

ANSWER TO THE "REMARKS ON 'REVIEW OF THE GENUS  
*CACOMANTIS*'"

BY ERNST HARTERT

WITH regard to Mr. Mathew's remarks on my criticisms I have the following to say:

It was of course a silly mistake to enumerate *pyrrhophanus* as a subspecies of *cineraceus*, as *pyrrhophanus* was the older name!

What I said on p. 172 about Mathews using *rubricatus* as the specific name of what I called *Cacomantis cineraceus* was of course perfectly correct. I referred to and quoted *B. of Australia* vii, 1918, but overlooked that four years later, *B. of Australia* ix, 1922, he had corrected and altered the name, and I also overlooked that he had called attention to the existence of Lichtenstein's name *Cuculus prionurus* of 1823, in the following words:

"List p. 155, and Check List p. 103.

Add to synonymy:

*Cuculus prionurus* Lichtenstein, Verzeichn. Doubl. Mus. Berlin, p. 9 (pref. Sept.) 1823: New South Wales."

But this was done in August 1921, about three years after the publication of the volume on the *Cuculidae* of the Birds of Australia! I will of course not make excuses for overlooking his statement, but I might be allowed to say that it is a hard task to look up in such cases several lists in order to find out what genus and species is referred to. It would have been much easier for ornithologists who have to do with the nomenclature of Australian Birds, if Mathews had said:

"*Cacomantis rubricatus*: To the synonymy must be added: *Cuculus prionurus*, etc., etc."

I have since seen the type of *Cuculus prionurus* in the Berlin Museum, and there is no doubt that it is the bird which for many years was erroneously called *C. flabelliformis*, and in 1912 by Mathews *C. rubricatus*. As *prionurus* is earlier than *cineraceus*, I must of course adopt it, and the species I called *C. cineraceus* in Nov. Zool. 1925, pp. 172-4, will be:

***Cacomantis prionurus* (Licht.)**

Mr. Mathews disagrees with me in adopting the name *pyrrhophanus* of Vieillot, 1817, for the New Caledonian subspecies, but I cannot approve of his reasons. As to the description, Vieillot says: "Il a toutes les parties inférieures rousses." This clearly means that the whole underside is rufous, and I do not agree that we should take it for a bird which has the throat ashy grey. Mathews argues that the underside in this case does not include the throat, because Vieillot says afterwards that the head is grey, and that the head includes the throat as well. This of course might have been argued, but I had good reason to take my point of view, as the description agreed with the type, and moreover, it seems to be obvious that Vieillot first described the underside, and then the upperside, the "head" meaning the head from above. In fact, in the very next description on the same page he said, in describing *Cuculus solitarius*, that the head is greyish



("la tête glacé de gris"), the throat and fore-part of the neck rufescent ("la gorge d'un roux foible, le devant du cou roussâtre et ondé de brun"), and so in other cases; this shows how Vieillot's diagnosis must be understood.

Mathews further says that the bird which was kindly sent me as the type of Vieillot's *C. pyrrhophanus* could not be the type, as it "was not now claimed as the type," and the real type was "lost." I naturally took the bird sent to me as the type, and the label on it seemed to prove this, saying that it is "*Cacomantis pyrrhophanus*, Type N<sup>elle</sup> Calédonie, Labillardier." I therefore wrote to the Paris Museum again, asking for explanation, and Monsieur Berlioz kindly informed me that nothing was known of a "lost type," that the specimen in question was undoubtedly the one of which Pucheran speaks as the type in 1852, that the specimen in their register is given as "*Cacomantis pyrrholophus* (V.) *C. bronzinus* (Gr.), N<sup>elle</sup> Calédonie, Labillardière." There can be no doubt that *pyrrholophus* is merely a mistake for *pyrrhophanus*, as no bird has been described under the name *pyrrholophus*, and there is no *Cacomantis* with a red crest! Though the new register does not particularly "claim" the bird as the type, it by no means disclaims it, and both at the Paris Museum and in my opinion Mathew's theory of the "lost type" is not confirmed any more than that it is the real type, which there is no good reason to doubt. I may add that "types" were seldom, if ever, marked as such in olden times, and that it was left to later research to find out which the type-specimens were, and Pucheran doubtless knew more about the old specimens than we do now!

I may also repeat that the description of the upperside by Vieillot was bad, but was corrected by Pucheran! Also that Labillardière, the collector, was a long time in New Caledonia, and that such a mistake as "Nouvelle Hollande" for "Nouvelle Calédonie" could easily be made by Vieillot, while "Java" (or "Timor," as Mathews suggests, without obvious reason) could not likely be made for New Caledonia! Monsieur Berlioz tells me that a second specimen, received from a dealer in London, Leadbeater, was erroneously labelled as coming from Java, and that this must have been the reason for believing the type came from there by Pucheran. The localities were evidently put on the labels later, but as the specimen belongs to the New Caledonian form, and no such bird occurs on Java, the locality New Caledonia must be correct, while there is no thought of Java (or "Timor"!).

The chief aim of my article in Nov. Zool. 1925, pp. 164-74, was to show the relationship of the various forms of *Cacomantis* to each other, and my arrangement remains so far unaltered and is so far not doubted by any critic. With the discovery (by Mathews) of the name *prionurus* the subspecies which I called *C. cineraceus cineraceus* becomes

### ***Cacomantis pyrrhophanus prionurus***

and the other subspecies should be called: *Cacomantis pyrrhophanus prionurus*, *C. pyrrhophanus excitus*, *C. pyrrhophanus meeki*, *C. pyrrhophanus pyrrhophanus*, *C. pyrrhophanus simus*, and *C. pyrrhophanus schistaceigularis*.

The name of *rufulus* is in my opinion most certainly too uncertain to adopt it for any form with absolute certainty.



24 MAR 1926  
PURCHASED



Hartert, Ernst. 1926. "Answer to the "Remarks on 'Review of the genus *Cacomantis*'".*" Novitates zoologicae : a journal of zoology in connection with the Tring Museum* 33, 55–56. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.21144>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/22616>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.21144>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/21144>

#### **Holding Institution**

Natural History Museum Library, London

#### **Sponsored by**

Natural History Museum Library, London

#### **Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: The Trustees of the Natural History Museum, London

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

Rights: <http://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.