

Richard Shine *et al.* (1987), Hinrich Kaiser *et al.* (2013), Jane Melville *et al.* (2018 and 2019): Australian Agamids and how rule breakers, liars, thieves, taxonomic vandals and law breaking copyright infringers are causing reptile species to become extinct.

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ABSTRACT

In 1987 a renegade group of herpetologists, including Richard Shine decided on a new means of dealing with people they saw as rivals in the science of reptile taxonomy in Australia. They unsuccessfully petitioned the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature, (ICZN) to formally suppress the works of two authors, Richard Wells and Cliff Ross Wellington so they could rename species and genera in violation of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Ride *et al.* 1999). The ICZN was fed a raft of lies and innuendo about two major Wells and Wellington papers from 1984 and 1985 that had already named hundreds of species and genera.

However in 1991 reason prevailed and the ICZN refused to suppress the works. Since then, the same group opposing Wells and Wellington has continued to run an unlawful campaign of effectively boycotting the taxonomy and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington.

The evil business plan involves synonymising all relevant named taxa with earlier named forms, even when the taxa are clearly different species or genera.

More recently the group, now known as the Wüster gang, best known for their war cry, a blog opinion piece called Kaiser *et al.* (2013) have formally put their manifesto as one to refuse to cite or use the works of an ever increasing number of authors, including, Wells, Wellington, Raymond Hoser, John Cann (all from Australia), John Edward Gray (UK), Demangel Miranda (Chile), William McCord (USA), Mehdi Joseph-Ouni (USA), Cris Hagen (USA) and anyone else whose work they wish to steal and re-badge as their own.

The second part of this Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto is to ignore all rules of science, peer review, established conventions and even copyright law to ostensibly allow the group and their supporters to steal from published works of others to rename species and genera in breach of the rules of the *International Code of Zoological* and to refuse to cite the works they steal from. This is known taxonomic vandalism!

Besides the ethical and legal issues arising from the preceding acts of misconduct, these actions have caused significant downsides for science and conservation of relevant species. At least one species of reptile has become extinct as a direct result of the actions of the Wüster gang and others are likely to suffer a similar fate.

In 2018 and 2019, Jane Melville as senior author published two PRINO (peer reviewed in name only) papers, renaming agamid taxa in Australia

This taxonomic vandalism cited the long disproven lies in the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto as justification for it. This paper gives a detailed critique of the unlawful actions by Melville *et al.* (2018 and 2019) and further identifies the species *Tympanocryptis pinguicolla* Mitchell, 1948 as the first extinction likely to have been caused by the reckless actions of the Wüster gang.

Keywords: Richard Shine; Jane Melville; Wolfgang Wüster; Hinrich Kaiser; Taxonomic vandalism; theft; copyright breach; plagiarism; agamid lizards; reptilian; agamidae; Australia; extinction; Wells and Wellington; Raymond Hoser; Victoria.

INTRODUCTION

In 1983, Hal Cogger, his wife Heather Cogger and Elizabeth Cameron, working for the Australian government published *The Zoological Catalogue of Australia, 1, Amphibia and Reptilia* (Cogger *et al.* 1983).

This 313 page book was the culmination of many years work and for the first time ever listed all Australian reptiles and amphibians by species and genus names and also all known synonymies as classified by Cogger.

As a conservative "lumper" in taxonomy, Cogger synonymised many forms, but all were listed.

The opposite side of this spectrum were a pair of so-called "splitters", Richard Wells and Cliff Ross Wellington, who had a well-founded view that the Australian herpetofauna was grossly underestimated at the species and genus level.

Using Cogger *et al.* (1983) as a map of known Australian reptiles and frogs, Wells and Wellington used their many years of combined knowledge derived from fieldwork in most parts of Australia to set about reclassifying Australian reptiles and frogs as they saw it.

This culminated in two major publications Wells and Wellington (1984 and 1985), which in combination named hundreds of species and genera for the first time and also resurrected from synonymy many others.

The majority of species first named by the authors in these publications were well known as undescribed forms to herpetologists in Australia and so in the normal course of events, the new Wells and Wellington names would have been adopted and used by others virtually immediately.

However due what was seen at the time as a near comprehensive review of Australia's herpetofauna and its taxonomy, a number of other aspiring taxonomists in Australia saw Wells and Wellington as scooping work and name authority for species that they may have at some later stage decided to formally name. They therefore viewed the Wells and Wellington publication with hostility and sought legal means to suppress and rename the various taxa.

The rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* fourth edition (Ride *et al.* 1999) governs the naming of all animals, including reptiles, as did earlier versions of the same code and these effectively bind all practicing taxonomists and scientists in general.

Wells and Wellington's publications of 1984 and 1985 made a point of complying with the rules of the second edition of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* and meaning names for previously unnamed taxa first proposed by Wells and Wellington had to be used for them and in favour of any later names coined.

In 1987 a renegade group of so-called herpetologists, with Richard Shine as the apparent front man, petitioned the ICZN to formally suppress the works of Wells and Wellington for nomenclatural purposes (Anonymous 1987). If successful, the renegades would have gained the right to rename any or all validly named species and genera previously named by Wells and Wellington, this being completely contrary to the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*.

The petitioners to the ICZN did so under the banner "President: Australian Society of Herpetologists". No lead author was identified or named in the publication, but at the time this person was Richard Shine. In 1987, he was relatively new to herpetology but as a publishing herpetologist it was seen as likely he would aspire to a career as a taxonomist seeking "name authority" for species at some later stage.

The published claims against Wells and Wellington were many and most were completely false. This is not to say the papers of Wells and Wellington were perfect. In fact they were far from it. The two men had prepared their papers with minimal outside help or resources and so by necessity both were brief in terms of each formal description and published to minimal standards, as was the case for other papers published by the pair at the time or for that matter most of their contemporaries..

Notwithstanding this, the taxonomic judgements and descriptions

themselves in terms of compliance with the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* were almost all correct and in full compliance.

However most of the published claims in relation to the Wells and Wellington papers by later authors have in fact been completely false. Furthermore they can readily be shown as false by simply cross-referencing the false claim with the original cited paper, which in itself disproves the claim (as seen in the example published later in this paper).

In spite of false claims to be representing the majority of Australian herpetologists, the group led by Shine and others and including such persons as Wolfgang Wüster lost their case.

Petitioners against the name thieves included the herpetology curator at the Australian Museum in Sydney, Dr. Allen E. Greer who did in fact speak for the largely harassed and silenced, silent majority.

It was in 1991, that by near unanimous vote, reason prevailed and the ICZN commissioners refused to suppress the works (ICZN 1991).

A second attempt to have the ICZN formally suppress Wells and Wellington material again failed in 2001 (ICZN 2001).

That should have ended the matter and the relevant Wells and Wellington names should have come into general usage.

This has happened in part, largely due to their adoption by Dr. Hal Cogger, who incidentally was the only ICZN commissioner out of about 20, who voted against the works of Wells and Wellington in the earlier case, but once the ruling was handed down, he abided by the ruling.

Cogger has published seven editions of the major work identifying all of Australia's reptiles and amphibians, including most recently Cogger (2014), which is replete with numerous species and genera named by Wells and Wellington in 1984 and 1985.

However in contrast to the actions of Cogger, the same group of renegades opposing Wells and Wellington has continued to run a campaign of effectively boycotting the taxonomy and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington with a business plan of synonymising all relevant named taxa with earlier named forms, even when the taxa are clearly different species or genera.

Cogger has played into the hands of this group by refusing to publish in his books names of species or genera that are in any way in contention or doubt.

So by continuing to improperly raise doubt as to the validity of species and genera named by Wells and Wellington and harassing other potential users of their taxonomy and nomenclature to not do so, many Wells and Wellington named taxa remain ignored, unnamed and unpublished by Cogger and therefore generally unknown to most of the wider herpetological community.

