

Bogan
1985

Vernacular Names of Freshwater Bivalves.
I take this opportunity to address some of the remarks R. Tucker Abbott (1985) made regarding the AMU list of scientific and vernacular names of North American mollusks, specifically those concerning the freshwater bivalves. I have three points to make.

First of all, I apologize to all of the freshwater clam fishermen of North America for Abbott's unfortunate and rude remarks. Abbott's comments on the "common name" list appear to be based on a misunderstanding of the difference between vernacular and common names. In this instance, names applied by clam fishermen are vernacular names and only when these names are widely and commonly used to they become "common names." The list of scientific and vernacular names as it stands is a list of vernacular names.

Second, patronyms and capitalization were discussed by the Vernacular Names Committee which recommended that the mollusk list follow the format and conventions of the list of fishes published by the American Fisheries Society. The committee's recommendations were approved by the Council of Systematic Malacologists and the AMU. Patronyms used as vernacular names are really misnomers because the named person is not the owner of the species, but merely the person for whom the species was named.

Third, the list of unionid names, both scientific and vernacular, are the result of the combined efforts, and agreement by approximately 40 people, not a fiat by a single individual. More than 25 papers on unionids were searched to determine which vernacular names had been used historically and names for 175 taxa were found, most of which have been in use for at least 70 years. The oldest freshwater bivalve vernacular name so far documented was noted by Rafinesque (1819) for the snuffbox, *Epioblasma triquetra* (Rafinesque). Abbott (1985:93) remarked "There are much better common names possible for freshwater mussels — ones that can be recognized as common names, are easily remembered and are associated with the scientific name." Although objectionable to Abbott, people throughout the Interior Basin seem to have no problem using such names as washboard, pocketbook, and butterfly (which is not in the genus *Elliptio*, contrary to Abbott's assertion). Other names such as the bloofer, catspaw, or forkshell are only locally used due to the restricted distribution of the species. However, most of the vernacular names included in the list are truly common names, since they are in general use. The majority of the published names are for either species frequently encountered or of commercial importance. These vernacular names are a part of North American folk taxonomy and local history. I feel it would be a disservice to the objectives of the list of vernacular names to throw out well-established and "common" names because they do not fit a preconceived notion of a "good" common name.

Literature Cited

Abbott, R. Tucker. 1985. Crazy popular names by scientists. *Shells and Sea Life* 17(3):92-93.
Rafinesque, Samuel C. 1819. Conchology. p. 65-66. In: *Sketches of Louisville and its environs; including, among a great variety of miscellaneous matter, a Florida Louisvillensis; etc.* by H. M'Mutrie, first edition, S. Penn, jun, Louisville.

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Shells and Sea Life, 16(6):189

1985