

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF A TYPE-SPECIES FOR
PITHECOPS HORSFIELD, 1828. Z.N.(S.) 1675
(see present volume, pages 69–71)

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Francis Hemming was a man for whom I had the greatest affection and for whose views and work I have the utmost respect. However, his application on this subject published posthumously in April 1965 (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 22 (1) : 69–71) is one which I cannot support.

Under the references quoted by Hemming, and as he says, Horsfield designated the genus *Pithecopus* based on an insect from Java which he faithfully described and figured, but misidentified as *Papilio* (*Hesperia*) *hylax* Fabricius, which nominal species was designated the type-species of the genus by Scudder (1875). But Fabricius's name applies in fact not to Horsfield's oriental insect but to the circumtropical species known, until Corbet in 1940 pointed out the error, as *Zizula gaika* (Trimen, 1862).

In consequence, as Corbet made clear, the circumtropical species should be known as *Zizula hylax* Fab. and, assuming proper steps are taken regarding type fixation, the Javan insect as *Pithecopus corax* Fruhstorfer (1919). To describe the two specific taxa in *Pithecopus hylax corvus* Fruh. and *P.h. corax* Fruh. as almost completely unknown is surely most misleading; they are fully dealt with and referenced in Seitz Vol. 9 (110) (1920) : 879 and 1014, pl. 154 figs. e, 1–4, and quite familiar in the region affected.

It is 25 years since Corbet corrected the specific nomenclature error, and his article has been accepted, and the consequent corrections carried out, as indeed they should, certainly throughout the Oriental region. The most recent publications from Malaysia, Japan, India (*sens. lat.*), and Australasia respectively are, and treat of: Corbet (1956) (pp. 277 & 456, *Pithecopus corvus* Fruh., 289 & 457, *Zizula hylax* Fab.); Shirôzu (1960) (pp. 335 & 456, *Zizula hylax* Fab.); Cantlie (1962) (pp. 36, *Pithecopus corvus* Fruh.; 65, *Zizula hylax* Fab.); and Couchman (1962) (pp. 76, *Zizula hylax attenuata* (Lucas)).

Thus over the entire region where both the affected species fly the errors have been corrected smoothly and quietly in conformity with the rules, without any of the "serious confusion" or "disastrous consequences" which Hemming so strangely feared.

Any authors elsewhere who may not yet have adopted *hylax* Fab. as the senior taxon for *gaika* Trimen are at fault under the rules. It might be of assistance to authors in similar cases if the International Commission were to publish details of such necessary changes, or at least references to them, at an early date after their discovery, although of course with the introduction of Article 23 (b) and the *nomina oblita* rule such cases will become increasingly rare.

Any attempt now by the International Commission to switch these names back after the lapse of 25 years would surely do it, and all conscientious observers of the rules, far more harm than good.

There remains the necessity for action to regularize the use of the generic name *Pithecopus* Horsfield, as so well explained by Hemming.

I therefore request that the International Commission:

- (1) use its plenary powers to set aside all designations of type-species for the nominal genus *Pithecopus* Horsfield (1828), made prior to the ruling now proposed and, having done so, to designate as the type-species of that genus the species *Pithecopus corax* Fruhstorfer (1919) as published in the trinomen *Pithecopus hylax corax*.
- (2) place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the generic name *Pithecopus* Horsfield (1828), *Descr. Cat. lep. Ins. Mus. East India Coy.* (1): 66 (gender : masculine), type-species by designation under the plenary powers in (1) above, *Pithecopus corax* Fruhstorfer (1919).

- (3) place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the specific name *corax* Fruhstorfer as published in the trinomen *Pithecopa hylax corax* Fruhstorfer (1919) *Arch. Naturgesch.* **83**, Section A.1 (1917): 79, (type-species of *Pithecopa* Horsfield (1828)).

NOTE: Both Lieut.-Col. J. N. Eliot and Mr. G. E. Tite have asked me to say they are most emphatically in agreement with the above views, the latter pointing out that African authors long ago accepted the discovery of Corbet and complied with the rules, *vide* Peters (1952) (p. 119, no. 192, *Zizula hylax* F.), and Stempffer (1957) (p. 220, *Zizula hylax* Fab.).

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