Only about 25% of the species formally described by Wells and Wellington appear in Cogger (2014), even though this publication post dated the Wells and Wellington papers by 3 decades and even a brief analysis of the relevant Wells and Wellington papers shows that the majority of species the pair named are valid.

In fact as of 2019, the majority of these said taxa have also been validated by the evidence of molecular studies involving both nuclear and mitochondrial DNA.

It is also noteworthy to state that this technology which is excellent at determining whether or not given animals are of different species was not available to Wells and Wellington at the time they published their papers, so they invariably had to do most of their taxonomic work by looking at the relevant animals themselves.

One such example is *Rankina boylani* Wells and Wellington 1984 as shown by Hoser (2015g) to be valid based on all of morphology, geographical range and DNA divergence and yet outside of publications of this author (Raymond Hoser), the name *Rankina boylani* Wells and Wellington 1984 is not seen in print as of 2019 and the very distinct species is treated as synonymous with *R. diemensis* (Gray, 1841) by all relevant authors.

What we have seen has been a well orchestrated boycott of works and names of Wells and Wellington and the species they have discovered and named decades back in that they are being forcibly ignored as detailed by Hoser (2007, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013,

2015a-f and sources cited therein).

Richard Shine and others in the group, now generally known as the Wüster gang (named after the main ringleader, Wolfgang Wüster, now at Wales in the UK), have managed to maintain the boycott on use of Wells and Wellington taxonomy and nomenclature by getting members of their group on editorial committees of major herpetology journals who then tell authors not to cite the works of Wells and Wellington or use genus and species names of theirs. Papers that do are simply rejected or alternatively the authors are forced to use an alternative and erroneous taxonomy and nomenclature instead.

More recently this group is now known as the Wüster gang, best known for their blog hate rant, marketed as a "paper" called Kaiser *et al.* (2013). The same small but vocal group of renegades and thieves, continually alleging they represent herpetology, rather than accurately stating they represent a noisy minority have authored similar hate rants cited here as Kaiser (2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014a and 2014b and others not cited here). They have formally put their manifesto Kaiser *et al.* (2013) (and similar documents) as one to refuse to cite or use the works of an ever increasing number of authors, including, Wells, Wellington, Raymond Hoser (this author), John Cann (all from Australia), John Edward Gray (UK), Demangel Miranda (Chile), William McCord (USA), Mehdi Joseph-Ouni (USA), Cris Hagen (USA) and anyone else whose work they wish to steal and rebadge as their own.

The second part of this Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto is to ignore all rules of science, peer review, established conventions and even copyright law to ostensibly allow the group and their supporters to steal from published works of others to rename species and genera in breach of the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Ride *et al.* 1999) and to refuse to cite the works they steal from. This is known taxonomic vandalism!

Kaiser *et al.* (2013) and later incarnations consistently champion themselves as the effective owners of "peer review" and claim that their publications have this, while those they target for suppression do not.

The reality is in fact the complete opposite as demonstrated by Hoser (2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2015a-f and sources cited therein).

The publications of the Wüster gang consistently lack any credible peer review as seen by the material that gets published. Bare faced lies, irrelevant comments and all out rants get published, masquerading as science, while ostensibly peer reviewed scientific descriptions of allegedly new taxa invariably include work stolen from earlier uncited authors, typically copied verbatim in key parts, or alternatively include species named in the absence of evidence, when a cursory examination of the said taxon shows that it has already been named in any event.

The papers of Wüster gang member and listed co-author of Kaiser *et al.* (2013) Wulf Schleip (e.g. Schleip 2008 and 2014) are holotype examples, including Schleip (2008) (discredited by Hoser 2009) and Schleip (2014) (discredited by Hoser 2015a-f). Both Schleip papers make false statements about the papers and author from where work is stolen and both papers engage in the ethically repugnant act of taxonomic vandalism, in that species previously named are renamed by Schleip.

The crimes of Schleip are made much worse by other members of the Wüster cohort who then force other reptile databases (e.g. the Peter Uetz run "The Reptile Database") and journal editors (e.g. "Memoirs of Museum Victoria") to use the invalid Schleip names or other invalid names, even when they know they are not legal and/or in some cases, not even biological entities.

Besides the ethical and legal issues arising from the preceding ethical misconduct, these actions have caused significant downsides for science and conservation of relevant species. At least one species of reptile has become extinct as a direct result of the actions of the Wüster gang and others are likely to suffer a similar fate. That species *Tympanocryptis pinguicollis* Mitchell, 1948, now believed to be extinct, is dealt with later in this paper. In terms of the unethical conduct of Wüster, Schleip and other members of the gang, such as UK-based Mark O'Shea, this is covered in detail in earlier papers of Hoser 2009, 2012a, 2012b,

2013 and 2015a-f and sources cited therein), although it is simply too hard to keep up with the non-stop unlawful actions of the Wüster gang. These actions go beyond acts of scientific fraud and taxonomic vandalism.

The gang attack enemies in all ways possible, both legal and illegal.

Wüster *et al.* regularly create and edit Wikipedia hate pages that they then protect by robot to prevent correction by others. These pages have all their invalid names in use with false statements to the effect that they are the correct ones.

The Wikipedia hate page on "Raymond Hoser" (created and managed Wüster under his user ID "Mokele" and lackey Mark O'Shea under user name "Papblak") makes too many false claims to be dealt with here, but include such niceties such as to allege I have plagiarised material from others (I never have, but the Wüster gang do so regularly) and that I have killed my own daughter, testing illegally de venomized snakes on her that had supposedly regenerated venom.

Every part of that claim is false including, 1/ I killed my daughter, 2/ I had illegally de venomized snakes and 3/ That the said snakes had ever regenerated venom.

Several Australian courts have issued orders for that page to be removed but both the Wüster gang and Wikipedia act in contempt of court to keep the unlawful hate page online.

TYPANOCRYPTIS PINGUICOLLA MITCHELL, 1948.

This taxon was originally described as a subspecies of the morphologically similar *T. lineata* Peters, 1863 from elsewhere in south-east Australia.

In line with other previous authors, Wells and Wellington (1985) assumed that *T. lineata* had been collected from near Adelaide in South Australia and that the specimens from Southern Victoria were Mitchell's *T. lineata pinguicollis* as this matched the given type locality for this taxon.

Lizards from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and nearby southern New South Wales (near the ACT and further south around Cooma, had until the time of the Wells and Wellington paper in 1985 been treated as being of the same subspecies.

In what was seen as a radical move, Wells and Wellington (1985) first elevated *T. pinguicollis* to full species status and then split the northern population from the ACT and nearby off into a separate species.

The new species was formally named *T. telecom* Wells and Wellington, 1985.

The Wells and Wellington description for this species was mixed up and confusing and while complying with the relevant articles of the relevant *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* did not in fact give any means to separate *T. telecom* and *T. pinguicollis* from one another.

Due to both the poor original description of *T. telecom* and the widespread push to suppress the works of Wells and Wellington, no herpetologist so much as tested the assertion by Wells and Wellington that their *T. telecom* was in any way different from *T. pinguicollis*.

By 2014, Cogger (2014) had adopted what by then was the consensus position in Australian herpetology in recognizing *T. pinguicollis* as different and distinct from *T. lineata* and listed both in his book as separate species.

In line with all other authors, the ACT and nearby southern NSW populations from the population centred on Cooma, an hour's drive south of Canberra city were also assigned to *T. pinguicollis*. As of 2014, with the exception of Wells and Wellington themselves, no publishing herpetologist had considered *T. telecom* a valid species save for the publication of Hoser (2007).

