

AVIAN NOMENCLATURAL ISSUES ARISING FROM THE PUBLICATION OF
ROOKMAAKER'S *THE ZOOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SOUTHERN AFRICA 1650-1790*P. A. CLANCEY¹ & R. K. BROOKE²

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SUMMARY

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Rookmaaker (1989) has drawn the attention of taxonomists to the existence of a range of long overlooked senior ornithological synonyms which, if adopted in terms of the Law of Priority, would result in changes to long established names. As such extensive changes of name are patently undesirable, we propose a course of action which would entail as little disruption as possible to current usage, and obviate the necessity for the submission of cases to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 14 – Birds – of his recently published seminal work on the earlier historical stages of the zoological exploration of southern Africa, the Dutch bibliographer L. C. Rookmaaker (1989) demonstrates that thirteen scientific names of Afrotropical birds in widespread use in the standard literature are in fact antedated by earlier, long overlooked binomina which in terms of the mandatory provisions of the Law of Priority (International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, 3rd edition, 1985) should supersede them. They are based on the same plates as those referred to by the later authors where a Levaillant (1796-1812) illustration and accompanying text were used.

As the majority of zoologists, and certainly contemporary ornithologists, are now opposed to changing names on grounds other than that of blatant error in secondary attribution, or in order to meet the overriding requirements of findings based on new research, we, as members of the S.A.O.S. List Committee, have given careful consideration to the envisaged name changes. Our proposals for resolving the various cases are laid out below.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The required adjustments to binomina, authors, original citations and dates result from Rookmaaker's critical collating of a somewhat obscure and compendious publication entitled *Encyclopaedia Londinensis* which appeared in 24 volumes between 1795 and 1829 in no less than 1678 parts, and was described as a "Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature, comprehending, under the general alphabetical arrangement, all the words and substances of every kind of dictionary extant in the English language ... compiled, digested and arranged, by John Wilkes, of Millant House, in the county of Essex, Esq.; assisted by eminent scholars of the English, Scotch and Irish Universities. London. Printed for the proprietor.". Wilkes was the editor of the work, but no evidence exists as to the identity of the contributors, though Cassin (1867) and, later, Sherborn (1922) attributed the articles on birds to Wilkes in his capacity as editor.

How it is that the names dealt with below in Tables 1 and 2 have only now come to the attention of avian taxonomists is difficult to understand, as they appear in no fewer than four of the

TABLE 1

SPECIES GROUP NAMES OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN BIRDS PROPOSED BY LATHAM, WILKES AND VIEILLOT BETWEEN 1801 AND 1817
 TO BE VIEWED AS ORIGINAL PROPOSALS OF NAMES IN CURRENT USE ATTRIBUTED TO LATER AUTHORS

Present name and citation	New and correct citation
1. Familiar Chat <i>Cercomela familiaris</i> : <i>Saxicola familiaris</i> Stephens, in Shaw, <i>General Zoology</i> , vol. xiii, 1826, p. 241. Based on Levaillant, <i>Ois. d'Afr.</i> , pl. 183 (1806).	<i>Motacilla familiaris</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 86. Same basis as <i>S. familiaris</i> .
2. Anteating Chat <i>Myrmecocichla formicivora</i> : <i>Oenanthe formicivora</i> Vieillot, <i>Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat.</i> , vol. xxi, 1818, p. 421. Based on Levaillant, <i>Ois. d'Afr.</i> , pls 186 & 187 (1806).	<i>Motacilla formicivora</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 88. Same basis as <i>O. formicivora</i> .
3. Karoo Scrub Robin <i>Erythropygia coryphaeus</i> : <i>Sylvia coryphaeus</i> Lesson, <i>Traite d'Ornith.</i> , 1831, p. 419. Based on Levaillant, <i>Ois. d'Afr.</i> , pl. 120 (1801-1804).	<i>Sylvia coryphaeus</i> Vieillot, <i>Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat.</i> , vol. xi, 1817, p. 177. Synonym <i>Sylvia coryphaeus</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 77. Same basis as <i>S. coryphaeus</i> Lesson.

