

Naming Conventions for Conditional and Provisional Taxa

This page describes the conventions used for constructing conditional and provisional names used in BioData.

BenchTaxonName	Applicable Taxonomic Groups	
sp. nr.	invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Means "species near" 2) Refers to a potentially undescribed species nearest to the species following the designation 3) Example: <i>Hydropsyche</i> sp. nr. <i>simulans</i>
cf.	algae, fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Means "confer" 2) Refers to a species that closely matches the species following the designation but differs morphologically in some minor ways or the description in the literature is too vague or incomplete to be certain 3) Example: <i>Hydropsyche</i> cf. <i>simulans</i>
/ "slash"	fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Used to denote two or more taxa that are unresolvable or where only two taxa are known in a monophyletic group 2) Placed between the taxa in question 3) Species or Taxa names are ordered alphabetically 4) Example: <i>Hydropsyche rossi/simulans</i>, <i>Centroptilum/Procloeon</i>
sp. 1 or sp. A genus A	fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Refers to provisional taxa reported in the literature where their specific identity remains unknown; also known as "operational taxonomic units" or "OTUs" 2) Provisional designation is reported exactly as it appears in the literature 3) A BenchTaxonNameReferenceCode is required to support this type of name 4) Example: <i>Oecetis</i> sp. A
BenchTaxonName_Analyst	algae	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Used for algal taxa that have not been described formally, with the format "BenchTaxonName TaxonAnalystInitials" 2) Example: <i>Hippodonta</i> sp. 19_SAS
sp. 1 ?	algae	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Genus names followed by "sp. 1 ?", "sp. 2 ?", "sp. 3 ?", etc. refer to unique species within the sample, but the species name (epithet) has not been determined. 2) These designations are used for taxa that are rare in a sample and may not be identified with confidence. These names are to be used to determine the number of unique taxa within a sample. That is, the names distinguish taxa that are different within a sample, but not across samples. For example, Sample #1 contains <i>Navicula</i> sp. 1 ?, <i>Navicula</i> sp. 2 ? and <i>Navicula</i> sp. 3 ?, which are 3 undistinguished species within the sample. If Sample #2 also contains <i>Navicula</i> sp. 1 ?, this taxon may (or may not) be the same as in Sample #1. 3) NOTE that within a sample with only one unknown species in "Genus", Genus sp. is equivalent to Genus sp. 1 ?
group	fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Denotes a group of more than two closely related species that cannot be separated or organisms that can be reliably placed in a species group where determination to species is unsupported 2) If only two species in the group, then use "/" or slash designation 3) Is formally recognized in the literature 4) A BenchTaxonNameReferenceCode is highly desirable, but not required to support this type of name 5) Example: <i>Hydropsyche scalaris</i> group
complex	algae, fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Denotes a species for which there may be considerable variation suggesting two or more cryptic species 2) Is formally recognized in the literature 3) A BenchTaxonNameReferenceCode is highly desirable, but not required to support this type of name 4) Example: <i>Oecetis inconspicua</i> complex
n. sp.	fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Means "new species" 2) Represents a species new to science that has been verified by a recognized authority or one that appears in the literature as such 3) A BenchTaxonNameReferenceCode is required to support this type of name 4) Example: <i>Hydroptila</i> n. sp.
Other conditional or provisional designations	fish, invert ebrates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reported exactly as they appear in the reference from which they were obtained 2) A BenchTaxonNameReferenceCode is required to support this type of name 3) Example: <i>Stilocladius?</i> or <i>Thienemannimyia</i> group sp.