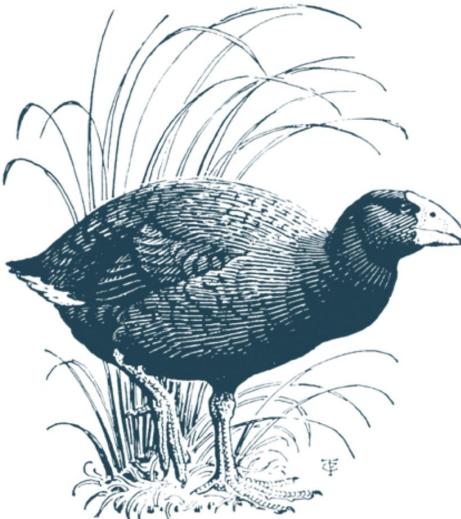


What's in a name? Understanding scientific names for birds

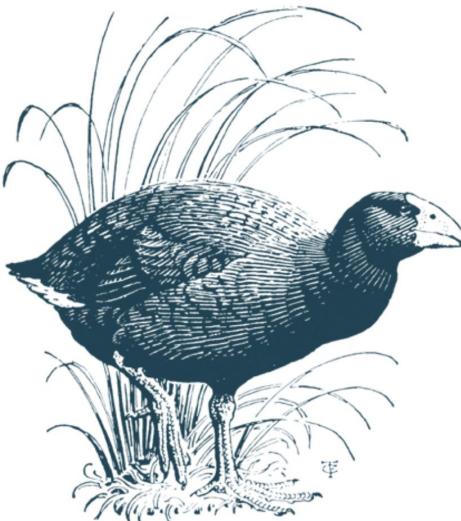
Richard Littauer
Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington

CHECKLIST OF THE
BIRDS
OF NEW ZEALAND



- Since 1953
- Has a Checklist Committee
- Available online
- 1,105~ scientific names

CHECKLIST OF THE
BIRDS
OF NEW ZEALAND



"The aim of this sixth checklist of New Zealand birds, like its predecessors, is to provide information on the **nomenclature**, taxonomy, classification, distribution (current, historical, and fossil) and status of the birds of the New Zealand region."

► ***Porphyrio hochstetteri* (A.B. Meyer)**

South Island Takahe | Takahē

Notornis Mantellii Ellman, 1861: *Zoologist* 19: 7470 – New Zealand. Junior primary homonym of *Notornis mantelli* Owen, 1848.

Notornis hochstetteri A.B. Meyer, 1883: *Abbildung von Voegel-Skeletten* 1(4–5): 28, pls 34–37 – North of Mararoa R., 3.5 miles east Whitestone R. and 9 miles south-east of south end of Lake Te Anau, Fiordland.

Notornis parkeri Forbes, 1892: *Trans. N.Z. Inst.* 24: 187 – Half a mile east of Patience Bay, Lake Te Anau, Fiordland.

Mantellornis hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer); Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th series): 216.

Porphyrio mantelli hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer); Checklist Committee Birds N.Z.: 125.

Porphyrio hochstetteri (A.B. Meyer); Holdaway *et al.* 2001, *New Zealand J. Zool.* 28(2): 132, 178.



International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

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INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

Fourth Edition

[Incorporating **A.** Declaration 45, Addition of Recommendations to Article 73 and of the term "specimen preserved" to the Glossary, **B.** Declaration 44, amendments of Article 74.7.3, with effect from 31 December 1999, and **C.** the Amendment on e-publication, amendments to Articles 8, 9, 10, 21 and 78, with effect from 1 January 2012]

*adopted by the
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INTERNATIONAL COD

Fourth Edition

[Incorporating [A. Declaration 45](#), [Addition of 44](#), [amendments of Article 74.7.3](#), with effect from 21 and 78, with effect from 1 January 2012]

*adopted by the
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The provisions of this Code supersede those o

