ON THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE SPECIES *ERIOCHEIR OGASAWARAENSIS*
(DECAPODA, BRACHYURA, VARUNIDAE)

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The mitten crab, *Eriocheir ogasawaraensis*, reported by T. Komai, I. Yamasaki, S. Kobayashi, T. Yamamoto & S. Watanabe as a new species in 2006 (cf. Komai et al., 2006), is a varunid species endemic to the Ogasawara (Bonin) Islands, and has often been cited as *Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* Komai, 2006. This citation remains ambiguous and puzzling, which has caused arguments on the authorship of the species. Hence, it is required to clarify who should be authorized as describer(s) of this species as a new species in 2006, i.e., in the joint paper by those five authors as cited above.

DISCUSSION

In 2006, Komai, Yamasaki, Kobayashi, Yamamoto & Watanabe published their paper entitled “*Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* Komai, a new species of mitten crab (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura: Varunidae) from the Ogasawara Islands, Japan, with notes on the systematics of *Eriocheir* De Haan, 1835.” [Zootaxa, **1168**: 1-20 (2006)]. Since then, this species has become widely known in Japan and has often been cited as *Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* Komai, 2006, which citation, however, gives an impression as if the paper describing a new species had been presented by a single author, i.e., T. Komai. This same citation was also used by Ng et al. (2008) in their comprehensive and authoritative overview of the Brachyura of the world.

The reason why such a citation has been adopted since 2006, in spite of the fact that it is evident, as mentioned above, that the paper was conceived and published by those five authors, Komai, Yamasaki, Kobayashi, Yamamoto & Watanabe, is...
that the new species was presented with a confusing notation. In a paper published under the responsibility of five authors, these authors should not have used the notation “*Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* Komai, a new species…” as in the title, and subsequently “*Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* Komai, n. sp. . . .” both as a heading with the actual description and further in all figure captions, if nowhere any explicit statement was made in the paper that the description of the new species should be conceived as being under the responsibility of only one author among them. Instead, they ought to have used the notation “*Eriocheir ogasawaraensis*, a new species…” in the title and, subsequently, “*Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* n. sp. . . .” in all further citations, when presenting the new species in their paper. This, as is well known, constitutes the time-honoured, established way of describing and naming a new species, as amply shown in the taxonomic literature to date.

Besides, their way of referring to the new species with the notation “*E. ogasawaraensis* Komai, a new species…” in the title [and, as remarked, as “*Eriocheir ogasawaraensis* Komai, n. sp. . . .” henceforth], must be qualified as being confusing, because such a notation would mean that “*E. ogasawaraensis*” had already been [earlier] published by T. Komai alone. However, the author last-mentioned had not described and published *E. ogasawaraensis* by then, as there was [and is] no original, single-authored paper on *E. ogasawaraensis*, published before the publication of the joint paper (Komai et al., 2006).

If the five authors desired the new species to be cited as *E. ogasawaraensis* Komai, 2006, in spite of their joint authorship of the paper that includes the first description, they ought to have indicated explicitly in the text that T. Komai was the sole person authorized to describe the species presented by all five of them as new. But this clearly was not the case: in the following explanation, below, I shall thus argue that where the paper at issue (Komai et al., 2006) is under the responsibility of five authors, the description of the new species is likewise under the responsibility of all these five authors and not under that of a single author only.

In the 2006 paper of the five authors (Komai et al., 2006), there are sentences that explicitly indicate that the authors ALL take responsibility for the new species (and hence for the new name), as they wrote (their p. 2): “In this paper, we describe a new species, *E. ogasawaraensis*, based on specimens from… [etc.]”; (same p. 2, one sentence earlier) “A detailed morphological comparison led us to conclude that the Ogasawara populations are distinct from *E. japonica*, and as well as other congenerics.” [In both cases, bold face markings by the present author.]

Then, the references to both “us” and “we” (and especially the latter) are, in my opinion, to be interpreted as a clear and unambiguous indication that the description that follows is considered by all authors as being under their joint authorship. The only indication in the whole paper that T. Komai alone would