

**ON THE PROPOSAL BY THE NOMENCLATURE COMMITTEE OF THE  
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, NEW YORK, FOR THE  
SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLenary POWERS OF THE LINNEAN  
NAMES PUBLISHED IN 1776 IN THE "CATALOGUE OF EDWARDS'  
NATURAL HISTORY" WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE NEW  
NAMES FOR BIRDS**

By FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.

(Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature)

(Commission's references Z.N.(S.)502 and 649)

When the International Commission comes to consider the application submitted by the Nomenclature Committee of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, that the plenary powers should be used to suppress all the new names by Linnaeus published in 1776 in the *Catalogue of Edwards' Natural History* (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 6 : 163), it will be necessary to consider two questions which would call for decision if it were proposed to take action in the sense recommended.

2. The points to be considered are :—

- (1) If this work were to be suppressed for nomenclatorial purposes, should that suppression be absolute (i.e. should that suppression apply for the purposes both of the Law of Priority and of the Law of Homonymy) or should it be limited, either for all names in the book or for some of them, to the Law of Priority ?
- (2) If the whole work were to be suppressed for either or both of the foregoing purposes, what steps ought to be taken to give effect in this case to the general direction of the International Congress of Zoology that adequate measures should be taken to ensure that the decision so taken is clearly related to the individual names involved (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 334).

3. On Point (1) the position is, so far as I know, that in one group only has a detailed survey been made of the new names in this *Catalogue*. The group concerned is the birds, as regards which Dr. James L. Peters (*Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.*) has published (1950, *Auk* 67 : 375-377) a complete list of the names involved. In view of the fact that the names concerned have thus acquired considerable prominence, I suggest that, if the Commission were to use its plenary powers to suppress this work, the logical course, as regards the bird names, would be to suppress them for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy. The effect of such a decision would be to prevent these names or any of them from taking priority over names in current use but at the same time, by maintaining the status of these names for purposes of homonymy, to prevent the confusion which might arise if the same trivial names were later to be applied to other species in the genera concerned. In the case of the groups, other than birds, no publicity in modern times has, so far as I am aware, been given to the names in question ; it would seem appropriate, therefore, that, if the names in this *Catalogue* are to be rejected, the names of taxonomic units belonging to groups other than birds should be suppressed absolutely, that is, both for the purposes of the Law of Priority and also for those of the Law of Homonymy.

4. On Point (2), it would be necessary, if the *Catalogue* were to be suppressed, to ask specialists in the various groups concerned to examine that work and to report which names in it were new and would therefore be affected by the general decision taken. The names so reported would then be placed on the *Official Indexes of Rejected and Invalid Names*. In the case of the bird names in the *Catalogue* the required information is already available through the paper by Dr. Peters referred to in paragraph 3 above, where it is shown that in the *Catalogue* there are one generic name and eighteen trivial names which are either new or have been so changed in spelling as, in Dr. Peters' opinion, to rank as new names. Particulars regarding these names have been extracted from Dr. Peters' paper and are given in the annexes attached hereto.



## ANNEXE 1

One new generic name for a bird by Linnaeus published in 1776 in the "Catalogue of Edwards' Natural History"

*Vermivora* Linnaeus, 1776 (: 13); a name based upon plate 305. This name antedates the name *Vermivora* Swainson, 1827.

## ANNEXE 2

New trivial names for birds by Linnaeus published in 1776 in the "Catalogue of Edwards' Natural History"

New Name	Page in "Catalogue" where name given	Plate in Edwards' "Nat. Hist." on which name based	Modern equivalent (as worked out by Dr. James L. Peters)
<i>americ, Vermivora</i>	13	305	<i>Motacilla vermivora</i> Gmelin, 1789
<i>araracina, Psittacus</i>	9	159	<i>Psittacus ararauna</i> Linnaeus, 1758
<i>bicator, Coracias</i>	13	320	considered to be unidentifiable
<i>calidris, Motacitta</i> [sic]	8	121	species figured not recognisable
<i>cinereus, Todos</i> [sic]	12	262	<i>Todus cinereus</i> Linnaeus, 1766
<i>dominica, Loxia</i>	8	127	<i>Loxia dominicana</i> Linnaeus, 1758
<i>falcolinus, Tetrao</i>	11	246	<i>Tetrao francolinus</i> Linnaeus, 1766
<i>globifera, Crax</i>	13	295	<i>Crax globicera</i> Linnaeus, 1766
<i>hybrida, Meleagris</i>	14	337	<i>Lyrurus tetrix</i> x <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>
<i>lutea, Muscicapa</i>	11	255	<i>Sylvia magnolia</i> Wilson, 1811
<i>nyctelea, Strix</i>	6	61	<i>Strix nyctea</i> Linnaeus, 1758 ( <i>Strix</i> <i>scandiaca</i> Linnaeus, 1758)
<i>pensylvanica</i> [sic], <i>Passer</i>	13	304	<i>Fringilla albicollis</i> Gmelin, 1789
<i>senegallensis, Picus</i>	9	182	<i>Picus benghalensis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
<i>spectrum, Psittacus</i>	13	315	<i>Psittacus fuscus</i> Müller (P.L.S.), 1776
<i>spectrum, Psittacus</i>	13	316	<i>Psittacus aterrimus</i> Gmelin, 1788
<i>umbellatus, Tetrao</i>	11	248	<i>Tetrao umbellus</i> Linnaeus, 1766
<i>voarula, Motacilla</i>	12	259	<i>Motacilla boarula</i> Linnaeus, 1771
<i>zeylonicus, Turdus</i>	13	321	<i>Turdua zeylonus</i> Linnaeus, 1766



Hemming, Francis. 1952. "On the proposal by the nomenclature committee of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, for the suppression under the plenary powers of the Linnean names published in 1776 in the "Catalogue of Edwards' Natural History" with spec." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 9, 68–69. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.10234>.

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