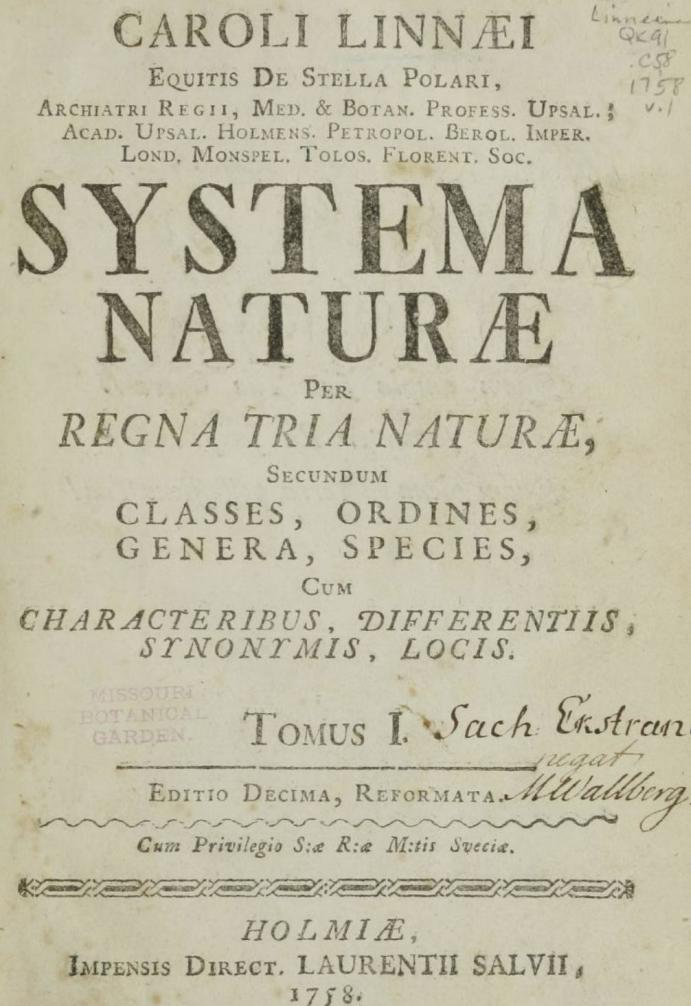


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The author of this Code is the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

"The Code":

- French and English
- 90 Articles
- Glossary
- Examples (which don't count)



Article 3: The beginning

- Starts with Linnaeus 1758, on Jan. 1.
- But they never specify the calendar.



Article 8.2 Disclamation

"A work that contains a statement to the effect that it is not issued for public and permanent scientific record, or for purposes of zoological nomenclature, is not published within the meaning of the Code."

This presentation is so stated.



Article 11.2 Latin alphabet

*Haematopus
unicolor*

And not:

እናወያም ብሔን አቅርብ



Article 11.3 Derivation

Doesn't have to be Latin.

Cf. *Manu antiquus* Marples, 1946

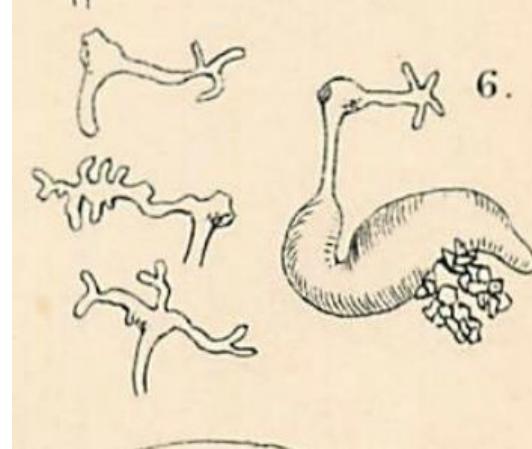


Article 11.9 Species names

Can be:

- an adjective in the nominative singular
- a noun in the nominative singular
- a noun in the genitive case, or:

"11.9.1.4. an adjective used as a substantive in the genitive case and derived from the specific name of an organism with which the animal in question is associated (as in *Lernaeocera lusci*, a copepod parasitic on *Trisopterus luscus*)."



Article 23 Principle of priority

First means first.



Gould, public domain

Huia

► †*Heteralocha acutirostris* (Gould)

Neomorpha acutirostris Gould, 1837: *Synop. Birds Australia* 1: pl. 11 & text – North Island.

