

MESOPLODON GERVAIS, 1850 (MAMMALIA: CETACEA):
PROPOSED CONSERVATION. Z.N.(S) 2081.

By Dale W. Rice (*National Marine Mammal Laboratory,
7600 Sand Point Way N.E., Bldg. 32, Seattle, Washington 98115*)
and Kenneth E. Kinman (*665 West 3rd, Hoisington, Kansas 67544,
USA*)

The purpose of this application is to request the suppression of *Nodus* Wagler, 1830, so that *Mesoplodon* Gervais, 1850, can continue to be used in its generally accepted sense for a genus of beaked whales in the family ZIPHIIDAE.

2. Hershkovitz, 1966 (Catalog of living whales, *Bull. U.S. natn. Mus.* No. 246: 125) lists five generic names that have priority over *Mesoplodon*, a genus containing 12 species. The following synonymy lists the names relevant to the present discussion:

Aodon Lesson, 1828 (*Hist. nat. Mamm. Ois.* 1788, vol. 1: pl. 3), type species: *Aodon dalei* Lesson, 1828 (: 149, pl. 3), by monotypy. *Aodon* Lesson, 1828, is a junior homonym of *Aodon* Lacépède, 1789, — Pisces.

Nodus Wagler, 1830 (*Nat. Syst. Amphibien:* 34). Established as an objective replacement name of *Aodon* Lesson, 1828, type-species *Aodon dalei* Lesson, 1828, a junior subjective synonym of *Physeter bidens* Sowerby, 1804 (*Trans. Linn. Soc. Lond.*, vol. 7: 310).

Micropterus Wagner, 1846 (in Schreber, *Säugethiere*, vol. 7: 352), type species: *Delphinus micropterus* Cuvier, 1829 (*Règne animal*, ed. 2, vol. 1: 288), by monotypy. *D. micropterus* is a junior subjective synonym of *Physeter bidens* Sowerby, 1804. *Micropterus* Wagner, 1846, is a junior homonym of *Micropterus* Lacépède, 1802, — Pisces.

Micropteron Eschricht, 1849 (*Kongl. dansk. Vidensk. Selsk. Skr.*, ser. 5, vol. 1: 97). An incorrect subsequent spelling of *Micropterus* Wagner, 1846. *Mikropteron* Eschricht, 1849 (: 98). An incorrect subsequent spelling of *Micropterus* Wagner, 1846.

Dioplodon Gervais, 1850 (*Annales Sci. nat.*, ser. 3 (Zool.), vol. 14: 16, lines 19-20), type species *Delphinus densirostris* Blainville, 1817 (*Nouv. Dict. Hist. nat.*, vol. 9: 178) by original designation.

Mesoplodon Gervais, 1850 (: 16, line 26), type species *Delphinus*

sowerbensis Blainville, 1817 (:177), by original designation. *D. sowerbensis* is an unnecessary objective replacement name for *Physeter bidens* Sowerby, 1804.

3. *Aodon* and *Micropterus*, being preoccupied, need not concern us here. Hershkovitz (: 127) discusses the status of the other names in the following passage: 'As shown in the generic synonymy, the names *Nodus* Wagler, *Micropteron* Eschricht, and *Dioplodon* Gervais take priority, in the order given, over *Mesoplodon* Gervais. The first, *Nodus*, has had no currency as a senior synonym of *Mesoplodon*. It has, instead, been cited incorrectly as a junior synonym of *Hyperoodon* Lacépède (cf. Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, 1951; Hall & Kelson, 1959). The second, *Micropteron*, has been used rarely in the primary literature and never during this century. Both *Nodus* and *Micropteron* would be regarded as nomina oblita by adherents to Article 23 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. *Dioplodon* was published simultaneously with *Mesoplodon* but generally has been cited from a later publication. Although *Dioplodon* has line priority over *Mesoplodon*, it may be treated as a junior synonym of it in accordance with Article 24a(i) of the International Code.'