THE TYPANOCRYPTIS PAPER OF JANE MELVILLE PUBLISHED IN 2019

In May 2019, Jane Melville (Melville *et al.* 2019) published a significant paper on the genetics and taxonomy of the *T. lineata* species group. This was the most recent in a number of papers by a number of authors on or including *T. lineata* and/or lizards until recently treated as the same species, which included *T. pinguicollis*. Central to her analysis was Australian tax-payer funded genetic

data that accurately delineated the relevant species in the complex, or at least those the authors had sampled.

The main findings of the paper were that the lectotype of *T. lineata* assigned by Wells and Wellington (1985), while sourced from 4.5 km west of Gawler (near Adelaide) in South Australia, was in fact caught on a collecting expedition from at or near the southern highlands of New South Wales.

This meant these southern highlands of New South Wales lizards were in fact *T. lineata* and not what was until then thought to be the main species population in southern South Australia. That was a different and potentially unnamed species.

This finding was supported by the morphology of the lizard itself, being of the southern highlands form (or one of them) and recently obtained diary entries relevant to the original capture of this specimen.

A second important finding was that not only was the ACT population of *T. pinguicollis* a separate species from the type form from near Melbourne in Victoria, but that the population centred on Cooma in southern New South Wales was also specifically distinct from the ACT population (also found in immediately adjacent NSW) as well as the Victorian population of *T. pinguicollis*.

Melville *et al.* (2019) then attempted to ascertain whether the lectotype came from the Cooma or the ACT population and after publishing a complex set of statistical calculations stated that it was most likely an ACT animal on a probability basis.

This in effect led to the next logical step which was to synonymise *T. telecom* with the earlier named *T. lineata*.

Melville *et al.* (2019) then asserted that both the Cooma population was an undescribed form as was what had until then been the South Australian population of the alleged nominate form of *T. lineata*.

While she didn't explicitly state this, her paper also provided further evidence that the population thought to consist of nominate *T. lineata* with a distribution centred on South Australia did in fact consist of up to four or more species including the species *Tympanocryptis alexteesi* Hoser, 2015.

Significantly, rather than citing the Hoser species and paper, Melville instead cited Kaiser *et al.* (2013) as a justification for ignoring the Hoser-named species and paper.

That Melville was aware of the Hoser paper of 2015 (Hoser 2015g) had been confirmed in a letter from the editor of another journal she had published in a year earlier.

She had also posted adverse comments about the Hoser (2015g) paper on Facebook shortly after it had been published.

In this regard, Melville's conduct of pretending Hoser (2015g) did not exist was both unethical and for that matter also unscientific.

Of course Melville's actions in suppressing the information about the Hoser-named species and 2015 paper from readers would mislead them into believing of the existence of an undescribed species in need of being formally named, when she knew at all times this was not the case.

Her actions created a very real risk that another herpetologist may waste valuable time naming an already named species and then worse still, other herpetologists would have to waste valuable time dealing with the consequences of an unnecessarily created synonym.

Melville further determined that a recently found population attributed to *T. pinguicollis* from near Bathurst, New South Wales was also a separate species and named it, even though she was aware I was working on these reptiles and so to this extent, she scooped me to grab "name authority" for that species taxon.

As a result of Melville's main findings summarized above, Melville *et al.* (2019) formally named the Bathurst species *T. mccartneyi* (the taxonomic decision itself not being contentious or in dispute) and the Cooma population as *T. osbornei*.

Unfortunately for Melville, it is clear from her supplementary data and the paper itself, both published together and at the same time in May 2019, that she either had no idea which form the badly preserved lectotype of *T. lineata* really was, or perhaps more damningly, (and most likely based on the contents of her own paper) did and chose to hide this fact.

To solve the problem of identity of the lectotype for *T. lineata* she did a confusing statistical analysis of characters known to both forms and plumped for the one with the most matches. What was omitted from this analysis was the single characteristic that consistently separated the two species.

The ACT population has 7-11 caudal blotches, versus 12 or more in the Cooma species.

We know this critically important fact because Melville herself stated this as the only consistent difference between the two species in the paper.

Melville *et al.* (2019) included a poor quality photo of the lectotype of *T. lineata* and it showed clearly that it had more than 12 caudal blotches, making it a Cooma-type animal, also matching the account of its collection, hidden in the supplementary data and not in the published paper itself, that being all most readers would ever see..

In other words, Melville had made a serious error in her ostensibly peer reviewed paper and inadvertently renamed *T. lineata* as *T. osbornei*. The preceding also meant that the ACT population was in fact *T. telecom* as this was now the only available name for it. Now even a high school student could have counted the tail blotches of the lectotype to confirm which species it was, so it beggars belief that any peer reviewer would let such an error slip through to publication.

Or for that matter, how could an allegedly PhD qualified author make such a stupid error before getting to peer review stage? And should I also mention the other alleged co-authors of the paper as well. How could they all miss the obvious identity of the lectotype and get it wrong?

In other words her paper was PRINO, meaning "peer reviewed in name only".

Melville *et al.* (2019) also asserted that the species name *T. telecom* was "*nomen nudum*" without giving any proper explanation, but reference to the original description at page 20 of Wells and Wellington (1985) when cross referenced with the definition of "*nomen nudum*" in the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (edition 4) showed quite emphatically that the Wells and Wellington name was not *nomen nudum* based on the definition within the code or potential creative interpretation of it.

Again, any peer reviewer should have checked both the Wells and Wellington (1985) paper and the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* to see if the extremely significant *nomen nudum* claim was correct. The clear failure of any to do so, which on its own would have stopped the paper being published in the form it was, confirms that the Melville *et al.* (2019) paper was either not peer reviewed or PRINO in every sense of the acronym.

Hence while Melville *et al.* (2019) had done the ostensibly beneficial act of formally recognizing *T. mccartneyi* for the first time (scooping myself), noting that the species is highly vulnerable to extinction, their potentially good work was negated by her effective act of taxonomic vandalism by renaming *T. lineata* as *T. osbornei* (for the Cooma-type population) and the improper labelling of *T. telecom* as *T. lineata*.

TYMPANOCRYPTIS TELECOM WELLS AND WELLINGTON, 1985.

With the allegation by Melville *et al.* (2019) that *T. telecom* was *nomen nudum* and myself working on the taxonomy of the genus, I was forced to check the claim and test it.

This I did and as stated already, it came out in the negative.

Both the description and the relevant parts of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* had to be cross-referenced to see if the first complied within all the rules of the second, which it did.

However it is important that without asking for explanations or excuses from Wells and Wellington, I objectively viewed the relevant description of *T. telecom* to determine if the name is available for the relevant species and I do have relevant comments to make.

Rather than give a long winded explanation of what the two authors said, it is easier to copy and paste the entire, very brief description herein.

At page 20 of Wells and Wellington (1985) it read:

“*Tympanocryptis telecom* sp. nov.

Holotype: An adult specimen at the Australian National Wildlife Collection, CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research, Canberra. Collected on Black Mountain, A. C. T. by CSIRO staff.

Diagnosis: A small stout member of the *Tympanocryptis lineata* complex, most closely allied with *Tympanocryptis pinguicolla* of southern Victoria and readily identified by consulting the description in Jenkins and Bartell (1980:96-97, Plate on page 97) who regard this species as ‘*Tympanocryptis lineata pinguicolla*’. Mitchell (1948) should be consulted for comparative data on *T. pinguicolla*. *Tympanocryptis telecom* is only known from the site occupied by the Post Office Tower on Black Mountain, A. C. T. Its survival status is unknown, but must be considered as potentially endangered, as no further specimens have been reported since the disturbance of its habitat for the Telecom facility. More intensive field work may reveal the existence of this species ranges in the southern highlands.”

The description on face value is lousy. The authors, probably by way of inadvertent omission, failed to give a specimen number for their holotype. This has been done before by other authors, including in peer reviewed journals and in the absence of qualifying material in the description could make it either invalid, or a *nomen nudem*.

The authors identified the institution where the specimen was held, what it had been identified as and its location of collection.

