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Case 2141

***Rana sphenocephala* Cope, 1886 (Amphibia, Anura): proposed precedence over *Rana utricularius* Harlan, 1826**

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Abstract. Conservation of the name *Rana sphenocephala* Cope, 1886 for a common American leopard frog by suppression of *R. utricularius* Harlan, 1826 was proposed in 1977. The latter name was essentially unused because it was considered a synonym of *R. pipiens* Schreber, 1782, but it was revived in 1974 as a supposed senior synonym of *R. sphenocephala*. Objections on taxonomic grounds to the proposed suppression of *R. utricularius* prevented completion of this case; it is now proposed that *R. sphenocephala* be given precedence over *R. utricularius*.

1. In 1977 we published an application (BZN 33: 195-203) for the conservation of the species-group name *sphenocephala* Cope, 1886 (p. 517). As was stated in that application, Cope's name (usually cited as from Cope, 1889) has been extensively used for a century, either as *Rana sphenocephala* or as *R. pipiens sphenocephala*, for a leopard frog from the south-eastern United States; it was first published (as *R. halecina sphenocephala*) to replace *R. oxyrhynchus* Hallowell, [1856] (p. 142), which is a junior primary homonym of the name of an African frog, *R. oxyrhynchus* Smith, 1849.

2. *R. oxyrhynchus* Hallowell, [1856] was published for a leopard frog from Florida. A more northerly distributed taxon is *R. pipiens* Schreber, 1782, of which *R. halecina* Daudin, 1802 is a junior subjective synonym. As discussed in the original application, and in the references cited there and below, *pipiens* and *sphenocephala* are taxonomically distinct within the '*R. pipiens* complex'. Frogs of this group are very widely studied for a variety of purposes.

3. In 1826 Harlan (p. 60) described *R. utricularius* from Pennsylvania and New Jersey, but, as we discussed previously, this did not become the accepted name for any taxon because of the seniority of *pipiens* or *halecina*, and it had been unused for very many years before being resurrected by Pace (1974). Pace used the spelling '*utricularia*', but *utricularius* is a noun meaning 'bagpiper'. In adopting the name, Pace considered that Harlan had differentiated his *utricularius* from *halecina* (= *pipiens*) in ways which



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