

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Standard Language (Insert Language of Choice) Names Versus Common Names

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Caramaschi et al. (2005) recently published an excellent paper on providing “common” names to species of frogs in the genus *Leptodactylus*. They are to be commended for this and for their logic on why it is important to devise these names. Their criteria for determining these names are models to be followed.

However, I have a single comment that I hope will be informative and useful. In the North American amphibian and reptile names publications (Crother et al. 2000, 2003), notice that we never use “common name” and it is for specific reasons. First, what is common about them? These are unique appellations that are simply non-binomial and non-Linnaean. In the North American list they are called Standard English names. We did not presume to tell Spanish or German or Chinese, etc. what they should call the taxa in their language. Caramaschi et al. gave a beautiful example when they translated from the Portuguese or Spanish to an English name. They made a Standard English name, not a common name. They also make Standard Spanish and Standard Portuguese names and this should be wholeheartedly applauded and supported. These are not Spanish or Portuguese common names in any sense. I hope workers providing non-binomial non-Linnaean species names will consider that these are not common names, but Standard Language names.

It is important to provide these names, I just hope we can agree that they are not common.

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ARTICLES

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Effects of Toe-Clipping on the Survival and Growth of *Hyla squirella*

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Toe-clipping is a widely used and cost-effective method for marking amphibians for ecological studies, but recent research has suggested that toe-clipping may cause adverse impacts on amphibian health and behavior. Several studies have documented decreased growth or recapture rates in toe-clipped animals (Davis and Ovaska 2001; McCarthy and Parris 2004). Other studies have noted inflammation and necrosis of clipped toes, suggesting this method may adversely affect mobility and survivorship (Davis and Ovaska 2001; Golay and Durrer 1994; Lemckert 1996). Recently, McCarthy and Parris (2004) questioned the ethics of toe-clipping based on findings that recapture rates in four studies decreased linearly with the number of toes removed.

One important assumption of mark-recapture studies is the mark has no influence on the survival or recapture probability of an animal (Donnelly and Guyer 1994). Thus, any direct or indirect impact of toe-clipping, such as negative effects on growth, health, or behavior may bias results unless those effects are known and can be accounted for during data analysis (Donnelly and Guyer 1994). Unfortunately, study results conflict over the existence and degree of such effects. Instances where toe-clipping did not affect survivorship or growth were documented by Ott and Scott (1999) for *Ambystoma opacum* and by Van Gelder and Strijbosch (1996) for *Bufo bufo*. However, the magnitude and cause of adverse impacts are difficult to quantify in the field and have not conclusively been addressed under controlled settings.

In a laboratory study, we evaluated the impact of toe-clipping on growth and survivorship of squirrel treefrogs (*Hyla squirella*). Conducting the study in a controlled setting allowed us to separate direct effects of toe removal on survivorship and growth due to physiological stress and wound infection, from possible indirect effects such as behavioral avoidance of capture locations and decreased foraging success or increased predation due to impaired mobility.

Methods.—Sixty-two adult *H. squirella* were collected in Baker County, Georgia, USA (31°13'16.88"N, 84°28'37.81"W) during November 2004 and maintained in the lab until sufficient numbers were gathered for the study. On 2 December 2004, frogs were weighed (± 0.01 g) and the snout-vent length (SVL; ± 0.1 cm) was