A first reviser could easily have gone to the Australian National Wildlife Collection (ANWC), viewed any of the specimens conforming to the above and assigned a relevant lectotype and still can do so. None of this is terribly difficult or uncommon and hence the failure to include a specimen number does not fatally invalidate the Wells and Wellington description.

I should also note that the same paper has dozens of other species descriptions which all appear to conform to the normal practice of citing institution and specimen number, clearly indicating that the omission of a relevant specimen number for *T. telecom* was an editorial oversight in the production process and not a standard act of bad practice by the said authors.

A read of the description diagnosis including by cross referencing of the texts cited therein does not in my view diagnose the relevant species or separate it from *T. pinguicolla*. Now I may have missed something here, but in any event this is not relevant.

In order to comply with the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* and be an available name, the description does not need to accurately separate the alleged taxon *T. telecom*, or even do so. In fact it only merely needs to “purport” to do so.

As the Wells and Wellington paper clearly purports to separate *T. telecom* from the other species, it cannot be invalidated on that basis either.

The paper was published in hard copy in the usual way and so complies with Article 8 of the Code and so the name cannot be invalidated on that basis.

Shine *et al.* (1987) as the “President of the Australian Society of Herpetologists” petitioned the ICZN to formally suppress the Wells and Wellington paper of 1985 and that attempt failed in 1991 with a ruling in favour of Wells and Wellington (ICZN 1991), followed by a second failed attack on the pair (ICZN 2001)..

More recently in 2013, Kaiser *et al.* (as cited by Melville *et al.* 2019) decided to step outside the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* and among other things decreed that publications alleged to be not peer reviewed or failing some other ill-defined standards could be ignored, suppressed and over-written by merely citing Kaiser *et al.* (2013) when doing so.

This included to the point of non-citation and literally faking the fact that the earlier paper never even existed!

As there is no other basis to suppress or ignore and not use or recognize as valid, the name *T. telecom*, as done by Melville *et al.* (2019), the sole and entire basis for doing so must be Kaiser *et al.* (2013) as cited by her in that paper.

The law-breaking decrees and edicts of Kaiser *et al.* have long since been discredited (see for example Hoser 2012b, 2013, 2015a-f and sources cited therein).

Therefore use of Kaiser *et al.* (2013) or later incarnations of it as a basis to allege that *T. telecom* is either invalid or *nomen nudem* is also removed.

Hence the name *T. telecom* Wells and Wellington is available and also the only available name that can be applied to the relevant population of lizards.

Furthermore, unless the rules governing names of animals is changed, *T. telecom* Wells and Wellington, 1985 will be the only available name in perpetuity.

THE EXTINCTION OF TYMPANOCRYPTIS PINGUICOLLA CAUSED BY THE ACTIONS OF THE WÜSTER GANG

Rosauer *et al.* (2018) emphatically confirmed that the taxonomic diversity of Australia’s herpetofauna has been seriously underestimated. This is a belated recognition of the same view peddled by Wells and Wellington (1984, 1985) (as of that date and when far less reptile taxa had been formally recognized) and reiterated by Hoser (2007). Contrary to this view and since shown to be erroneous has been that of Anonymous (1987) (= Richard Shine *et al.*) and repeated by Kaiser *et al.* (2013).

However the anarchist doctrine of Kaiser *et al.* (2013), better known as Wüster *et al.* (2013) as Kaiser earlier said Wüster had written the rant, is being used to harass and intimidate other herpetologists and pretty much everyone else not to use the taxonomy and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington and others they have targeted to steal works from.

Hence they seek to treat all relevant species as being synonymous with their otherwise nearest currently recognized relative.

This is not a conservative or cautious view of taxonomy as alleged by Kaiser *et al.* or some supporters of the group.

The species of concern have long been supported by a peer reviewed body of evidence, which while being an alleged tenet of Kaiser *et al.* is in fact systematically ignored and abused by them and held in disdain by them.

This is exactly why Kaiser and the group have denied the existence of *T. telecom* and *T. pinguicolla* as defined by Wells and Wellington as geographically restricted taxa right up to the present date (2019).

None of this is simply just a matter of personalities and egos, although this is exactly how Kaiser *et al.* treat it and at times ask others to as well.

For the first time ever, it is possible to state with complete confidence that the statements and actions of Shine *et al.* (Anonymous 1987) and their group (later known as the Wüster gang) in doing all they could to suppress then works of Wells and Wellington and the taxonomy and nomenclature within their papers, using totally unscientific and unethical methods, has in fact resulted in the wholly avoidable (almost certain) extinction of a species of *Tympanocryptis*, namely *T. pinguicolla* (as of 2019).

As already noted, in 1985, Wells and Wellington restricted *T. pinguicolla* to Victoria. At the time both Hoser (1989) and Hoser (1991) was published, case Case 2531, seeking suppression of the Wells and Wellington papers and all the nomenclature within was before the International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) and at the time both books were published was undecided.

In mid 1991 the ICZN found in favour of Wells and Wellington and against the name thieves, which they again did in 2001.

In spite of this improperly created uncertainty of nomenclature, both Hoser (1989) and Hoser (1991) recognized the Wells and Wellington taxonomy (leaving the nomenclature in doubt pending ICZN resolution), (see for example “*Egernia cunninghami*” at page 89 and “*Varanus gouldii*” at page 115 of Hoser, 1989).

Both Hoser (1989) and Hoser (1991) also called for the urgent captive breeding of potentially endangered Australian reptiles to avert extinctions.

Had the quite correct and proper and lawful ICZN compliant taxonomy and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington (1985) with respect to *T. pinguicolla* and the northern species they formally

named, namely *T. telecom* Wells and Wellington, 1985, been properly adopted by Shine *et al.* (Anonymous 1987), later to become known as *Wüster et al.* (as outlined in Kaiser *et al.* 2013), instead of attacked with lies, smear, innuendo, mental gymnastics, smoke screens and the like, both species could have been properly managed from 1985.

For the record, the southern species *T. pinguicollis* was sighted in the wild near Melbourne, Victoria as recently as 1988 and 1990, as recorded in the Victorian Biodiversity Atlas, published online at: <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/biodiversity/victorian-biodiversity-atlas> or in the supplementary data of Melville *et al.* (2019).

That postdates Wells and Wellington (1985) by five years and represented ample time to rescue remaining specimens from the urban development of greater Melbourne (Victoria) and prevent the species becoming extinct.

T. pinguicollis could have been readily rescued from the brink of extinction, but this was in effect completely dependent on it being recognized as separate from the NSW / ACT species and therefore recognized as being at risk.

Shine *et al.* (AKA the *Wüster gang*), must now stand culpable for the deliberate and reckless extinction of this iconic species of Victorian dragon lizard.

The pig-headed refusal to recognize and conserve taxa named by Wells and Wellington (1985), even though the available scientific evidence to support recognition of taxa they formally named was generally overwhelming is what caused the extinction.

The suppression of the names of Wells and Wellington extended to all areas of herpetology as the *Wüster gang* and earlier incarnations of the same group of individuals sought to harass, bludgeon and influence by all means possible, others working in the wildlife space.

The Victorian Government wildlife department, known under countless names and acronyms over the three decades preceding 2019, and their business arm, "Zoos Victoria", owner of the three main government-owned zoos in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia claims ownership of the registered trademark incorporating the key words "Fighting Extinction" (Australian registered trademark number: 1470848) which they ruthlessly protect and stop others in the wildlife conservation "business" from using.

However in spite of claims to be protecting the states reptiles from extinction, both the department overseeing "Zoos Victoria" and "Zoos Victoria" itself allowed *T. pinguicollis* to become extinct in Victoria over the relevant 24 years post-dating the publication of Wells and Wellington (1985).

