not treated exactly alike by the rules; each may have a distinct procedure outlined for it. For instance, new names proposed with an acceptable but inadequate diagnosis are to be treated in an almost entirely different manner than names accompanied by adequate diagnoses. In spite of the existence of these several different categories, they have never been clearly defined or named. It is my belief that their clarification will greatly simplify the consideration of taxonomic problems. The present discussion suggests a possible scheme of classification.

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