

# Nomenclature Committee

## Activities of the Zebrafish Nomenclature Committee

The rapidly expanding wealth of zebrafish genetic and genomic information makes it essential to give unique and meaningful names to every zebrafish gene. Good nomenclature practices foster unambiguous communication within the research community and make electronic data retrieval much easier and more efficient.

The Zebrafish Nomenclature Committee, appointed at a Cold Spring Harbor meeting several years ago, is alive and well. Our job is to provide guidelines and advice for naming genes and mutants. These conventions are based on input from the zebrafish community and on the rules used for naming human and mouse genes.

During the past several years, we have participated in the International Nomenclature Workshops and have published updated guidelines in Trends in Genetics (Genetic Nomenclature Guide, 1998). The current guidelines are available on ZFIN.

The committee continuously reviews zebrafish gene names to consolidate multiple names for the same gene, to assign uniform names to all members of gene families, and to clarify the relationships between genes in zebrafish and other vertebrates. These reviews often require BLAST, cluster and mapping analysis. We also work closely with the mouse and human nomenclature committees. The approved name and all other previous names of all published zebrafish genes are listed on ZFIN.

We encourage all of you to consult the committee before publishing new gene names. ZFIN currently supports a mechanism for researchers to reserve names for newly discovered mutants. These names are reviewed by the committee to ensure they conform to accepted nomenclature conventions and then given a tentative approval that reserves the name until the mutant or gene is published. To reserve names for genes identified by molecular means, you can contact the ZFIN nomenclature coordinator ([nomenclature@zfin.org](mailto:nomenclature@zfin.org))

The mouse and human research communities now require approval from their respective nomenclature committees before new names can be published. Most of the major journals support this process by requiring a statement of the committee's approval for all new names before the manuscript is published. This helps avoid changing names later because of nomenclature problems. Is the zebrafish research community ready for this?

Please give us your feedback at: [nomenclature@zfin.org](mailto:nomenclature@zfin.org)

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