Melville *et al.* (2019) in agreeing with Wells and Wellington (1985) in determining the Victorian *T. pinguicollis* are a different species to NSW specimens which they assign to two other species, then found that *T. pinguicollis* are almost certainly extinct.

The preceding herein is written on that basis.

In any event, had the taxonomy and nomenclature of Wells and Wellington (1985) been adopted and implemented at the relevant time as it should have been for *T. pinguicollis*, along with a proper conservation plan for the remainder of the species populations, there is effectively no doubt at all that *T. pinguicollis* would not be extinct as of 2019.

While populations of all other known species of *Tympanocryptis* appear to be stable as of 2019, those from the ACT and Cooma regions in NSW are small, fragmented and highly vulnerable to precipitous decline and extinction as is the newly described *T. mccartneyi* Melville *et al.*, 2019 from around Bathurst in NSW. This is due to their proximity to rapidly expanding centres of human population and Australian governments being generally indifferent to wildlife conservation at all levels.

The relevant species should immediately be given the highest practical levels of protection and management possible and in a way that positively involves all stakeholders, so as to maximise chances of long term success.

There are other species of *Tympanocryptis* at potential risk elsewhere in Australia as detailed in a separate paper published at the same time as this.

Failure to recognize any of the properly identified and named relevant species immediately could be a precursor to their extinction.

The ugly lesson of the likely extinction of *T. pinguicollis* caused by the reckless actions of Shine *et al.* (Anonymous 1987) and more recently continued by Kaiser *et al.* (2013), shows that the ongoing activities of Kaiser *et al.* in the form of lies, smear, false claims and reckless unscientific synonymisation of species named in the presence of good peer reviewed scientific evidence must be stopped.

The equally evil taxonomic vandalism practiced by the Kaiser *et al.* gang of thieves, including by Jane Melville *et al.* (Melville *et al.* 2018 and 2019) with respect to the Australian agamidae and *Tympanocryptis* in particular needs to be stopped immediately.

This is because dealing with their unwanted dual nomenclature has several devastating and diversionary side effects that will hasten demise of relevant species.

Firstly, scientists have to waste time synonymising the illegally coined names of Melville and others before other people in the herpetology and wildlife conservation space get confused as to which species is which. This time wasted dealing with those who illegally rename species in breach of the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Ride *et al.* 1999) and would be better spent on dealing with the conservation needs of the relevant taxa.

Secondly, competent taxonomists who have their name improperly blackened by Kaiser *et al.* and their false claims of being unscientific and the like will leave the field and this is detrimental to conservation as a whole. No species can be conserved unless it is formally named according to the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* and as of 2019 there remain dozens of reptile species in Australia awaiting formal recognition. This is principally due to the lack of competent taxonomists working on Australian reptiles.

The shortage of reptile taxonomists in Australia over the 34 years since 1985 was in large part caused by the improper attacks on Wells and Wellington (1984, 1985), still ongoing and also including the baseless attacks on taxonomic works of myself (Raymond Hoser) from 1998 to present, which in turn significantly discouraged and continues to discourage many potentially great scientists from entering the field of reptile taxonomy. This was and is, due to a well-grounded fear that they will be subjected to improper character assassination, including on specially created "Wikipedia" hate pages, that their works would be improperly lampooned or suppressed, or as an equally evil twin part of the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto, the results of many years hard work would be stolen and rebadged as a "new discovery" by a thief who is part of the same group of "non-scientists".

This is exactly as done by Melville *et al.* (2019) in terms of Mitchell's *T. lineata* and/or the Wells and Wellington *T. telecom*.

Personal suffering of people is one thing, but the reptile extinctions caused by the activities of Shine *et al.* (Anonymous 1987), Kaiser *et al.* (2013), better known as *Wüster et al.* including their followers like Melville (2018 and 2019) is exactly why these people need to be outed for what they are, thieves and rogues. This should be done before yet more species are driven to a wholly avoidable extinction.

MELVILLE ET AL. (2018) TAXONOMIC VANDALISM AND POTENTIAL COPYRIGHT BREACH

As mentioned already, the *Wüster gang* manifesto Kaiser *et al.* (2013) and various ever-changing incarnations of it published since, advocate the forced suppression of names and works from authors they target to steal names and works from in breach of the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*. The manifesto also directs authors not to cite the works of people they seek to steal works from (in breach of copyright law) and to raise bogus claims against relevant authors of unscientific methods used or a lack of peer review, or even that they refuse to recognize the validity of the publication the paper was published in on the basis that their mob had not acted to censor or vet the work.

The more destructive part of the Kaiser manifesto is the unlawful

direction to others to break the law and breach copyright by using someone else's work and not citing it, with the even more nefarious addition that validly named species, genera or other taxa should be illegally renamed.

Jane Melville as senior author of paper Melville *et al.* (2018) did exactly what was directed in the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto to engage in a fraudulent case of pseudo-science and taxonomic vandalism.

Hoser (2015g) published a major paper naming 18 new species, 3 new genera and 6 new subgenera of Australian agamid. The paper was published in accordance with the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (current edition 4, Ride *et al.* 1999) and so the names were available according to the rules.

Furthermore, each species, genus and subgenus was identified as distinct on the basis of well-quantified morphological differences, none interbred, and all were also separated on a calibrated molecular basis by way of known timeline of divergence at levels in excess of what was usually required to make such distinction.

The paper was also peer reviewed!

None of these latter facts mattered in terms of the names being available under the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*, but these added facts meant that each and every species should have been immediately recognized by the wider herpetological community and the names used to describe the relevant taxa as needed.

In fact based on posts on social media shortly after publication, it was self-evident that people working in the field had absolutely no doubt at all, that I, Raymond Hoser had discovered and named for the first time ever for science, unique biological entities.

The two taxa relevant here were:

Lophognathus wellingtoni Hoser, 2015 was listed at the ICZN's repository at time of publication at:

<http://www.zoobank.org/NomenclaturalActs/24fb5585-f73e-428c-84ed-5c7b71cf4148>

with LSID urn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:24FB5585-F73E-428C-84ED-5C7B71CF4148

and because it was named on the basis of peer reviewed scientific evidence it was widely recognized and listed in numerous indexes such as the "Global Names Index" at:

http://resolver.globalnames.org/name_resolvers/cyr5dz1m08eh

and *Melvillesaurea* Hoser, 2015 also listed at the ICZN's repository at time of publication at:

<http://www.zoobank.org/NomenclaturalActs/13e8878a-f06a-4ec6-8e52-5c1751cbbbd1>

with LSID urn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:13E8878A-F06A-4EC6-8E52-5C1751CBBBD1

and listed in numerous indexes such as the "Global Names Index" at:

http://resolver.globalnames.org/name_resolvers/wktdzml2ypy4

This meant that from time of publication in 2015, the relevant taxonomic entities and their correct ICZN names were well-known globally.

In line with the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto of making false claims and then forcibly ignoring the works of persons they deem outside their group, Melville went onto Facebook at end 2015 to voice her disapproval of my paper as did others in their group.

Her stated disapproval of the paper is not at issue here, after all she is legally allowed to refuse to accept the taxonomy within the paper, but it did show she had read it (or at least claimed to have) as far back as 2015 and so could not have ignored it and pretend she didn't know about it at some later date.

In 2018, Jane Melville, an employee at the National Museum of Victoria, Australia, published an alleged review of some Australian agamids in the in-house online journal "*Memoirs of Museum Victoria*".

The basis of the online paper was to rename a genus and species previously named by Hoser (2015g).

These were genus *Tropicagama* Melville *et al.* 2018 being an objective junior synonym of *Melvillesaurea* Hoser, 2015 and the

species *Lophognathus horneri* Melville *et al.* 2018 being a junior subjective synonym of *Lophognathus wellingtoni* Hoser, 2015.