4. The generic names *Micropteron* and *Mikropteron* were used by Eschricht, 1849 (:97, 98). A translation of the usage on page 97 is as follows: 'It is perhaps safe to compare fossil species whose exact correspondence with living species has been fully established with those of the genus *Micropteron*, whereas the rest should at least for the time being remain under the common designation of *Ziphius*'. A translation of the usage on page 98 is as follows: ' Failing that, the name of the bottle-nosed whales, Rhynchoceti, appears to be most suitable, and this group would therefore consist of the following genera: 1) *Chaenocetus*, the true bottle-nosed whale or duck whale, 2) *Mikropteron*, the short-finned bottle-nosed whales to which, apart from the still-living *Delphinus micropterus*, further fossil species would have to be added, and 3) *Ziphius* as an at least provisional generic name for the fossil bottle-nosed whales whose generic characteristics it has not yet been possible to determine.' There is no evidence in these extracts nor in the rest of the work that these names are anything other than incorrect subsequent spellings of *Micropterus* Wagner, 1846. However, Hershkovitz, 1961 (*Fieldiana Zool.*, vol. 39: 557) stated '*Micropterus* Wagner is invalidated by *Micropterus* Lacépède, 1802, a genus of fish. In 1849, however, Eschricht (*Kongl. Danske Vidensk. Selsk. Skrift.*, (5), 1: 97) independently erected the same generic tautonym for *Delphinus micropterus* Cuvier but wrote it *Micropteron*. This form of the name is valid.' Hershkovitz made no

mention of *Mikropteron*.

5. Hershkovitz, 1961 (: 557) used *Nodus* as a valid name, but later (1966: 125) he considered this name to be a nomen oblitum and used *Mesoplodon* Gervais, 1850. The Zoological Record shows the following works published from 1970 to 1973 alone in which *Mesoplodon* is used as a valid name:

- Dixon, J.M., 1970, *Victorian Nat.*, vol. 87: 88–93.
 Ross, G.J.B., 1970, *Ann. Cape Prov. Mus.*, vol. 8:195–204
 Sergeant, D.E. and others, 1970, *J. Fish. Res. Board Canada*, vol. 27: 1903–1915.
 Smet, W.M.A. de, 1970, *Naturalistes Belg.*, vol. 51: 118–124.
 Varona, L., 1970, *Poeyana (A) (69)*: 1–17.
 Besharse, J.C., 1971, *J. Mammal.*, vol. 52: 297–315.
 Best, P.B., 1971, *Mammals of Africa (Washington D.C.)*: 2.
 Caldwell, D.K. & Caldwell, M.C., 1971, *J. Mammal.*, vol. 52: 206–209;
 Gaskin, D.E., 1971, *N.Z. J. Mar. freshw. Res.*, vol. 5: 318–325.
 Kasuya, T., 1971, *Sci. Rep. Whale Res. Inst. Tokyo (23)*: 129–137.
 Moore, J.C., 1972, *Fieldiana Zool.*, vol. 62: 1–19;
 Nishiwaki, M. and others, 1972, *Sci. Rep. Whale Res. Inst. Tokyo (24)*: 43–56.
 Praderi, R., 1972, *Commun. zool. Mus. Hist. nat. Montevideo*, vol. 10(237): 1–7.
 Robson, E.D. & van Bree, P.J.H., 1972, *Tuatara*, vol. 19: 101–102.
 Massey, C.I., 1973, *Naturalist (Leeds) (925)*: 28.
 Mörzer Bruyns, W.E.J., 1973, *Säugetierk. Mitt.*, vol. 21: 75–77.
 Robineau, D., 1973, *Mammalia*, vol. 37: 504–513.

It would be possible to add about another 50 relevant references published in the last 50 years.

6. Substitution of *Nodus* Wagler, 1830, for *Mesoplodon* Gervais, 1850, would upset long-standing nomenclatural stability and universality. The names of their type species are universally accepted as synonyms of one another and in this well known group of whales there is no possibility of the senior name ever being required for use. It is therefore more straightforward to ask for the suppression of the senior name rather than ask that *Mesoplodon* be granted nomenclatural precedence.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is therefore requested:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the name *Nodus* Wagler, 1830, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy;

- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *Mesoplodon* Gervais, 1850 (gender: masculine), type species by original designation, *Delphinus sowerbensis* Blainville, 1817;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *bidens* Sowerby, 1804, as published in the binomen *Physeter bidens* (valid specific name of the type species of *Mesoplodon* Gervais, 1850);
- (4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology:
 - (a) *Nodus* Wagler, 1830, as suppressed by use of the plenary powers in (1) above;
 - (b) *Micropteron* Eschricht, 1849, an incorrect subsequent spelling of *Micropterus* Wagner, 1846;
 - (c) *Mikropteron* Eschricht, 1849, an incorrect subsequent spelling of *Micropterus* Wagner, 1846.