

Codex Mutabilis: Preserving The Reasons For Changes In Scientific Names

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Flickr Foundation

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
International Union of Biological Sciences*

The provisions of this Code supersede those of the previous editions with effect from 1 January 2000



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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]

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"The Code":

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

CAROLI LINNÆI

EQUITIS DE STELLA POLARI,

ARCHIATRI REGII, MED. & BOTAN. PROFESS. UPSAL.
ACAD. UPSAL. HOLMENS. PETROPOL. BEROL. IMPER.
LOND. MONSPEL. TOLOS. FLORENT. SOC.

SYSTEMA NATURÆ

PER

REGNA TRIA NATURÆ,

SECUNDUM

CLASSES, ORDINES,
GENERA, SPECIES,

GUM

*CHARACTERIBUS, DIFFERENTIIS,
SYNONYMIS, LOCIS.*

TOMUS I. Sach Ekstrand.

EDITIO DECIMA, REFORMATA. *M. Wallberg*

Cum Privilegio S:æ R:æ M:tis Sveciæ

HOLMIÆ.

IMPENSIS DIRECT. LAURENTII SALVII

1758.

Article 3: The beginning

- Starts with Linnaeus 1758, on Jan. 1.
 - But the Code doesn't specify which calendar.



Article 11.2 Latin alphabet

*Haematopus
unicolor*

And not:

እናወያም ብሔን አቅርብ



Article 11.3 Derivation

Doesn't have to be Latin.

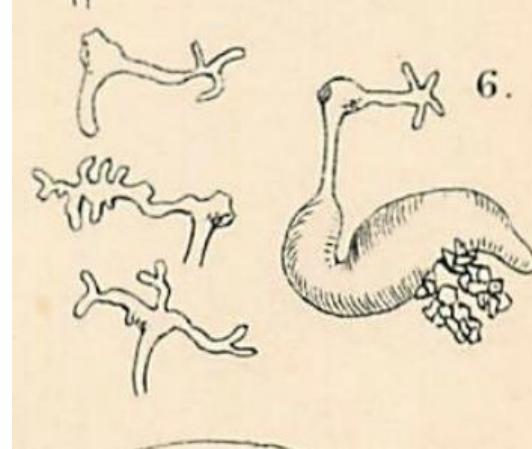
Cf. *Manu antiquus* Marples, 1946



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
- an adjective in the genitive case representing related species



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.

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 24 First Reviser

- *Pachyptila belcheri* vs. *Pseudoprion turtur solanderi* Mathews, 1912 – Mathews
- *Larus dominicanus antipodum* vs. *antipodus* Bruch, 1853
- *Branta* vs. *Brandae* Scopoli, 1769
- *Mohoua*, *Mohouas*, *Mohoua-houa* Lesson, 183x?
- *Rhopalum succineicollarum*, *succineicolle*, *suecineicolle*, or *succinei collearum* [and *succineicollare*] Tsuneki, 1952

Article 26. Assumption of Greek or Latin



Badly transliterated:

- Athene, Gerygone, Eudynamys, Aegotheles, Gymnorhina

Latin or Greek?

- Lagopus, Lago+pus?, λαγοπους?

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 30.2 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: But not compound names.

31.2.2: Unclear N or Adj:

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



Some unclear names from NZ I've found

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

The Code has some issues

Here's a cute parrot again.

► *Strigops habroptila* G.R. Gray

Strigops habroptilus G.R. Gray, 1845: *Gen. Bird.*
Strigopsis habroptilus (G.R. Gray); Bonaparte 1850
Strigops greyii G.R. Gray, 1862: *Ibis* 4: 230 – So
Stringops (Strigops) habroptilus (G.R. Gray); Poey 1874
Stringops habroptilus G.R. Gray; Reichenow 1881
Stringops Greyi G.R. Gray; Reichenow 1881, *Journ. für Ornith.*
Strigops habroptilus habroptilus G.R. Gray; Mathews 1912
Strigops habroptilus innominatus Mathews & Irene 1912
Strigops habroptilus parsonsi Mathews & Iredale 1912
Strigops habroptila G.R. Gray; Dickinson 2003,



The Code has some issues

- No storage of decisions
- Papers often behind paywalls
- The Code rarely updates
- Some changes are too small

This causes:

- Instability for names
- Duplicated work
- Confusion



Codex Mutabilis

- Satisfies the ICZN rules around publishing online
 - Permanent works (PDFs)
 - Storage (Internet Archive)
 - An ISSN
- Provides a place to make:
 - Mandatory changes
 - First revisions
 - Synonyms

Posts

Nov 2, 2025

[First Reviser for *Rhopalum succineicollarum* Tsuneki, 1952](#)

Dec 5, 2024

[Porrhomma boreale \(Banks, 1899\) is changed to *P. borealis*](#)

Dec 4, 2024

[Prunum boreale \(A. E. Verrill, 1884\) is changed to *P. borealis*](#)

Dec 3, 2024

[Codex Mutabilis is launched!](#)

subscribe [via RSS](#)

Codex Mutabilis

- A GitHub Jekyll website
- Publishes in Markdown
- Uses GitHub pull-requests for review
- Backed up on the Internet Archive
- Low maintenance costs