Neomorpha crassirostris Gould, 1837: *Synop. Birds Australia* 1: pl. 11 & text – North Island.

Neomorpha Gouldii G.R. Gray, 1841: *List Gen. Birds* (2nd edition): 15. Unnecessary *nomen novum* for *Neomorpha acutirostris* Gould, 1837.

Heteralocha Gouldi (G.R. Gray); Cabanis 1851, *Mus. Heineanum* 1: 218. Unjustified emendation.

Heteralocha gouldi (G.R. Gray); G.R. Gray 1862, *Ibis* 4: 217. Unjustified emendation.

Heteralocha acutirostris (Gould); Buller 1872 (Apr.), *History of the Birds of N.Z.*, 1st edition (part 1): 63.

Heteralocha auctirostris (Gould); Enys 1876, *Trans. Proc. N.Z. Inst.* 8: 204. Misspelling.

Article 24 First Reviser

- Many names – Bruce & McAllan (1990)
- *Pachyptila belcheri* v *Pseudoprion turtur solanderi* Mathews, 1912 – Mathews

New:

- *Calidris melanotos* v. *maculata* Vieillot, 1819 – Wetmore
- *Larus dominicanus* *antipodum* v. *antipodus* Bruch, 1853
- *Branta* v. *Brandae* Scopoli, 1769
- *Mohoua*, *Mohouas*, *Mohoua-houa* Lesson, 183x?

LES MOHOUAS⁽²⁾.

Ils tiennent des picucules, des grimpereaux et des gobe-mouches. Leur bec est gros, pointu, courbé, à peine infléchi à sa pointe, qui est légèrement arrondie, et pourvue d'une très petite dentelure. Les narines sont ouvertes et médianes ; la mandibule supérieure est carénée, et l'inférieure est rectiligne. La commissure du bec est garnie de soies roides et longues. La langue est ciliée. Les ailes s'allongent jusqu'au milieu de la queue. Celle-ci a douze pennes fortes, étagées, et usées à leur sommet. Les tarses sont très forts.

La seule espèce de ce groupe a été découverte sur les bords de la baie Tasman, où les naturels lui donnent le nom de *mohoua-houa* : c'est le *grimpereau hétéroclite* ⁽³⁾ à dos olivâtre, à ailes brunâtres frangées de jaunâtre, et tête, poitrine et ventre jaunes. Son gésier ne renfermoit que des baies.



⁽¹⁾ *Sclerurus*, ibid.

⁽²⁾ *Mohoua*, Less.

⁽³⁾ *Certhia heteroclitae*

fig. 1 p. 223

Article 26. Assumption of Greek or Latin



Badly transliterated:

- Athene, Gerygone, Eudynamys, Aegotheles, Gymnorhina

Latin or Greek?

- Ptilinopus, Hirundapus, Apus, Haematopus, Phalaropus, Lagopus

Article 30.1 Gender of genus-group names

If Latin, Latin.

If Greek, Greek.

If Greek but looks like Latin, like Latin.

If disclaimed, not Greek or Latin.

If “common or variable”, masculine.

If ends in *-ops*, masculine.



Article 30.1 Gender of genus-group names?

Common-gendered genera:

- *Thalassarche, Aquila, Anthornis, Acanthis, Lagopus*
- ...and 12+ species under them.



Article 30.2 Gender of genus-group names

If in “modern European language”,
the gender of that word.

Else, as noted by author.

Or by combination.

Or masculine,
unless ends in *-a* (feminine.);
-um, *-on*, or *-u* (neuter).



Article 31.2 Agreement

Species must agree with genus.

31.2.1: Compound names ≠ agree.

31.2.2: If either N or Adj:

- Did the author note it?
- Is usage decisive?
- Can it be regarded as either?

TBD: 47 species names.



Article 31.2 Agreement

But it really depends.

Compound nouns: 11 species.

Substantives: 11 species.

Unclear N+Adj: 10 species.

Medieval Latin: 6 species.

Errors in Code examples: 2.

Unresolvable: ???



