Mirrabella, a new name for the genus Mirabella De Bruijn et al., 1987 (Mammalia), preoccupied by Mirabella Emeljanov, 1982 (Insecta)

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De Bruijn et al. (1987) described a new genus of cricetid-like muroid rodent, Mirabella, from the eastern Mediterranean. The type species is M. tuberosa from the Early Miocene locality of Aliveri (Island of Evia, Greece). The name had already appeared in Benda and De Bruijn (1982), but only as a nomen nudum. Apart from the type species, De Bruijn et al. (1987) also defined M. intermedia from the Anatolian locality of Harami I. However, this species was transferred subsequently to Deperetomys (De Bruijn et al., 1993). Instead, another Mirabella, M. anatolica, was described, also from Harami I, as well as M. crenulata from the somewhat younger locality of Keseköy (De Bruijn and Saraç, 1992). The presence of the genus in two central European localities was also noted therein. The original classification in the Eucricetodontinae, partly based on the species intermedia, was changed into Paracricetodontinae. Unfortunately, Kalthoff (2000, 2006) did not analyse the microstructure of the lower incisors of Mirabella, so its allocation remains uncertain for the time being.

However, the name Mirabella had already been used for a homopteran from Mongolia (Emeljanov, 1982). The type species of this genus is the extant Homoptera, a Miocene hamster and an extant plant-sucking bug, apparently considered the morphology of their respective type species to be aberrant, which lead to the use of the same name (Mirabella = miraculous, L.). The homonomy of the hamster and the snail was discovered while entering information into the Paleobiological Database; one of our reviewers drew our attention to that of the homopteran (S. Bengtson, written comm., March 2007). The description of both the homopteran and the hamster Mirabella comply by the requirements of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. Thus, Mirabella De Bruijn et al., 1987, is a junior homonym of Mirabella Emeljanov, 1982. We therefore propose the name Mirrabella nom. nov. for Mirabella De Bruijn et al., 1987, not Emeljanov, 1982. The new name attempts to preserve the sense of the original by a minor modification of the spelling. The type species of Mirrabella is Mirabella tuberosa De Bruijn et al., 1987, by original designation.

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