The screenshot shows a GitHub repository page for `codexmutabilis.com`. The repository was created by `RichardLitt` and has 2 issues and 1 pull request. The repository is public and has 1 fork and 0 stars. It includes sections for `Code`, `Issues`, `Pull requests`, `Actions`, `Projects`, `Wiki`, and `Settings`. The `Code` tab is selected, showing a list of files and their commit history:

File	Description	Last Commit
<code>.github/workflows</code>	Create jekyll-gh-pages.yml	last year
<code>_includes</code>	Adding ISSN	11 months ago
<code>_layouts</code>	Adding DOI to the rendered ...	7 hours ago
<code>_posts</code>	DOI to match new upload wi...	7 hours ago
<code>_sass</code>	Bring assets locally, add foot...	last year
<code>assets</code>	Bring assets locally, add foot...	last year
<code>lib</code>	Adding Rake file	last year
<code>.gitignore</code>	Initial post	last year
<code>404.html</code>	Initial post	last year
<code>CODE_OF_CONDUCT.md</code>	Adding CoC	last year
<code>Gemfile</code>	Initial post	last year
<code>LICENSE</code>	Initial commit	last year
<code>README.md</code>	Edit name	last year
<code>Rakefile</code>	Adding in a rakefile to test Fi...	7 hours ago
<code>_config.yml</code>	website > journal	last year
<code>about.md</code>	Update about	11 months ago
<code>index.markdown</code>	Initial post	last year
<code>_main.scss</code>	Bring assets locally, add foot...	last year

On the right side, there is a sidebar with repository details:

- A journal for publishing corrections for grammatical agreement in the ICBN
- `codexmutabilis.com/`
- science, nomenclature, taxonomy, latin, greek, icbn
- Readme, GPL-3.0 license, Code of conduct
- Activity: 0 stars, 1 watching, 1 fork
- Contributors: RichardLitt, Richard Littauer, jessamynwest, Jessamyn
- SCSS 43.0%, HTML 38.4%, Ruby 18.6%

Each article has:

- A list of relevant Articles in the Code
- References
- Etymologies
- Editorial or peer review
- A machine-readable interface
- Version control
- Persistent identifiers (DOI and Git commits)
- Registry in Zoobank
- Persistent storage of the data.

First Reviser for *Rhopalum succineicollarum* Tsuneki, 1952

Nov 2, 2025 • Richard Littauer • <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1750439>

Rhopalum succineicollarum Tsuneki, 1952 was made available according to the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1999; henceforth "the Code") in a publication that included the spellings *succineicollarum* (pg. 115, 116, 120), *succineicolle* or *suecineicolle* (pg. 116), and *succineicollareum* [sic] (pg. 117). A synonymy and citation record is provided in Leclercq (2010). Tsuneki consistently used *succineicollare* in subsequent publications, but this form is not a valid mandatory emendation of *collarum*, *collearum*, or *colle* according to the rules of Latin grammar. Tsuneki cannot be considered his own First Reviser according to Article 24.2.4 of the Code.

Haneda (2008) may have served as a First Reviser, as according to Leclercq (2010) the form *succineicollarum* was used in this work. However, this work is not accessible online, and I could not verify whether Haneda (2008) cited all forms of the original name in Tsuneki (1952). Hashimoto and Nakanishi (1999) also use *succineicollarum*, but do not act as First Revisers.

Acting as First Reviser, I select *Rhopalum succineicollarum* Tsuneki, 1952 as the available name. *Rhopalum succineicolic*, *Rhopalum succineicolle*, *Rhopalum succineicollareum*, and *Rhopalum succineicollare* are all incorrect spellings and therefore unavailable according to Art. 24.2.3. If they are considered subsequent spellings, both Haneda (2008) and Hashimoto and Nakanishi (1999) preclude the possibility of *Rhopalum succineicollare* being a correct original spelling according to Art. 33.3.1. If they are to be considered incorrect original spellings, they have no separate availability and cannot enter into homonymy or be used as a substitute name according to Art. 32.4.

If Haneda (2008) proves to have been a First Reviser, this revision is to be considered nullified according to Art. 24.2.5 and an update will be published accordingly upon notice.

References

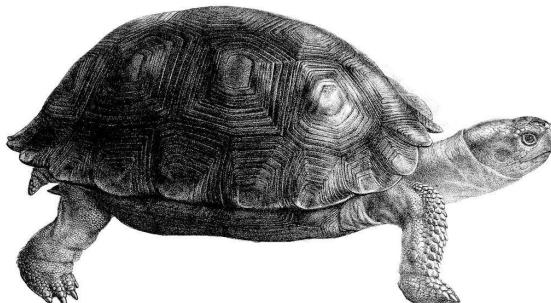
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Registration

This work was registered in Zoobank. urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:7AF7E617-3E3D-45B3-BEA4-81C67A1ED814

Why?

- The Code is too slow.
- Don't just store decisions! Store the rationale behind them.
- Don't lock things in PDFs.
- Experiments can show the limits of a system, thereby improving it.



Needs for Codex Mutabilis

- Editorial oversight and peer-review
- A taxonomy of Article decision-trees
- Adoption



Questions?

Thank you.

Reach me at <http://richard.social>, or

Codexmutabilis.com 

