

**MYODES PALLAS, 1811, IS THE VALID NAME FOR THE
GENUS OF RED-BACKED VOLES**

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**MYODES PALLAS, 1811 -ВАЛИДНОЕ НАЗВАНИЕ
ДЛЯ РОДА ЛЕСНЫХ ПОЛЕВОК**

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Red-backed voles are among the most numerous rodents of the Holarctic forest zone, and hundreds of scientific papers are published annually on their biology and systematics. Three generic names have been applied to red-backed voles: *Myodes* Pallas, 1811; *Clethrionomys* Tilesius, 1850; and *Evotomys* Coues, 1874. We briefly review their nomenclatural history and conclude that *Myodes* is the proper one to use.

Red-backed voles were commonly listed under *Evotomys* (type species, *Mus rutilus* Pallas, 1779) by early systematists (Hinton, 1926; Miller, 1896). Palmer (1928) later uncovered the priority of *Clethrionomys* and fixed *Mus rutilus* as its type species, a change accepted as valid by most authorities throughout the latter 1900s (Eilerman, 1941; Gromov, Polyakov, 1977; Hall, 1981). Palmer, however, had overlooked Pallas' (1811) *Myodes* and Lataste's (1883) subsequent designation of *Mus rutilus* as its type species.

Pallas (1811) included 10 species in *Myodes*, among them *rutilus* and *lemmus*, but did not specify a type species. This omission was corrected by Lataste (1883: 349), who indicated *Mus rutilus* as type species of *Myodes* and noted the junior status of *Evotomys*. Some modern workers thus employed *Myodes* as the oldest name for red-backed voles (Kretzoi, 1964, 1969; Zagorodnyuk, 1990), and others have acknowledged it as probably valid while retaining *Clethrionomys* for reasons of familiarity (Pavlinov, Rossolimo, 1987; Gromov, Erbaeva, 1995; Pavlinov et al., 1995).

The long confusion of *Myodes* as junior synonym of *Lemmus* pertains to evaluation of its status. As early as 1839, Selys-Longchamps had narrowed the definition of Pallas' *Myodes* to identify red-backed voles, and Lataste (1883) mentioned his study as precedence for applying *Myodes* to

glareolus and *rutilus*. Early North American taxonomists instead used *Myodes* to embrace brown lemmings (Baird, 1857; Coues, 1874), following Keyserling and Blasius (1840). Their classification of European mammals included four species within *Myodes* (*lemmus*, *obensis*, *lagurus*, and *torquatus*), but no type species was noted. The latter concept was the one emphasized by Miller (1896:15), who stated that "since *Myodes* contained species of exactly the same modern genera as *Lemmus* Link and no groups not included in the latter, the name is a synonym of *Lemmus*." In effect, he based their synonymy on the equivalence of contents, as he judged generic limits in 1896, not on the principle of typification (Article 61, ICZN, 1999). Hinton (1926) formalized Miller's interpretation and listed *Mus lemmus* as type species of *Myodes*, thereby reinforcing its synonymy under *Lemmus*. In light of Lataste's (1883) legitimate indication of *Mus rutilus* as type species for *Myodes* (Article 69.1), Hinton's mention of *Mus lemmus* as its type is invalid to establish the equivalence of *Myodes* with *Lemmus* (Article 70.2). Unfortunately, Hinton's incorrect synonymy was perpetuated in the seminal classifications of Ellerman (1941) and Simpson (1945) and became broadly adopted afterwards, especially by North American authors but not universally by European workers.

In summary, two generic names, *Clethrionomys* Tilesius, 1850, and *Myodes* Pallas, 1811, appear in the recent zoological literature on this vole group, a situation that marks their nomenclature as unstable. Both taxa, as well as *Evotomys* Coues, 1874, are founded on *Mus rutilus* Pallas, 1779, as type species. Where two or more genus-group taxa have the same type species, their names are considered objective synonyms and the senior among them has priority (Article 61.3.3). Pavlinov et al. (1995) questionably referred to *Myodes* as a *nomen oblitum* in the synonymy of *Clethrionomys*. To reverse the principle of priority, however, both conditions of Article 23.9.1 must be jointly satisfied: the senior synonym cannot have been used as a valid name after 1899 (*nomen oblitum*), and the junior synonym must have been used extensively as the prevailing name. Although the second condition supports retention of *Clethrionomys*, the first requires recognition of *Myodes* as the valid name for the genus of red-backed voles.

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