Grammatophora temporalis Günther, 1867 is the type species of *Melvillesaurea* Hoser, 2015 as well as for *Tropicagama* Melville *et al.* 2018.

The holotype for *Lophognathus wellingtoni* Hoser, 2015 was specimen number D73809 at the National Museum of Victoria, Australia listed in Melville's paper as a specimen of her own *Lophognathus horneri*, her designated holotype being collected immediately proximal to the Hoser one.

Of course the unnecessary creation of junior synonyms in breach of the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* is the sort of thing no self-respecting scientist would do, let alone one who works at a taxpayer funded government-owned State Museum, being the National Museum of Victoria at Melbourne, Australia.

Just so there is no doubt as to the exact publication we are talking about here, it's full citation is:

Melville, J., Ritchie, E. G., Chapple, N. J., Glor, R. E. and Schulte, J. A. 2018. Diversity in Australia's tropical savannas: An integrative taxonomic revision of agamid lizards from the genera *Amphibolurus* and *Lophognathus* (Lacertilia: Agamidae). *Memoirs of Museum Victoria* 77:41-61.

Significantly, besides a complete absence of reference to any work of Hoser (2015g), the above paper, cited herein as Melville *et al.* (2018) also did not cite Kaiser *et al.* (2013), which has been used by that group and like-minded name thieves as a justification for acts of name authority theft and illegal creation of synonyms in breach of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*.

Being aware of Melville's earlier statements about Hoser (2015g) on Facebook, it seemed near impossible that Melville could have inadvertently overlooked that 2015 paper.

However near certainty is not absolute certainty and so I decided to give Melville the benefit of any doubt and sent her an email outlining my earlier paper and her need to renounce her illegally coined names as soon as possible to avoid instability of names.

An email was sent to Melville on 30 November 2018 (Hoser 2018) and it was apparently ignored and so it was re-sent a number of times.

Phone messages were left on her phone and she chose not to reply.

After it became abundantly clear that she had no intention of speaking with me or retracting her illegally coined names, I wrote a letter on 18 Feb 2019 to the editor of the same in-house journal, Richard Marchant, (Hoser 2019), similarly seeking retraction of the names or at least some kind of publication pointing out the correct senior synonyms.

Marchant, the editor of the journal replied on 19 Feb 2019, with an email stating that they were relying on Kaiser *et al.* (2013) as a basis to illegally over-write the Hoser (2015g) names (Marchant 2019).

Marchant went further and said he would ignore any further correspondence from me on the matter, meaning that as far as they were concerned, the case was 'closed'.

The exact text of the Marchant email follows:

"RE: Taxonomic vandalism in Memoirs of Museum Victoria - Please correct this with urgency - see email below.

Richard Marchant <rmarch@museum.vic.gov.au>

Tue 19/02/2019 2:41 PM

To: Raymond Hoser - The Snakeman

Dear Mr Hoser,

Dr Melville relied on advice from the Australian Society of Herpetologists when she published her recent paper in the *Memoirs of Museum Victoria* (vol 77, pages 41-61, (2018)):

"the Society strongly recommends that the documents distributed under the banners *Australian Biodiversity Record* and *Australasian Journal of Herpetology* not be regarded as publications for the purposes of nomenclature, and the Society recommends that any names or nomenclatural acts proposed in those documents not be regarded as available."

It is clear to me that her decision was eminently sensible.

Please do not email me further on this matter as I will not reply.

Richard Marchant
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GPO Box 666
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ph +61 3 83417433
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Besides the fact that the renaming of taxa is a direct breach of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*, Melville and it appears the journal editor, Richard Marchant who masquerades as an entomologist also knowingly engaged in the highly illegal and potentially criminal act of Copyright infringement, which no Kaiser *et al.* (2013) edict can ostensibly over-rule!

In fact there is little doubt that Melville did breach copyright in both her formal descriptions, which she then had the audacity to fraudulently market to the world as her original research. Her claims or inferences in this regard were outright lies.

The description of her species *Lophognathus horneri* was in materially significant ways a direct rip-off of the description of *Lophognathus wellingtoni* in Hoser (2015g), which I have already noted was not cited in any way in her paper.

Significantly Hoser (2015g) was the first publication anywhere that had identified and detailed the morphology separating the relevant species (*L. wellingtoni*) from nearest congeners.

For the record, Hoser (2015g) in the diagnosis for the newly named species wrote:

“*Lophognathus wellingtoni* sp. nov. is readily separated from *Lophognathus gilberti* Gray, 1842 by the presence of a thick creamish-white bar that runs on both the upper and lower jawline, versus mainly on the upper side in *L. gilberti*. In *L. wellingtoni* sp. nov. the upper margin of this white line is effectively straight whereas in *L. gilberti* there is a strong uptick in the region of the eye (usually a fraction behind the lowest point), meaning there is no straight line appearance at the upper margin of the bar.

In *L. wellingtoni* sp. nov. the dark region between the eye and the ear is bounded at the top by a well defined line. This is not the case in *L. gilberti*, where the colour merely merges into that at the top of the head.”

In turn Melville *et al.* (2018) paraphrased this stating pretty much exactly the same thing when it seems she essentially lifted the Hoser description and re-arranged the words when she wrote:

“*Diagnosis.* A member of the Australian genus *Lophognathus* Gray, 1842, characterised by broad white stripe on the upper and lower lips, extending along the full extent of the jaw, a pale stripe from behind the eye to the top of the ear, which is cream, white, grey or yellow in life. This pale stripe is well defined ventrally and dorsally by a row of darkly pigmented scales (fig. 6). It is a large robust dragon with long head and well-built moderately long limbs. It has heterogenous scales on the back, both at the midline and dorsolaterally, associated with a weak to prominent row of enlarged strongly keeled scales. *Lophognathus horneri* is distinguished from *Lophognathus gilberti* by the presence of a distinct white spot on the tympanum (fig. 7). This well-defined white spot is wholly surrounded or bordered dorsally and to the anterior by an area of black pigmentation that is positioned on the upper posterior quarter of the tympanum. This area of black pigmentation also runs along a raised ridge that extends from the outer dorsoposterior edge of the tympanum towards its centre (fig. 9).”

In terms of the renaming of the genus *Melvillesaurea*, Melville not only ripped off the description from Hoser (2015g), but went further by ripping off the relevant species description from Cogger (2014) which she also failed to cite or acknowledge anywhere in her paper.

Hoser (2015g) wrote:

“*Diagnosis:* *Melvillesaurea* gen. nov. is separated from all similar genera (e.g. *Gowidon* Wells and Wellington, 1984 and *Lophognathus* Gray, 1842), by the following suite of characters:

The nostril is nearer the snout than the eye (versus equidistant in *Gowidon*), the light labial stripe includes supralabials and several scale rows above them (the labial stripe does not include supralabials and several scale rows above them in *Gowidon*), the posterior margin of the ear does not have a small white spot (versus a small white spot on the black posterior margin of the ear in *Gowidon*).

***Gowidon* and *Melvillesaurea* gen. nov. are both separated from the morphologically similar genus *Lophognathus* by the fact that the keels of dorsal scales form ridges running obliquely to the vertebral scale row, versus running parallel in *Lophognathus*.**

A key to separate these and other recognized Australian agamid genera is in Cogger (2014), pages 692-693.”

Significantly and ethically, Hoser (2015g) cited Cogger’s work, down to the page numbers, even though Hoser (2015g) had clearly come to the same findings by independent means. Hoser (2015g) also gave full credit and citation to Cogger (2014) at the end of the paper in the usual scientific way.