All main issues combined in a BBT

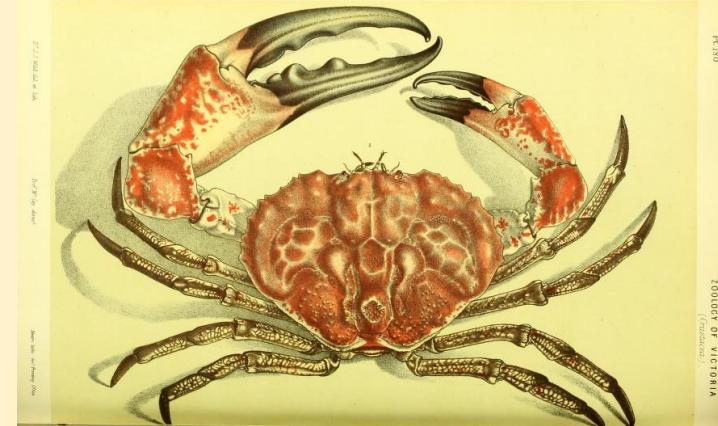
Megalapteryx didinus, Euryapteryx curtus, Euryapteryx curtus curtus, Dendrocygna, Cygnus atratus, Cygnus sumnerensis chathamicus, Branta, Numida, Callipepla, Callipepla californica, Synoicus, Ptilinopus, Eudynamys, Aegotheles, Hirundapus, Hirundapus caudacutus, Hirundapus caudacutus caudacutus, Apus, Apus pacificus, Apus pacificus pacificus, Zapornia pusilla, Tribonyx hodgenorum, Haematopus, Pluvialis dominicus, Numenius hudsonicus, Arenaria, Calidris, Calidris acuminata, Calidris ferruginea, Calidris alpina, Calidris melanotos, Calidris pusilla, Phalaropus, Phalaropus fulicarius, Phalaropus lobatus, Anous albivittus, Gygis alba, Larus dominicanus dominicanus antipodum, Onychoprion fuscatus serratus, Onychoprion anaethetus melanopterus, Chlidonias leucopterus, Chlidonias hybridus, Chlidonias hybridus javanicus, Aptenodytes patagonicus, Pygoscelis papua taeniata, Diomedea, Diomedea antipodensis, Diomedea antipodensis antipodensis, Thalassarche, Thalassarche impavida, Hydrobates leucorhous, Thalassoica, Daption capense, Ardenna pacifica chlororhyncha, Pelecanoides georgicus, Pelecanoides georgicus georgicus, Morus, Sula leucogaster plotus, Bubulcus ibis coromandus, Ardea intermedia plumifera, Botaurus poiciloptilus, Aquila, Tyto alba delicatula, Athene, Eurystomus orientalis pacificus, Todiramphus, Todiramphus sanctus, Cacatua galerita, Platycercus eximius, Cyanoramphus, Cyanoramphus novaezelандiae chathamensis, Anthornis, Anthornis melanura obscura, Anthochaera carunculata, Gerygone, Gerygone albofrontata, Mohoua, Artamus cyanopterus, Gymnorhina, Petroica, Petroica macrocephala, Petroica macrocephala macrocephala, Poodytes punctatus stewartianus, Passer domesticus, Acanthis, Acanthis flammea, Anas, Oreortyx, Coturnix coromandelica, Lophura nycthemera, Lagopus, Lagopus lagopus scotica, Pluvialis apricaria, Passer montanus, Alectoris rufa

Towards Resolution?

- Publish papers on it
- Talk to BirdsNZ Checklist committee
- Appeal to the ICZN

International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

- Est. 1895
- 26 Commissioners
- Occasionally publishes Opinions.
- Publishes "The Code"
- Updates it every 25~ years.



Toward Resolution!

- Wait for the ICZN to change
- Provide examples of how it needs to change first?



A photograph of a small, colorful bird perched on a thin, bare branch. The bird has a dark cap, a white patch on its wing, and a mix of brown, yellow, and white feathers on its body. It is positioned in the center-left of the frame, surrounded by out-of-focus tree trunks and branches. A red speech bubble in the top-left corner contains the text "Thanks.".

Thanks.

A close-up photograph of a tree trunk with rough, textured bark. A red speech bubble in the bottom-right corner contains the text "Questions?".

Questions?