

Scalibregmatidae (Annelida)—Mandatory species name emendations

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The Zoological Code requires mandatory correction for incorrect gender-agreement of adjectival species-group names (ICZN 1999: article 31.2). This applies to both original names and recombinations. Authorships do not change with gender-agreement spelling changes. There are an unusual number of neuter genera (6 of 15) in Scalibregmatidae, and in a recent monograph of scalibregmatid polychaetes 76 species including 54 new species, were covered, most of which were correctly introduced with new or recombined neuter-gender adjectival names (Blake 2025). However, a few mostly minor spelling changes required for certain neuter constructions were overlooked. Here we make those changes and some related changes for previously described species. The genders of all valid genera within Scalibregmatidae are noted in Read & Fauchald (2025).

The type-genus of Scalibregmatidae, *Scalibregma* Rathke, 1843, is of neuter gender, as are five further valid genera that were named to include ‘*bregma*’ as the ending letters. This results in a high proportion of neuter genera in a relatively small family of annelids. In nomenclature the duplication in a new genus of part of an existing compound name (two descriptive words combined) is a common method to signal membership of a group of two or more genera, in this case ‘*bregma*’ indicating membership in the family Scalibregmatidae. Rathke (1843: 182, footnote) explained the derivation of *Scalibregma* as follows (translated): “*The name is composed of [Greek for] front head and [Greek for] a tool for digging, scratching.*” Brown (1954) translated the Greek *bregma*, -*tos* (neuter) as front part of the head, and Greek *skalis*, -*idos* (feminine) as mattock or hoe. Thus, *Scalibregma* means hoe (-shaped) forehead and the genus is of neuter gender as the ending word ‘*bregma*’ of the combination is neuter. Rathke (1843) correctly gave the type species a neuter species-group name of ‘*inflatum*’.

The Zoological Code operates only as a useful framework for community collaboration and is without legal force, but it is inadvisable to contravene it without good reason because of its laboriously achieved consensus on any rule. It is worth mentioning, however, that the concept of gender agreement is not agreed upon by all zootaxonomists, including some lepidopterists who reject continuing with it for reasons related to the history of their group (the major genus *Papilio* is of disputed gender) and some experts who abide by the requirement but do not think that it is essential for stability of name spelling (see analyses of Sommerer 2002 and Welter-Schultes 2013). Sommerer (2002) artfully quoted the Latin maxim “*ultra posse nemo obligatur*” (no one should be obligated beyond their ability) for indicating how taxonomists today may be disadvantaged in not having basic knowledge of nomenclatural Latin or Greek. While gender agreement is deeply embedded in taxonomic practice, and for many decades-past taxonomists silently made the necessary corrections (although it is better to explain a spelling change), the difficulty is that genus genders are not always unambiguously known. This is partly due to the fact that otherwise highly skilled past and modern zoologists have not thought to state the gender of their new genera (contrary to ICZN Recommendation 30A), and authors do not indicate if species names are (changeable) adjectives or (unchanging) nouns, thus weakening how easily gender-agreement can be applied. Nevertheless, the requirement in the ICZN for gender-agreement seems unlikely to change in the immediate future.

The name spellings as used by Blake (2025) are entered in WoRMS, the World Register of Marine Species (Read & Fauchald 2025) along with detailed notes on any needed corrections. For the convenience of other taxonomists, we list here the required changes, plus some further necessary changes from other works (while not considering currently unaccepted names). We regard certain species names as unchanging nouns in apposition, notably the type species of the masculine genus *Hyboscolex*, *H. longiseta* Schmarda, 1861 (adjective and noun with no adjectival suffix modifying the

noun ‘seta’). See Langeneck & Strazzulla (2025) for other examples and see WoRMS for further noun Scalibregmatidae examples and the supporting details of the etymologies. From Blake (2025) the changes include some legacy feminine ‘-ata’ endings which should have been neuter ‘-atum’, and some Latin masculine and feminine adjectival endings of ‘-is’ which should be ‘-e’ to match neuter genera. Notably this applies to the popular ‘-ensis’ suffix which makes a placename into a species-group adjectival name indicative of geographic origin. The ‘-ensis’ suffix only applies to binominals of masculine and feminine genera, whereas the neuter species ending should be ‘-ense’ (Brown 1954). As a demonstration of relative current use there are 42,660 (1,939 Annelida) valid ‘-ensis’ species names in WoRMS versus only 3,655 (67 Annelida) valid ‘-ense’ names.