Melville *et al.* (2018) in what appears to be a most serious breach of copyright in terms of both Hoser (2015g) and Cogger (2014) wrote:

“*Diagnosis.* A monotypic genus consisting of a large agamid lizard in the subfamily Amphibolurinae, with exposed tympanum, gular scales smooth to weakly keeled, ventral scales smooth to weakly keeled. Very long-limbed, prominent erectable nuchal crest. Long tail and head relatively narrow for length. Dorsal scales uniform, with keels converging posteriorly toward midline. Prominent pale dorsolateral stripes that are broadly continuous with wide pale stripe along upper and lower jaw. Lacks well-defined pale stripe between eye and ear. Upper portion of head usually dark grey or black and uniformly coloured. Under the head, on the chin, gular and neck areas, there is dark grey or black uniform pigmentation in adult males, with two narrow white stripes extending from the back of the jaw anteriorly under the chin, parallel to the jaw, ending approximately half way along the jaw. Femoral pores 1-6; preanal pores 2 (range 1-3).”

Neither Hoser (2015g) or Cogger (2014), from where her diagnostic information was effectively lifted, were cited in any way by Melville *et al.* (2018), even though her work was clearly derived from the earlier publications.

Melville and her publisher have in effect been guilty of fraud, scientific fraud, plagiarisation, taxonomic vandalism, misleading and deceptive conduct, breaching the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* which supposedly binds all taxonomists and also almost certainly engaged in significant copyright infringement making her and her employer liable for damages.

The evil and dishonest taxonomic vandalism practiced by the Kaiser *et al.* gang of thieves, including by Jane Melville *et al.* (Melville *et al.* 2018 and 2019) with respect to the Australian agamidae needs to be stopped immediately as dealing with their unwanted dual nomenclature has several devastating and diversionary side effects that will hasten demise of relevant species and if unchecked potentially lead to extinctions.

As already stated, scientists have to waste time synonymising the illegally coined names of Melville and others before other people in the herpetology and wildlife conservation space get confused as to which species is which. Time wasted dealing with those who illegally rename species in breach of the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Ride *et al.* 1999) would be better spent on the conservation needs of the relevant taxa instead.

Significantly, competent taxonomists who have their name improperly blackened by Kaiser *et al.* and their false claims of being unscientific and the like will leave the field and this is

detrimental to conservation as a whole. No species can be conserved unless it is formally named according to the rules of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* and as of 2019 there remain dozens of reptile species in Australia awaiting formal recognition. This is principally due to the lack of competent taxonomists working on Australian reptiles caused by a reluctance of young scientists entering a field where they are likely to suffer such fates as character assassination and theft of works.

As inferred already, the acute shortage of reptile taxonomists in Australia was in large part caused by the improper attacks on Wells and Wellington (1984, 1985), still ongoing and also including the taxonomic works of myself (Raymond Hoser) from 1998 to present, which in turn significantly discouraged and continues to discourage many potentially great scientists from entering the field of reptile taxonomy. This was and is, due to a well-grounded fear that they will be subjected to improper character assassination, including on specially created "Wikipedia" hate pages, that their works would be improperly lampooned or suppressed, or as an equally evil twin part of the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) manifesto, the results of many years hard work would be stolen and rebadged as a "new discovery" by a thief who is part of the same group of "non-scientists", exactly as done by Melville *et al.* (2018).

Personal suffering of people is one thing, but the reptile extinctions caused by the activities of Shine *et al.* (Anonymous 1987), Kaiser *et al.* (2013), better known as Wüster *et al.* including their followers like Melville *et al.* (2018 and 2019) is exactly why these people need to be outed for what they are; thieves and rogues. This should be done before yet more species are driven to a wholly avoidable extinction.

END NOTE – THE NEXT AGAMID EXTINCTION IN VICTORIA? **RANKINIA JAMESWHYBROWI HOSER, 2015.**

Rankinia jameswhybrowi was formally identified as a new species of Mountain Dragon by Hoser (2015g). It has a 7.8% mitochondrial DNA divergence from its nearest relative, *Rankinia hoserae* Hoser, 2015 found just 110 km to the east, and generally occurring to the north, west and east of *Rankinia jameswhybrowi*. This means the two species diverged some 4 MYA, meaning that the identity and existence of each taxon as full and unique species is not possibly in any doubt.

Rankinia jameswhybrowi is known only from the Big River State Forest of Victoria, an area subject to numerous threats including logging by the anti-conservation Victorian State Government and entities they control as well as uncontrolled bushfires, such as the Sandstone Road blaze that destroyed several hundred hectares of important habitat in early 2019.

There are other unaccounted for potential risks such as feral cats, foxes, habitat degradation by deer plagues as well as potentially introduced pathogens.

In line with Shine *et al.* (1987) and the more recent incarnation of Kaiser *et al.* (2013), Jane Melville, Peter Robertson, Ron Waters and other important players at the Victorian State Government in terms of regulating and controlling reptiles have recklessly pretended for four years to 2019 that *Rankinia jameswhybrowi* Hoser, 2015 does not even exist!

None have initiated any significant actions to conserve the species in any way for reasons that will be apparent in the account that follows.

Using Kaiser *et al.* (2013), Melville *et al.* (2019) at fig 2, pretended that all *Rankinia* consist a single species (i.e. *R. diemensis* Gray, 1841), even though Hoser (2015g) readily separated six named species on the basis of both mitochondrial and nuclear DNA divergences and morphological differences.

Peter Robertson a loyal employee of the Victorian State Wildlife department, known currently (in 2019) as Department of Land, Environment, Water and Planning (DELWP) and long time business adversary of myself (Raymond Hoser), through their rival business "Zoos Victoria" has since 2015 scandalously pretended all Victorian Mountain Dragons (*Rankinia* Wells and Wellington, 1985) were of the oldest named species, *R. diemensis* (Gray, 1841).

This is even though molecular data their own State Government

employee, Jane Melville obtained, shows a 4 million year separation between the two taxa.

Similar applies to another employee (now former) but still key advisor to DELWP, Ron Waters, who has also publicly adopted the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) doctrine, including at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in 2015 to refuse to accept the existence of any taxa formally named by Raymond Hoser.

Waters was chastised by the VCAT judge for his unscientific attitude and to make things worse, in his important management role at "Parks Victoria", Ron Waters has significant management control of much of the area this species is found.

Since 2015 and in spite of being lampooned by the VCAT Judge, Ron Waters continues to post in support of Kaiser *et al.* on social media such as Facebook.

As a result of the preceding and in spite of being in possession of Hoser (2015g) since 2015, the DELWP and associated State Government entities have steadfastly pretended that *Rankinia jameswhybrowi* Hoser, 2015 does not exist.

Therefore the State Government mega-department empowered to regulate and protect wildlife and all that comes with it, such as protection of habitat has not done a single thing to protect this potentially endangered species.

As to how endangered the species is, one need look no further than early 2019, when an uncontrolled bushfire ripped through hundreds of hectares of the Sandstone Road area of the Big River State Forest, potentially wiping out a significant number of *R. jameswhybrowi* (Vic Emergency 2019).

However this is nothing compared to the ongoing threat of logging throughout the entire known range of this species (Carey, 2019), with this going on under the direct watch of the persons already named, all with the power to potentially stop the extinction of this relatively uncommon species.

Hence, the long term prognosis for the *R. jameswhybrowi* is simply not good.

In their 2019 book "*Reptiles of Victoria*", Peter Robertson and John Coventry, again ran the Kaiser *et al.* (2013) line and at pages 213 to 215 defied all reason to pretend that all Victorian Mountain Dragons were of the species *R. diemensis*, (Gray 1841).

The authors did mental, taxonomic and nomenclatural gymnastics throughout the book to ensure that the name "Hoser" was not seen in any part of the book as part of their ongoing campaign against myself and to attack our successful wildlife conservation and education business that they see as a competitor against their own dysfunctional "zoos Victoria" business. This was even though it was clear that in many parts of the very same book, the works of Hoser were being relied upon and yet they made a point of no citations of "Hoser" in the references section of the book.

