

men sent to the British Museum "from the Indian Ocean . . . where it still remains in the collections. . . ." Possibly this is the same specimen on which *platypterus* is based. The late John K. Howard in a manuscript now in press discusses this restriction and both he and the present correspondent agree that Goode's action constituted a valid restriction of the name by a revisor. Whitley apparently was unaware of Goode's action when he restricted (*Austral. Mus. Mag.*, 1955, vol. 11, no. 12 : 382) the use of *I. gladius* to the Atlantic species as based on "a drawing by the Dutch Soldier Prince Maurice of Nassau-Siegen (1604-1697) who painted fishes from eastern Brazil. . . ." Whitley's action is deemed improper in the light of Goode's much earlier action. Goode's action predated Jordan's (1917) designation of *Scomber gladius* as the type-species of *Istiophorus*.

3. Shaw and Nodder, in their description of *Xiphias platypterus*, include Marcgrav's Guebucu adding the statement "It was first described by Marcgrav, in his history of Brasil. . ." The description therefore is composite even though the Indian-ocean specimen and its illustration is clearly the main basis for their account.

4. The *nomen oblitum* question is one to be debated seriously and should not be supported indirectly by the application in question. This correspondent particularly does not wish to sanction this rule as it is currently written.

With this as background, this correspondent offers the following suggestions:

- (1) That *Xiphias platypterus* be accepted as applying only to the sailfish of the Indian Ocean represented by the type specimen BMNH 1964.7.2.1 in the British Museum (Natural History).
- (2) Inasmuch as the status of the species of *Istiophorus* is unsettled and inasmuch as no one name including *gladius* has been used consistently and in major works for any sailfish of the Indo-West Pacific, that proposal (3) of Whitehead (page 446) placing the specific name *platypterus* Shaw and Nodder, 1792, as published in the binomen *Xiphias platypterus* on the official List of Specific Names in Zoology, should be accepted. This will support the earliest name and will not upset any well-established name.
- (3) Inasmuch as *Istiophorus gladius* (Bloch) as restricted by Goode (1882) is a junior synonym of *platypterus*, there is no need to reject it officially. Thus *gladius* will be available if the sailfish problem turns out to be more complex than now believed. Indeed, if Goode's action is taken to include selection of a type specimen, *gladius* and *platypterus* may prove to be based on the same stuffed sailfish.
- (4) Proposals (1) and (2) of Whitehead, regarding the type species of *Istiophorus* are unnecessary and do not need attention since the type species remains the same and even in the unlikely event that *gladius* be used for a second, unexpected, species of Indian Ocean sailfish, there can be no question that the two will be congeneric.

Most of the points reviewed here were discussed with Col. John K. Howard. We were in agreement and had in mind preparing a joint statement to the International Commission. Col. Howard's death prevents such a joint statement.

#### REPLY TO PROF. ROBINS' COMMENT

By P. J. P. Whitehead (*British Museum (Natural History), London*)

Professor Robins' letter in support of my application to validate *Xiphias platypterus* Shaw & Nodder, 1792 for the Indian Ocean sailfish calls for a comment on the systematic procedure of Goode (1882, *Proc. U.S. nat. Mus.*, 4 : 424-425) in dealing with the name "*gladius*".

Professor Robins argues that Goode restricted *Istiophorus gladius* (Bloch) to an Indian Ocean species, whereas it had originally been based on Atlantic as well as Indian Ocean records. However, a much more cogent argument can be advanced to show that Goode did not so restrict Bloch's name. This has an important bearing on the Atlantic species of sailfish.

First it must be acknowledged that Goode accepted Broussonet's authorship of the name *Scomber gladius*. Thus, he cites the species as "9. *Histiophorus gladius* (Broussonet) Lacépède", with "*Scomber gladius*, Broussonet, Mem. Acad. Sci. 1786, p. 454, pl. X" as the first reference in the synonymy. Following the synonymy he notes that the species was "described first by Broussonet", and again (p. 426) that "From this specimen [i.e. the British Museum type] M. Broussonet prepared a description, giving it the name *Scomber gladius*..." Goode's citation of Lacépède as author (in part) does not mean that Lacépède cites for the first time an MS name attributable to Broussonet; Lacépède (1802, *Hist. Nat. Poiss.*, 3 : 375) mentions Broussonet but associates no binomen with this reference. Lacépède himself used the binomen *Istiophorus gladifer*, not *Istiophorus gladius* as Goode mis-quotes.

Second, far from unequivocally restricting *Scomber gladius* Bloch to an Indian Ocean species, Goode (pp. 423-424) cites Bloch's figure (but not description) in the synonymy of both an Indian Ocean and a United States species. It is important to note that Goode makes no further reference to Bloch, and no reference anywhere to Bloch's description.

Clearly then, it was the Indian Ocean "*Scomber gladius* Broussonet" which Goode "restricted" to an Indian Ocean species; not only had he no cause to restrict *Scomber gladius* Bloch, but patently he did not do so. Thus Goode's action cannot in itself serve to render *Scomber gladius* Bloch a junior synonym of *Xiphias platypterus* Shaw & Nodder. The first true restriction of *Scomber gladius* Bloch was that of Whitley (1955, *Austral. Mus. Mag.*, 11 (12) : 382). This was based on Bloch's figure, Bloch's description being considered an amalgam of Atlantic and Indian Ocean species. Whitley identifies the figure as based on a drawing by Prince Maurice of Nassau-Siegen, who painted fishes from Eastern Brazil, and therefore Whitley unequivocally restricts the name to an Atlantic species.

If the name *Scomber gladius* Bloch is to be retained (and not regarded as a *nomen dubium*), and if restrictions on the meaning of such doubtful names are to be accepted, then *Istiophorus gladius* (Bloch) must be given priority over *I. albicans* (Latreille), 1824 for the single Atlantic species recognised by Professor Robins.

In the light of the argument set out here, paragraphs (1) and (2), and suggestions (3) and (4) of Professor Robins' letter require re-appraisal and perhaps re-statement, particularly in the search for the correct name for the Atlantic species of sailfish. The points raised by Professor Robins do not, however, invalidate the original argument set out in my application, nor the four proposals on which the Commission's ruling was sought.

By F. Williams (*Guinean Trawling Survey, Lagos, Nigeria*)

From 1951-62 I worked at the East African Marine Fisheries Organisation, Zanzibar. I was concerned from 1958-62 with the biology of, and the sport fishery for, the Indian Ocean Sailfish, off the East African coast. In my review of the East African scombroid fishes presented to the Marine Biology Association, Mandapam Camp Symposium in 1962 I noted that the commonly accepted name *Istiophorus gladius* (Broussonet) could not stand, as although the specimen is in the British Museum (Natural History), Broussonet did not give the fish a scientific name (no Latin binomen). Some years ago I examined the B.M.(N.H.) specimen of sailfish collected by Banks and was in no doubt that it represented the Indian Ocean sailfish. However, I did not then carry out further investigation to determine the correct binomen for the fish. I have provisionally used the name *Istiophorus gladius* Bloch 1793 with great caution pending future clarification.

Certainly I think this clarification has now been made by Mr. Whitehead and I consider a strong case, which I strongly support, has been outlined for the validation of the *nomen oblitum* *Xiphias platypterus* for the Indian Ocean sailfish. Several workers, including myself, are currently working on the biology of the Indian Ocean sailfish and it will be of great practical importance to have at long last a valid scientific name for the fish.