

# Taxonomy: the science of naming and describing species

Each distinct species is given a **binomial name**: The first word is the genus and is capitalized; the second word is the species epithet; the binomial name is always italicized or underlined; eg. *Homo sapiens*

Species that are very closely related may be placed in the same genus; eg. *Caenis lupus* (gray wolf), *Caenis familiaris* (domestic dog) and *Caenis latrans* (coyote); or *Felix domesticus* (house cat), *Felix leo* (lion) and *Felix tigris* (tiger)

Most binomial names are latinized terms that describe some important characteristic of the species, identify the location from which it was first collected or honor a particular researcher in the field

In a few instances species have been named after real or imagined celebrities:

*Leonardo davincii* (moth)  
*Polemistus chewbacca* (wasp)  
*Polemistus vaderi* (wasp)  
*Aptostichus stephencolberti* (spider)  
*Myrmekiaphila neilyoungi*  
*Aegrotocatellus jaggeri*  
*Agra katewinsletae*  
*Agra schwarzeneggeri*  
*Agathidium bushi* (slime mold beetle)  
*Agathidium cheneyi* (slime mold beetle)  
*Agathidium rumsfeldi* (slime mold beetle)  
*Avalanchurus garfunkeli*  
*Avalanchurus lennoni*  
*Campsicnemioides charliechaplini* (fly)  
*Calponia harrisonfordi*  
*Confuciusornis sanctus* (bird)  
*Funkotriplotrypa iagobadius* — James Brown. Iago is "James" and badius is "brown" in Latin  
*Hyla stingi* (frog)  
*Orontobia dalailama* (moth)  
*Orectochilus orbisonorum* (beetle)  
*Preseucoila imallshookupis* — Elvis Presley. And the specific name for one of his songs  
*Struszia mccartneyi*

[see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_animals\\_named\\_after\\_celebrities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_animals_named_after_celebrities) for more]

Or sometimes just for fun:

<i>Abra cadabra</i> (clam)	<i>La cucaracha</i> (moth)
<i>Agra phobia</i> (beetle)	<i>Ohmyia omya</i> (fly)
<i>Agra vation</i> (beetle)	<i>Ytu brutus</i> (beetle)
<i>Ba humbugi</i> (snail)	<i>Enema pan</i> (beetle)
<i>Gelae donut</i> (beetle)	<i>Phthiria relativitae</i> (fly)
<i>Heerz lukenatcha</i> (wasp)	<i>Pison eyvae</i> (wasp)

The binomial name with the most letters apparently is:

*Parastratiosphecomyia stratiosphecomyioides* (fly, with 42 letters in the full name)

B. Dybowski, however, in 1927 proposed the following name for a Lake Baikal amphipod:

*Gammaracanthuskytodermogammarus loricatobaicalensis*

Which, with 50 letters, may be the longest scientific name ever proposed but this name was later invalidated by the ICZN.