For the record the species, *R. diemensis* is confined to Tasmania and immediately offshore islands and does not occur in Victoria, making the account of the "species" in Victoria in their book bordering on the farcical and not unlike a "Monty Python" act.

In other words, the State Government of Victoria and their employed scientists (or perhaps in this case pseudo-scientists) have not learnt a positive thing from their deliberately orchestrated extinction of *Tympanocryptis pinguicolla* in the period from 1985 to 2019.

As of 2019, *Rankinia jameswhybrowi* Hoser, 2015 is under extinction threat from a state Wildlife Department that pig-headedly refuses to accept its existence, simply because a person they deem as not one of them, had the fortitude to discover it and name it, coupled with the fact that the same State Government is now aggressively logging and destroying the last known habitat where it occurs.

By the time the State Government accepts the scientific reality of the existence of *Rankinia jameswhybrowi* Hoser, 2015 it will possibly be extinct.

DELWP and "Zoos Victoria" will have done nothing to fight extinction in this case, while using their so-called "wildlife protection laws" to aggressively stop anyone else from lending a hand in any way to save the species or even do field research on it. As always no one will be held to account.

Now the environmental catastrophe of the extinction of *Rankinia jameswhybrowi* Hoser, 2015 may well be minor compared to the same refusal by the Victorian and other governments to accept scientific reality of the perils of their ongoing drive for human overpopulation and potential climate change their activities may bring.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In terms of this paper there are none.

From Facebook

Richard Wells

May 26 at 4:24 PM ·

A recent taxonomic revision of *Tympanocryptis lineata* by Melville et al (published just a few days ago), requires a comment or two. Now I have read this paper fairly carefully and it does contain some useful data and I will discuss this further in a moment. But as is so often happening in taxonomy these days new descriptions of species are being published using supposedly state of the art techniques in genetics, biological scanning and advanced statistical mathematics that make a paper describing new species almost incomprehensible to even the most experienced herpetologist let alone the layperson. But I think there is a very big problem that is very much the elephant in the room and no one dares to mention for fear they will be labelled as a lesser being in the rarefied world of the taxonomist. And this is simply the fact that such advanced (and advancing) techniques have been largely developed for medical research and there are serious protocols and caveats on applying and interpreting the significance of the results using such techniques. Unfortunately, I have observed that a number of recent papers naming new species of reptiles in Australia and elsewhere in recent years (and the trend is increasing) appear to use such techniques in a fairly cavalier way when compared with the controls applying in medical research. Although I am only the son of a shearer, I have also worked in medical research (histopathology) and I often wonder what a competent medical researcher familiar with such methodology must think of such papers where the techniques used and the results derived may be so easily misinterpreted or even abused. Anyway, to me the current offering from Melville's stable appears to be just another example of the potential misuse of such high-powered scientific methodology that can easily end up producing low-grade outcomes in my opinion. But before I get into how they went about their work in describing these new species of lizard, let's look at the very beginning of their paper. On starting to read the paper, I immediately raised an eyebrow when I was confronted with a scientific paper that starts off like an internet rave on the blogosphere. They outlined a strong focus on conservation, research and extinction-risk, posturing about how good they were at doing taxonomy as well as other peripheral opinions but this sort of dribble would have been better dealt with elsewhere in the paper or better still in another article altogether such as in a magazine like Readers Digest. There is an overtone of extinction panic in the paper – which coincidentally is quite topical nowadays – that as expected has already been picked up by the popular press globally where the paper's assertion that one of more of these species may be facing extinction or have already reached this position [<https://www.theguardian.com/.../elusive-and-cryptic-lizard-hu...>] – The British press has trumpeted that Australia may have already achieved its first extinction of a mainland reptile (quoting Melville et al) – rapidly following on from the recently publicised loss of species of lizards from Christmas Island. And so the crisis grows.

This kind of popular-press powered taxonomy just stacks another card on the card-house of classification in my view for although it might appear smart to whip the public into a frenzy of concern to justify your taxonomic games it can easily blow up in your face if you are wrong about the survival status of the species concerned. To reinforce their conservation views, the authors have even gone to the extent of idiotically restricting the precise localities from their descriptions of the new species so as to supposedly protect the species from any risks to its conservation – when destruction of the species' habitat (which is fully described) has always been the primary driver in their presumed demise! In any case any moron that is capable of doing a Google Search on the Internet can have a full list of all known specimens of these species and the precise localities to the square metre thanks to GPS-based surveys and a plethora of other detailed scientific papers, as well as numerous Government and Private reports that are also on the Internet for any and all to see if required. The author's noting of the perilous survival status of the species is fair

enough, but it just gets a bit overdone to such an extent that the paper starts to read like a Grant Application rather than a taxonomic paper.

Yes, it may be sound to point out where future ecological or taxonomic work may be required, the recommendations and concerns expressed just add to an undercurrent of self-interest that permeates the paper from start to finish. Rightly or wrongly, one is left with the creeping suspicion that the authors appear more concerned about ensuring that the Grant Gravy Train keeps rolling for those in the driver's seat for research on the Grassland Earless Dragons than for the actual classification of the species – relegating the eventual naming of the species to virtually an afterthought of the paper! This is a problem to me because concerns about the survival status of species (that have never been adequately surveyed any way) as a justification for their classification can run the real risk of being hand-on-the-heart intentions, turning into foot-in-the-mouth outcomes, as it is a potentially flawed proposition to justify taxonomic actions. Many have made this mistake in the past, including myself, and I cannot over-emphasize how important it is to stay focused on the primary objective of classifying rather than preaching.

So, this paper was hard work from the outset when it should have been a no-brainer. I just wanted to know what new species had been described and I soon found myself hacking my way through a word jungle where I had to crow-bar every truth out of the depths of opinion. As I kept reading, my eyebrows kept rising higher and higher until I felt that I must have been starting to look like a monkey to my wife - who was herself starting to show similar levels of eyebrow raising over my occasional gasps of disbelief. However, as is so often the case with such papers, just as you are about to throw the offending item onto an ever growing pile of crap that may someday provide insulation for your home to offset the effects of climate change, the inconsistencies start to show themselves like distant flashes of light from a star blowing up in deep space.

For instance, as hard as it is to excuse the various self-serving platitudes and the other polemic a paper may contain, it is impossible to take hypocritical abuse masquerading as informed comment without at the very least a bit more eyebrow raising. A perfect example of this appears in Melville's paper where she waxes lyrically about how 'good' taxonomy by professionals (them) is essential for conservation policy and how 'bad' taxonomy by in effect those naughty amateur taxonomists can potentially cause species to become extinct! Mmmm...This made me instantly recall Shakespeare's Hamlet "The lady doth protest too much, methinks" as the paper was starting to emit an odour of insincerity about it at this point and the smell was getting stronger the more I read. As this appeared to me to be little more than a back-handed swipe that embedded yours truly in the latter group, I decided to look even closer at the paper's content and sure enough there it was in the content of their Supplementary Material where obvious reference to Wells and Wellington's earlier work on the Grassland Earless Dragon of over 30 years ago appears (when she was a student in primary school by the way). I mean to say, nothing personal here madam, but your concern for bad taxonomy and extinction risk is a bit rich, given that you are part of an institution (Museum Victoria) that not only operates as a scientific cemetery for millions of native animals that have been collected from nature without barely a thought for the environmental consequences of such collecting. It is also part of an Institutional structure that has long provided a refuge for under-performing and unproductive taxonomic outputs as collections grew to those millions of specimens, but species remained undescribed or largely unstudied even as they were going down the gurgler towards extinction. I mean it is breathtaking hypocrisy even on the surface, for a museum-employed author in Australia to now have concerns for conservation so as to justify her research while at the same time bagging those who did have such concerns and were ignored. So please forgive me for thinking that this might seem a bit ingenuous to even a homeless person living in the gutter – let alone to someone who actually knows what really goes on in zoological research.