Scalibregmatidae gender-agreement name adjustments, all taxa

1) Neuter to masculine

Genus *Asclerocheilus* Ashworth, 1901 [masculine]

Asclerocheilus pseudocollare (Schüller & Hilbig, 2007) [originally *Oligobregma pseudocollare*] → *Asclerocheilus pseudocollaris* (Schüller & Hilbig, 2007)

2) Masculine/feminine to neuter

Genus *Mucibregma* Fauchald & Hancock, 1981 [neuter]

Mucibregma spinosa Fauchald & Hancock, 1981 → *Mucibregma spinosum* Fauchald & Hancock, 1981

Genus *Oligobregma* Kudenov & Blake, 1978 [neuter]

Oligobregma aciculata (Hartman, 1965) [originally *Pseudoscalibregma aciculata*] → *Oligobregma aciculatum* (Hartman, 1965)

Oligobregma aristata Blake, 2023 → *Oligobregma aristatum* Blake, 2023

Oligobregma bathyala Blake, 2023 → [neologism not in dictionaries, kept unchanged]

Oligobregma mucronata Blake, 2015 → *Oligobregma mucronatum* Blake, 2015

Oligobregma oculata Kudenov & Blake, 1978 → *Oligobregma oculatum* Kudenov & Blake, 1978

Oligobregma profunda Blake, 2023 → *Oligobregma profundum* Blake, 2023

Oligobregma renuncula Blake, 2023 → *Oligobregma renuncula* Blake, 2023) [neologism treated as unchanging noun in apposition]

Oligobregma tasmania (Kirkegaard, 1996) [originally *Asclerocheilus tasmanius*] → *Oligobregma tasmanius* (Kirkegaard, 1996) [unchanging noun in apposition]

Oligobregma weddelliensis Blake, 2025 → *Oligobregma weddelliense* Blake, 2025

Genus *Pseudoscalibregma* Ashworth, 1901 [neuter]

Pseudoscalibregma gracilis Blake, 2025 → *Pseudoscalibregma gracile* Blake, 2025

Pseudoscalibregma orientalis Imajima, 2009 → *Pseudoscalibregma orientale* Imajima, 2009

Pseudoscalibregma bransfieldium (Hartman, 1967) [originally *Eusclerocheilus bransfieldia*] → *Pseudoscalibregma bransfieldia* (Hartman, 1967) [unchanging feminine noun in apposition]

Genus *Scalibregma* Rathke, 1843 [neuter]

Scalibregma australis Blake, 2015 → *Scalibregma australe* Blake, 2015

Scalibregma beaufortensis Blake, 2025 → *Scalibregma beaufortense* Blake, 2025

Scalibregma brevicaudum Verrill, 1873 (fide Blake 2025) → *Scalibregma brevicauda* Verrill, 1873 [revert to original spelling as unchanging compound noun in apposition]

Scalibregma chilensis Blake, 2025 → *Scalibregma chilense* Blake, 2025

Scalibregma lydoniensis Blake, 2025 → *Scalibregma lydoniense* Blake, 2025

Scalibregma ridleyensis Blake, 2025 → *Scalibregma ridleyense* Blake, 2025

Genus *Sclerobregma* Hartman, 1965 [neuter]

Sclerobregma branchiata Hartman, 1965 [originally *Sclerobregma branchiatum*, first misspelled by Hartman & Fauchald, 1971] → *Sclerobregma branchiatum* Hartman, 1965]

Sclerobregma nanhaiensis Lin, Huang, Liang & He, 2025 → *Sclerobregma nanhaiense* Lin, Huang, Liang & He, 2025

3) Feminine to masculine

Genus *Hyboscolex* Schmarda, 1861 [masculine]

Hyboscolex verrucosa Hartmann-Schröder, 1979 → *Hyboscolex verrucosus* Hartmann-Schröder, 1979

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