



On the need to follow rigorously the Rules of the *Code* for the subsequent designation of a nucleospecies (type species) for a nominal genus which lacked one: the case of the nominal genus *Trimeresurus* Lacépède, 1804 (Reptilia: Squamata: Viperidae)

PATRICK DAVID^{1,4}, GERNOT VOGEL² & ALAIN DUBOIS³

¹Reptiles & Amphibiens, UMR 7205 OSEB, Département Systématique et Evolution, CP 30, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, 57 rue Cuvier, 75231 Paris Cedex 05, France; e-mail: pdavid@mnhn.fr

²Society for Southeast Asian Herpetology, Im Sand 3, 69115 Heidelberg, Germany; e-mail: Gernot.Vogel@t-online.de

³Reptiles & Amphibiens, UMR 7205 OSEB, Département Systématique et Evolution, CP 30, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, 57 rue Cuvier, 75231 Paris Cedex 05, France; e-mail: adubois@mnhn.fr

⁴Corresponding Author

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the consequences of the non-respect of the Rules of the *Code* to ascertain the valid subsequent designation of the nucleospecies (type species) of the nominal genus *Trimeresurus* Lacépède, 1804. The long accepted designation was invalid because it was based on a nominal species which was not among the prenucleospecies (originally included species) of the nominal genus. In contrast with the commonly accepted viewpoint which makes the Indian taxon *Coluber gramineus* Shaw, 1802 the nucleospecies of the genus, we show that this role is played by *Trimeresurus viridis* Lacépède, 1804, a species inhabiting the Lesser Sunda Islands and Timor and, as a *nomen oblitum*, a senior synonym of *Trimeresurus albolabris insularis* Kramer, 1977, a taxon now considered a distinct species. The important nomenclatural implications of this finding are discussed here, especially with regard to the recent splitting of the genus *Trimeresurus*. The generic nomen *Trimeresurus* should be associated with the *Trimeresurus albolabris* group of species currently placed in the genus or subgenus *Cryptelytrops* Cope, 1860. A lectophoront (lectotype) is selected and described for *Trimeresurus viridis* Lacépède, 1804. *Coluber viridis* Bechstein, 1802 is an invalid objective junior synonym of *Coluber gramineus* Shaw, 1802. The current content of the genus *Trimeresurus* and of its eight subgenera is provided. Some clarifications or improvements to the *Code* are suggested.

Key words: Nomenclature, Onomatophore, Nucleospecies, Nominal species, Spelling, Type species, Prenucleospecies, *Trimeresurus*, *Trimeresurus viridis*, *Cryptelytrops*, *Trimeresurus insularis*, New synonym