



- 1. We need names to communicate.**
- 2. There is no objective way to provide names – many valid naming systems are possible.**
- 3. Because butterfly names are increasingly important to the general public and the government, we need a widely accepted set of names, so that communication is possible.**
- 4. Which name set should be adopted?**
- 5. How should changes to the name set be made?**
- 6. How should publications intended for the general public treat names?**





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navaruaq

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2. There is no objective way to provide names; many valid naming systems are possible.

Mallet, J. and Willmott, K. 2003. Taxonomy: renaissance or Tower of Babel? Trends in Ecology and Evolution. 18 No. 2: 57-59.

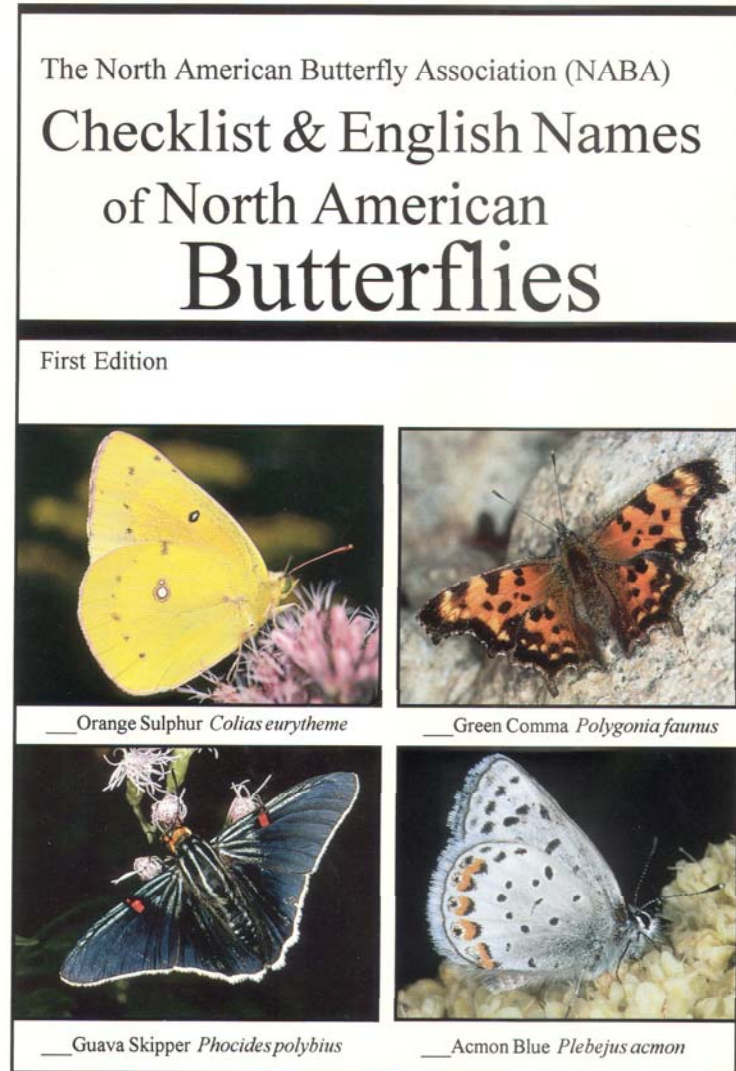
State “Taxonomists differ in how they circumscribe species, largely because of conflicting opinions rather than because of new information.”

and “...differences of opinion [among taxonomists] are extremely common today, leading to great potential instability.”

