



THE FESTIVUS

GUIDELINES FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF NEW TAXA

These guidelines are offered so that authors can prepare papers that meet the criteria of *The Festivus*. These guidelines only address three of the many sections associated with descriptions of new taxa. All manuscripts must be fully ICZN4 compliant.

Description (ICZN 13.1.1)

- The description of all new taxa must explicitly state “new genus”, “new species”, or the like.
- All species descriptions are based on the holotype; all genus descriptions explicitly state the type species, and other included species.
- Vague phrases such as “similar in size or shape to other members of the genus” should not be used in the description. This is a description not a comparison; comparisons are made in the diagnosis.
- Holotypes must be deposited in a nationally or internationally recognized public institution with an emphasis on mollusks.
- Address all morphological characteristics of the shell and discuss the live animal when available. Clarity, comprehensiveness and consistency without ambiguity are absolute standards.
- Variation of paratypes is important but is not to be included in the description of the holotype, unless necessary where the holotype is missing parts (*e.g.*, the protoconch).
- Type Locality: be specific regarding the locality and include depth and substrate if possible. Provide latitude/longitude if possible.

Paratypes

- Paratypes of species and subspecies are important as they help define the expected range of variation. Where paratypes are identified, an adequate discussion of the paratypes is necessary when quantifying variability and demonstrating the uniqueness of the species (*see*, Wilson, Judith E., 1999. *Describing Species - Practical Taxonomic Procedure for Biologists*, Columbia University Press, 519 pp., ISBN 0-231-06824-7).
- Authors should include a discussion of variation where appropriate. In doing so the author may wish use a heading such as “Paratype Variation.” Understanding and quantifying the variation within the taxa is critical so that the differential diagnosis or discussion is both correct and comprehensive.
- If necessary the author may borrow additional material from institutions or private collectors to ensure that the range of variation within the taxa is adequately presented.
- Deposit as many paratypes as practical in institutional collections. Types in private collections are often lost when collections are sold or divided, and therefore, it is not recommended that paratypes be privately held.

- Distinguish between specimens intended to be recognized as paratypes and those that are of questionable affinity by indicating the latter as “Other Material Examined”.

Diagnosis/Discussion (ICZN Article 13, Recommendation 13A)

- The purpose of this section is to make clear the author’s intent to unambiguously differentiate the taxon by providing a detailed comparison between the new taxon and other similar taxa to avoid confusion. This section may also be called a “Differential Diagnosis.” Where possible diagnostic features should be visible in the shell and/or in preserved specimens (*e.g.*, not solely geographic data, behavior, or genetic data), and should apply to all specimens known to or available to the author. It is understood that this is not always possible as certain species main differential characteristics include animal coloration which is lost in preservation, and cryptic species cannot always be diagnosed without molecular data. Tables of morphological characters that identify differences and similarities are important and useful, as are statistical analysis and/or graphs showing the range of variation and extent of overlap/separation with other taxa. Quantify attributes whenever possible and provide appropriate statistical tests. This is especially important if the author does not provide photos or illustrations of other similar species.

General Comments

- Papers with a combination of DNA data and morphological/distributional/behavioral data are acceptable.
- If DNA data provides the only characteristic used to distinguish a new taxon, journals with a focus on molecular systematics may be better suited.