

THE QUADRINOMINAL INFRASUBSPECIFIC NAMES OF AUSTRALIAN
ANTS (HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE)

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Summary

Forty-eight quadrinomial infrasubspecific names of Australian ants are reviewed. Three are considered to be available under the provisions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. It is recommended that the remaining 45 should be excluded from future use as specific epithets in the appropriate genera.

Names of animal taxa proposed 'for infrasubspecific entities as such' are excluded from the provisions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (Third edition, 1985) by its Articles 1b(5) and 45e. Criteria for 'Determination of subspecific or infrasubspecific rank' are listed in Article 45f, clause (iii) of which states that a name is deemed to be 'infrasubspecific, if the author, when publishing the name, published it as an addition to a trinomen'. Thus any name first published following 'the combination of a generic name, a specific name, and a subspecific name, that together constitute the scientific name of a subspecies' must be considered infrasubspecific.

Many previously infrasubspecific names have attained availability as species-group names because of nomenclatural acts subsequent to their first appearance. The Code provides that 'An infrasubspecific name that satisfies the other criteria of availability becomes available when the name is used for a species or subspecies' (Article 10c). Article 50c specifies that 'its author is the one who first uses it', and Article 23j determines that it 'takes priority from the date upon which it was used for a species or subspecies'. Despite these provisions I recommend that the elevation of infrasubspecific names should informally be discontinued, and that they should be left by future authors to remain outside the provisions of the Code.

Infrasubspecific names are not available as senior homonyms. Nonetheless, to avoid future nomenclatural confusion, it would seem not advisable for taxonomists to promulgate *new* species names formed from words previously used for infrasubspecific names in the genera involved. I recommend therefore that infrasubspecific names should be treated informally by future authors as if effectively preoccupied at the species-group level in their genera. Alternatively, a word previously used as an infrasubspecific name could be deliberately used as the name for a congeneric *new* species. This would block future elevation of the infrasubspecific name, because it would at that point be an immediate junior homonym. This practice is not recommended, since the infrasubspecific name might already have been elevated unknown to the author of the new species, and the new species name would then be a junior homonym.

Forty eight quadrinomial infrasubspecific names extracted from the literature of Australian myrmecology are reviewed here. Most were deliberately (and usually properly) excluded from the recent Australian Formicoidea catalogue of Taylor and D. R. Brown (1985), but this has confused some of its non-taxonomist users and explanation seems appropriate.