Note: Rookmaker, p. 324, recommends the adoption of the Vieillot binomen. Vieillot's spelling of the species name differs slightly from that of both Wilkes and Lesson.

4. Puffback *Dryoscopus cubla* Lanius: *cubla* Shaw, *General Zoology*, vol. vii, 2, 1809, p. 328. Based on Levaillant, *Ois. d'Afr.*, pl. 72 (1800-1801). *Lanius cubla* Latham, *Index Ornith.*, suppl., 1801, p. xxx. Same basis as *L. cubla* Shaw.

In all these cases, type-locality restrictions adopted in the S.A.O.S. Checklist of 1980 will apply unaltered to the new author and original citation, based as they are on the same Levaillant plates and texts.

TABLE 2

SPECIES GROUP NAMES OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN BIRDS PROPOSED BY WILKES AND TEMMINCK BETWEEN 1807 AND 1817 TO BE VIEWED AS LONG OVERLOOKED SENIOR SYNONYMS AND AS *NOMINA OBLITA*

Species and currently adopted binomina	Overlooked senior synonyms (<i>nomina oblita</i>)
1. Clapper Lark <i>Mirafr a apiaia</i> (Vieillot), 1816. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 194.	<i>Alauda percutiens</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. i, 1808, p. 236.
2. Thickbilled Lark <i>Galerida magnirostris</i> (Stephens), 1826. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 193.	<i>Alauda rostro-crassa</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. i, 1808, p. 235.
3. Blackheaded Oriole <i>Oriolus larvatus</i> Lichtenstein, 1823. <i>Verz. Doubl. Zool. Mus. Berlin</i> , p. 20.	<i>Oriolus africanus</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. vii, 1820, p. 740.
4. Mountain Chat <i>Oenanthe monticola</i> Vieillot, 1818. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 184(2) & pl. 185.	<i>Motacilla montana</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 89.
5. Bleating Bush Warbler <i>Camaroptera brachyura</i> (Vieillot), 1820. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 125.	<i>Motacilla viridis</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 80.
6. Blackcheasted Prinia <i>Prinia flavicans</i> (Vieillot), 1820. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 127.	<i>Motacilla citrina</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 78.
7. African Pied Wagtail <i>Motacilla aguimp</i> Dumont, 1821. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 178.	<i>Motacilla arenaria</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 85.
Subspecies complexes	
8. Cape Glossy Starling <i>Lamprotornis nitens</i> (Linnaeus), 1766. <i>Turdus nitens</i> Linnaeus, <i>Syst. Nat.</i> , 12th ed., i, 1766, p. 294.	<i>Sturnus nabiro</i> Temminck, <i>Cat. syst. Cab. d'Ornith.</i> , 1807, p. 85. Antedates either <i>L. n. phoenicopterus</i> Swainson, 1838, or <i>L. n. culminator</i> (Clancey & Holliday), 1951.
9. Cape White-eye <i>Zosterops pallida</i> Swainson, 1838. <i>Anim. in Menag.</i> , p. 295 (ex Burckell).	<i>Motacilla tcheric</i> Wilkes, <i>Encycl. Londinensis</i> , vol. xvi, 1817, p. 94. Basis: Levaillant, <i>l.c.</i> , pl. 132. Antedates one of the following: <i>Z. p. pallida</i> , <i>Z. p. atmorei</i> Sharpe, 1877, or <i>Z. p. capensis</i> Sundevall, 1850, and would become the name of the species.

