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New Seventh Edition of Common and Scientific Names of Fishes: Changes include capitalization of common names

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New Seventh Edition of *Common and Scientific Names of Fishes*

Changes include capitalization of common names

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The seventh edition of *Common and Scientific Names of Fishes from the United States, Canada, and Mexico* (Page et al. 2013) continues the effort established by the six earlier editions to standardize the names of North American fishes, thereby improving communication among fisheries biologists, the popular press, and others with an interest in fishes. It provides the accepted common and scientific names for all fishes in the continental United States, Canada, and Mexico, including marine species inhabiting (as juveniles or adults) contiguous shore waters on or above the continental shelf to a bottom depth of 200 m. In the Atlantic Ocean, all shore fishes from Greenland and eastern Canada, the United States, and Mexico, including those from the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea south to the Mexico–Belize border, are included. In the Pacific Ocean, species occurring over the continental shelf from the Bering Strait to the Mexico–Guatemala border, including Guadalupe Island and Revillagigedo Archipelago, are included.

From 570 entries in the 1948 list (comprising primarily the better known sport, commercial, and forage fishes), coverage increased to 1,892 species in 1960 (the first attempt at a complete listing), 2,131 species in 1970, 2,268 in 1980, and 2,428 in 1991. The 2004 list (sixth edition), which added the Mexican fauna, increased the coverage to 3,694 fishes and added six cephalochordates. The present edition includes 3,875 native

(indigenous) and established introduced species.

Major changes in the seventh edition include the capitalization of all common names in English, the addition of a common name in French for each Canadian species, and the recognition of occurrences in the Arctic Ocean as separate from those in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The southern boundary of the Arctic Ocean in North America is defined as extending from the northern tip of Labrador along latitude 61° N to Greenland in the Atlantic and from the western tip of the Seward Peninsula to the United States–Russia border in the Bering Strait in the Pacific.

The inclusion of a common name in French for all Canadian species (rather than only for those from Quebec, as in the sixth edition) provides a checklist for all Canadian species, just as the inclusion of common names in Spanish for all Mexican species provides a checklist for Mexico. The list does not provide a checklist of species for the United States, however, because all species, even if they occur only in Canada or Mexico, are given names in English (although all freshwater fishes from the United States are indicated as F:U in the column indicating where they occur). One goal for the eighth edition will be to create a means by which a checklist for all species occurring in the United States can be extracted.

The capitalization of common names in English was a rec-

ommendation from an ad hoc committee of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, which concluded that capitalization helps to eliminate the ambiguity that accompanies names like blue catfish, lake trout, black brotula, and deepsea sole (Nelson et al. 2002) and that common names in English should be treated as proper nouns. This change moves the practice for North American fishes into agreement with that for several other vertebrate groups, where capitalization of English names is standard. The capitalization of the English names of fishes applies only to individual species such as the Bluebarred Pygmy Sunfish and Bumphead Parrotfish, not to groups of related species such as pygmy sunfishes, parrotfishes, and bony fishes. (See the accompanying sidebar for additional information on the capitalization of fish names in American Fisheries Society publications.)

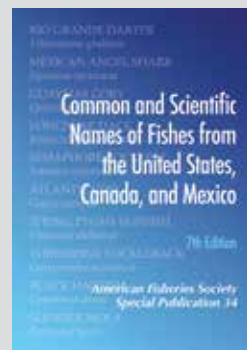
The English common names (or portions thereof) of several species are derived directly from the Spanish names used in Mexico, which may include words with accent marks. The Committee on Names of Fishes was divided over whether to treat such words as “automatically anglicized”—and thus not to retain the accent marks—or to regard them as Spanish words included in English common names and to retain the accent marks. Following the National Geographic Society’s *Atlas of the World*, we concluded that some geographic names have been so widely adopted into English that they can be considered anglicized (e.g., “Yucatan” as opposed to the Spanish “Yucatán” and Rio Grande as opposed to “Río Grande”), whereas others, which are generally not used in English, should retain their accent marks to assist in pronunciation (e.g., Cuatro Ciénegas Cichlid).

All additions to and changes in names and occurrences from those in the sixth edition are explained in an appendix, as has been done since the third edition. Scientific names change with advancing knowledge of the phylogenetic relationships of species and in accordance with the views of taxonomists. Most of these changes are straightforward and without controversy (often because only a limited number of taxonomists work on those taxa). However, a few are not unambiguous due to conflicting conclusions among the scientists studying particular species or higher taxa. In those circumstances, the committee sought the opinions of experts and chose the name that seemed best supported. The committee did not adopt a proposed change in a species, genus, or family name if it had not been adopted by a majority of the scientists working on that taxon. The appendix also provides comments on names that remain unchanged from the sixth edition but for which new information warrants clarification.

Some higher taxa that are used by most scientists as well as in the seventh edition (Perciformes being a prime example) are undoubtedly paraphyletic. Even so, evaluating attempts to resolve relationships and improve classification is difficult because of conflicting conclusions and, often, the limited number of taxa sampled. Changes clearly are necessary to reflect evolutionary history, but making changes that are short-lived has the effect of confusing rather than improving names meant to communicate information about fishes. Our apologies to those who feel that their work has been given less credit than it deserves. Ultimately, the systematists who best understand particular

groups of fishes will make the decisions about scientific names, but until such changes are accepted by the scientific community the committee will maintain a conservative approach.

Conservatism aside, the committee has discussed moving the process of reviewing and evaluating names to an online format that will allow all interested persons to contribute. This proposal will be discussed with members of the American Fisheries Society and the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in the near future.



The seventh edition of *Common and Scientific Names* is scheduled for publication in April 2013.

Capitalization of Species Names in AFS Publications

In keeping with the capitalization of the English common names of fishes in the seventh edition of *Common and Scientific Names of Fishes from the United States, Canada, and*

Mexico, the publications section of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) has revised some of its rules with respect to capitalization. In all submissions to AFS publications, authors should now

- Capitalize the English common names of all fish species, including those not in *Common and Scientific Names* and other AFS taxonomic publications
- Capitalize the common names of subspecies (e.g., Lahontan Cutthroat Trout)
- Not capitalize the names of life history variants (e.g., steelhead) and hybrids (e.g., saugeye)
- Not capitalize the common names of nonfish species, even if they appear in an AFS taxonomic publication
- Not capitalize common names that refer to groups of related species (e.g., Pacific salmon, darters)
- Not capitalize the common portions of names shared by two or more species when they are mentioned as a group (e.g., Gizzard and Threadfin shad; see section 2.12 of the AFS style guide)

Any questions about the capitalization of species names should be sent to the Journals Department (journals@fisheries.org).

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