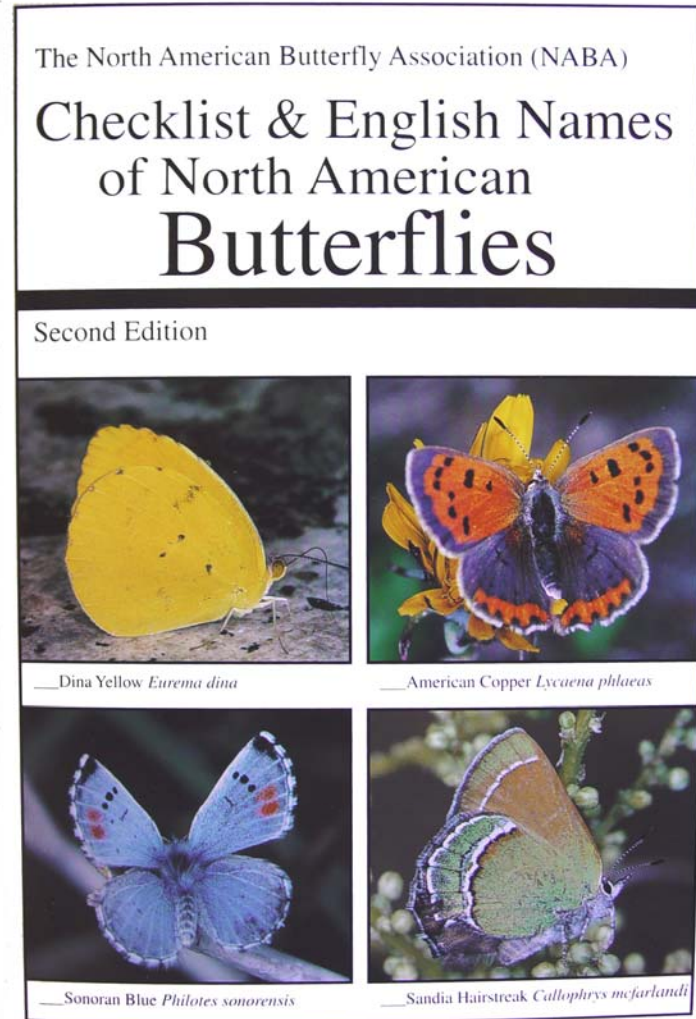
“Most name changes that annoy biologists today are due not to confusion over names applied to type specimens, but to changed concepts of the taxa that include those types”

3. Because butterfly names are increasingly of importance to the general public and the government, we need a widely accepted set of names for butterflies, so that communication is possible.

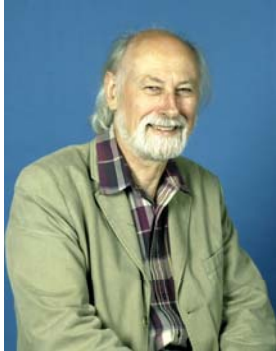
One of the first tasks that NABA undertook subsequent to its formation in November, 1992, was the creation of a Checklist and English Names of North American Butterflies, published in 1993.



Fourth, which name set should be adopted?



Recently, NABA has formed a new Names Committee to work toward a Third Edition of the Checklist. The Scientific Names Subcommittee, chaired by Dick Vane-Wright, has twelve voting members. The Subcommittee includes many of the leading scientists, from throughout the world, working in this area.



Dick Vane-Wright
University of Kent



Michael Braby
Australian Natl. Mus.



Marc Epstein
Smithsonian Institution



Peter Hall
Canadian Natl. Collection



Frank Hsu
Natl. Taiwan University



Torben Larsen
Denmark



David Lohman
City College of NY



Naomi Pierce
Harvard University



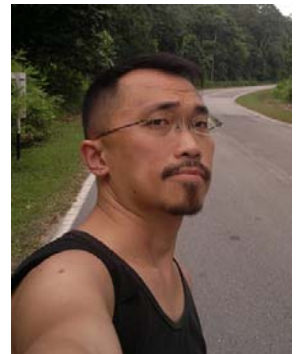
Malcolm Scoble
British Museum



John Tennent
Pacific Islands



Angel Vilorio
University of Venezuela



She-Horn Yen
Natl. Taiwan U.

5. How should changes to a name set be made?

In accordance with published scientific data that compels the conclusion that a change should be made.

Felix Sperling, a well-known evolutionary biologist at the University of Alberta has said

“Species and genera should be dead-obvious groupings for public consumption. Anything other than easily distinguished taxa should be considered subspecies, species groups, or subgenera, and discussed in the appropriate scientific literature.

Only when there is abundant, rigorous information available for a particular taxonomic change should it be introduced into field guides.

For species, any exceptions to the principle of recognizing only species that are easily diagnosed should be cases where there are excellent genetic data supporting genetic distinctness in spite of similarities in appearance. The same reasoning would apply to the process of lumping species, in that good data for genetic compatibility or continuity are required.”

“For genera, the standards for allowing change should be even higher.

Not only should newly recognized genera be demonstrably monophyletic and easily diagnosable, but any proposal for a change in genus usage should be accompanied by reasons why the change will provide significantly better communication by the general public.

It is insufficient to argue that a narrower definition of a genus will provide better information about what the closer relatives are, since this gain is balanced by the loss of information about what the more distant relatives of the narrower genus are.”

6. How should publications intended for the general public treat names?

with respect

with the acknowledgement that others disagree with a particular arrangement, if that is the case

To Conclude

Every member of the NABA Names Committee has agreed that the goal of the committee is the furtherance of butterfly conservation by stabilizing the names of butterflies, consistent with the application of new scientific information.

What this means is that names will only be changed when it is clear that the current name is incorrect.

This focus on stability, conservatism and procedure makes the NABA Checklist different from any other name set.