

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Meeting of the Nomenclature Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 19 August 2003, 18h00

TAXONOMY OF *BRACHYPELMA* SPP. LISTED BY CITES

This document has been prepared by the German Scientific Authority to CITES (Zoology), September 2002.

The present listing of *Brachypelma* spp. in Appendix II of CITES covers the following species (Checklist of fish and invertebrates listed in the CITES appendices and in EC Regulation 338/97, 5th edition, 2001):

Aphonopelma albiceps
Aphonopelma pallidum
Brachypelma albopilosum
Brachypelma angustum
Brachypelma auratum
Brachypelma aureoceph
Brachypelma baumgarteni
Brachypelma boehmei
Brachypelma embrithes
Brachypelma emilia
Brachypelma epicuraneum
Brachypelma fossorium
Brachypelma mesomelas
Brachypelma sabulosum
Brachypelma smithi
Brachypelma vagans
Brachypelmides klaasi

This list includes *Brachypelmides klaasi*, first described by SCHMIDT & KRAUSE in 1994. In the same publication they described the monotypic genus *Brachypelmides*. In 1997 SCHMIDT described another *Brachypelmides* species, *Brachypelmides ruhnaui*. This species is missing in the present checklist.

As lined out by Mr. Rick C. West (see email attached) and as represented in the most recent World spider Catalog by N.I. Platnick (Version 3, 2002)

(<http://research.amnh.org/entomology/spiders/catalog81-87/THERAPHOSIDAE.html>)

- *ruhnaui* is regarded as a valid species of the *Brachypelma/Brachypelmides* complex
- *Brachypelmides* is internationally regarded as a junior synonym of *Brachypelma*

Therefore we suggest the following changes to the checklist of species covered by the listing of *Brachypelma* spp.

- transfer of *Brachypelmides klaasi* Schmidt & Krause, 1994 to *Brachypelma klaasi* (Schmidt & Krause, 1994) with the respective *Brachypelmides* citation under the synonyms and

- addition of *Brachypelma ruhnaui* (Schmidt, 1997) with the respective *Brachypelmides* citation under the synonyms.

September 17, 2002

Dear Dr. Grimm -

Your query regarding the taxonomic status of the theraphosid species, 'ruhnaui', has been forwarded to me by Dr. Kurt Johnson, OSA, Washington, DC., to answer.

In 1994, all *Brachypelma* spp. were placed on Appendix II of C.I.T.E.S. At this same time, new *Brachypelma* spp. were illegally being taken out of Mexico by a few German Nationals to sell on

the pet trade. To get around the C.I.T.E.S. permit requirement for re-exporting these new *Brachypelma* spp. throughout Europe and North America, a new monotypic theraphosid genus *Brachypelmides* was created by German Nationals, Drs. Schmidt & Krause in 1994, describing *Brachypelmides klaasi* ... a patronym to German National Mr. Peter Klaas, who illegally brought this species out of Mexico. Drs. Schmidt & Krauses' scientific argument for creating this new taxon, *Brachypelmides*, was weak.

In 1995, Andrew Smith found and published *Brachypelmides* to be a junior synonym of *Brachypelma* in 'Tarantula Spiders: Tarantulas of the U.S.A. and Mexico.' Dr. Schmidt rejected Smith's finding in his own subsequent publication when he resurrected and described yet another *Brachypelmides* species, *B. ruhnaui* in 1997, a another patronym to German National Mr. Markus Ruhnau who also illegally collected and brought these specimens out of Toluca, Mexico, in September, 1996. Again, this was to aid the commercial marketing of this species without C.I.T.E.S. documents. Dr. Schmidt failed, however, to state the scientific reasons for the resurrection of *Brachypelmides*.

As you have already found briefly mentioned in Dr. Norman I. Platnick's, *The World Spider Catalog*, American Museum of Natural History, Version 3, 2002, that *Brachypelmides* was found to be a junior synonym of *Brachypelma* by Mr. Andrew Smith in 1995 and, again, in 1999 by Locht, Yanez & Vazquez. *Brachypelmides* has not been resurrected since, however, it's a genus still commonly used in the pet trade for the aforementioned reasons.

To your questions re: 'ruhnaui';

> a) is it covered by the listing of *Brachypelma* spp.

Yes

> b) if yes - whether it has to be regarded as a valid species

> or a only a synonym of another listed species

It is a valid *Brachypelma* species.

If you require further explanation as to the taxonomic status of *Brachypelmides* or *B. ruhnaui*, I recommend you contact *Brachypelma* specialist, Dra. Martha Yanez, who's email addresses are copied to this message. Martha Yanez is an expert in the biology of this taxon as well as a champion for their law enforcement and conservation in her country.

Sincerely,

Rick C. West

Arachnologist

www.birdspiders.com