THE NAMES OF THE COMMON NORTH AMERICAN GARTER SNAKE AND RIBBON SNAKE.—A transfer of the Linnaean name *sirtalis* to the ribbon snake, currently known as *Thamnophis sauritus* and the re-establishment of the name *Thamnophis ordinatus* for what has been known as the common garter snake under the name *sirtalis* auctorum, *nec* Linnaeus, is shown by Klauber (1948, COPEIA, 1948: 8ff) to be correct under accepted zoological procedure. A preliminary canvass of North American herpetologists indicates, however, that the great majority of productive students who are the users of these names are opposed to making the changes indicated, provided that action of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to validate the names in their long-established senses can be taken. Correspondence with the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Francis Hemming, indicates that action to suspend the rules of nomenclature with regard to trivial names has ample precedent.

We have accordingly proposed to the Commission that the rules be suspended to hold the name *Coluber sirtalis* Linnaeus in the sense of *Thamnophis sirtalis* auctorum, sensu Stejneger and Barbour, 1943, and further that the name *Coluber saurita* Linnaeus be established for *Thamnophis sauritus* auctorum, sensu Stejneger and Barbour, 1943. These names would be placed on the Official List of trivial names.

In this action, requesting validation of usage quite independent of the correspondence or non-correspondence with the actual sense of the original author, we are well aware that we are valuing a *continuity* principle above the "law" of priority. We feel strongly that a halt must be called to the changing of the scientific names of common species, and that *continuity* should be the guiding principle, taking precedence over priority, in the case of all those abundant or otherwise well-known forms whose names form a part of the vocabulary of non-systematists, e.g., embryologists, physiologists, ecologists, etc. That this reflects the belief and practice of many systematists in other fields than herpetology is evident from conversations with various colleagues (cf. Mayr, 1942, Systematics and the origin of species: 17). The International Rules have had the provision for their suspension as an integral "rule" (n.b., there are no "laws" of nomenclature) from the beginning. In our opinion, the establishment of an Official List of generic and trivial names no longer to be subject to change is essential if nomenclatural practice is to retain the respect even of its own practitioners.—KARL P. SCHMIDT and ROGER CONANT, *Chicago Natural History Museum, Chicago, Illinois,* and *Zoological Society of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

THE STATUS OF THE LIZARD *PANTODACTYLUS NICEFORI*.—The status of *Pantodactylus nicefori,* described by Burt and Burt in 1931 (Bull. Amer. Mus. 61: 360) on the basis of specimens allegedly from Bogotá, Colombia, has been open to some doubt (Brongersma, L. D., 1946, Zool. Meded., 26: 231; Dunn, E. R., 1944, Caldasia, 3: 104). Only the type and paratypes are known, and the figure of the type does not agree in all details with the description.

I have had occasion to investigate the status of various species assigned to teiid genera and of *Pantodactylus* in particular. I have examined the specimens described by Burt and Burt, and find that in their description of the type they state that the nasals are "separated by a single large frontonasal" whereas their drawing shows the nasals in contact anterior to the frontonasals. An examination of the type and paratype reveals that the drawing is correct. The presence of nasals in contact prevents the retention of this species in the genus *Pantodactylus*. Moreover, further investigation reveals that the specimens cannot be assigned to any other teiid genus. The specimens are part of the collection assembled by Prince Alexander Maximillian of Wied, and acquired by the American Museum of Natural History in 1870. The collection is of value because of the types it contains, although specimens with dubious locality data are included. Assuming the possibility that the locality data were in error, an attempt was made to place *Pantodactylus nicefori* in the family Lacertidae. It was soon evident that the type and paratype of *Pantodactylus nicefori* represented examples of *Psammodromus algirus algirus* (Linnaeus), a lacertid inhabiting France, Spain and northwest Africa. Consequently it is manifest that the type locality, Bogotá, Colombia, is an error in the cataloging or tagging of the specimens, and that *Pantodactylus nicefori* must be relegated to the synonymy of *Psammodromus algirus algirus*.—RODOLFO RUIBAL, *The American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, New York 24, New York.*