24 volumes of the series. At the time the critical volumes of the *Encyclopaedia* appeared, Europe was in a very disturbed state as a result of the Napoleonic wars and their aftermath. Yet, an additional binomen which appeared in volume xvi of 1817, along with several of the overlooked names, namely *Motacilla tractrac* Wilkes = *Cercomela tractrac* (Wilkes), 1817, of current usage, has been applied for years to the Tractrac Chat, following comment by Mathews & Iredale (1921). Rookmaaker's (1989) observations show that some taxonomists were aware of the existence of Wilkes's names, as Cassin's (1867) paper on the issue was reviewed by Mathews & Iredale (1921), with the result that *tractrac* Wilkes of 1817 was adopted without demur and replaced Vieillot's *Oenanthe cinerea* of 1818 for the species.

Of the species described by Wilkes, three have the same species names as those proposed by later authors, while in the case of the fourth – *Lanius cubla* Shaw, 1809, this, too, is shown to be antedated by the same binomen of Latham, 1801. In these four instances (see Table 1) we recommend that the necessary changes required in terms of the Law of Priority be met by accepting Wilkes's authorship (and Latham's in the case of *L. cubla*), when the epithet in present use is in agreement with the earlier proposal and change only affects

the names of the authors and original citations, including dates.

In respect of the other nine names involved in the present inquiry, we recommend that in order to obviate undesirable changes to long established binomina and the threat posed to nomenclatural stability, the epithets enumerated in Table 2 be viewed as long overlooked senior synonyms and, as such, *nomina oblita*. However, in the event of other workers feeling that the mandatory provisions of the Law of Priority should prevail in present circumstances, a formal application for the conservation of the endangered junior synonyms will have to be submitted to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

In the cases of species 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, the names proposed by Wilkes would take the type-localities of the names in present use, based as they are on the same Levaillant figures and texts.

In the case of the Blackheaded Oriole (3), and in the event of the name *africanus* being adopted, a type-locality based on Levaillant's account of the species would have to be proposed. The same situation obtains in the cases of 8 and 9. In the case of the name *Sturnus nabiro* Temminck, the description is based on a specimen presented to him by Levaillant, and a type-locality would have

to accord with the latter's travels in South Africa.

CONCLUSIONS

Thirteen cases brought to the attention of avian taxonomists through the publication of Rookmaaker's *The Zoological Exploration of Southern Africa 1650–1790* affect the stability of long-established names of Afrotropical – and particularly Cape – birds. Four of the senior synonyms of Wilkes, Vieillot and Latham can be adopted as they involve little other than a simple change of authorship and original citation, including date. They have the same specific epithets and Levaillant (1796–1812) source as those in present use. The other nine cases involve radical replacement of established and widely used junior synonyms and, in the interests of stability in nomenclature, require to be categorized as long overlooked bionomina and, as such, *nomina obliterata*. If the recommendations made here are contested in view of the requirements of the Law of Priority, the cases enumerated in Table 2 will require to be submitted to the I.C.Z.N. for possible suppression in terms of its plenary powers.

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REVIEW

BRASSELER, H. & BEKIERZ, F.W. 1984. *Bibliographie ornithologischer Bibliographien/Bibliography of ornithological bibliographies* CFS 72:1–157; BRASSELER, H. 1987. *Bibliographie ornithologischer Bibliographien II/Bibliography of ornithological bibliographies II* CFS 99:1–214.

These two important bibliographies have appeared as issues of *Curier Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg* issued by the Senckenbergischen Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in (West) Germany. They are not catalogues of other ornithological bibliographies, though these are included, but list books and major papers, often reviews, with long lists of references or literature cited. In the 1987 bibliography the citations are given first, followed by systematic, subject and author indexes. A different order is used in the 1984 bibli-

ography. It is thus possible to search for bibliographies on a particular species or group or on a topic (which includes geographical subdivisions of the world) or by an author. Both works are bilingual in German and English so that workers can use whichever language they are more at ease in. This is prudent, not least because 80% of the citations in the *Zoological Record Aves* dealing with the Afrotropical Region have been written in English.

These bibliographies are not comprehensive in that Helga Brasseler has only listed citations of which she is aware or to which her attention has been drawn. However, they include the obvious modern citations on southern African birds among the 4 744 citations collected in the two bibliographies.

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