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ON THE CORRECT NAME FOR SOME SUBFAMILIES OF MUSTELIDAE (MAMMALIA, CARNIVORA)

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ABSTRACT

Mustelids (Mustelidae) exhibit a wide morphological and ecological diversity, ranging from aquatic to semi arboreal and fossorial forms. It is the most diversity family in Carnivora, and this has promoted a great number of taxonomic arrangements for subfamilies, which can range from two to 15 depending on the author. The relatively recent use of molecular data has helped to elucidate the classification of mustelids, and eight subfamilies are currently recognized: Mustelinae, Galictinae, Helictidinae, Martinae, Melinae, Mellivorinae, Taxidiinae and Lutrinae. However, some of these subfamilies have nomenclatural problems, not receiving the oldest available name. The subfamily that includes martens (Martes, Charronia and Pekania), tayra (Eira) and wolverine (Gulo) has received the name of Martinae Wagner, 1841, but the oldest available name is Guloninae Gray, 1825. This problem also occurs for the subfamily that includes the grisons (Galictis), Patagonian weasel (Lyncodon), marbled polecat (Normela) and striped weasels (Ictonyx and Pocilogale), which are known as Grisoninae Pocock, 1921, but the correct name for this group is Ictonychinae, Pocock, 1921. The subfamily that includes ferret badgers (Melogale) retains the name Helictidinae Gray, 1865, because its validity is not affected when the type-genus of the subfamily becomes a junior synonym of another genus. Furthermore, a list of the extant subfamilies of Mustelidae and their respective synonyms and included genera is provided.

KEY-WORDS: Mustelidae; Subfamilies; Guloninae; Ictonychinae; Helictinae.

INTRODUCTION

Mustelidae, which includes weasels, martens, wolverines, tayras, polecats, badgers and otters, is the most diverse family in the order Carnivora, with about 60 valid species (Wozencraft, 2005; Larivière & Jennings, 2009). The family has an almost cosmopolitan geographic distribution (Nowak, 1999; Larivière & Jennings, 2009) and shows a great diversity of life-styles, including aquatic, semi-aquatic, semi-arboreal,

semi-fossorial and fossorial species (Larivière & Jennings, 2009). Different taxonomic arrangements were proposed during the 19th and early 20th century (Gray, 1825, 1869; Flower, 1869, 1883; Gill, 1872; Mivart, 1885; Flower & Lydekker, 1891; Trouessart, 1904; Miller, 1912; Pocock, 1920, 1921a), reaching a maximum of 15 subfamilies recognized by Pocock (1921b) (Table 1). Later, Simpson (1945) reduced this number to five (Table 1) in the taxonomic arrangement that became widely accepted by subse-

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