

It is to be hoped that in the coming years students of bird flight and migration will consult this unique collection of drawings and tables, and so put it to the use that Col. Meinertzhagen intended, over 70 years ago.

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25 June 1987

## IN BRIEF (2)

### The authorship of the raptor name *Circaetus fasciolatus*

The Fasciated Snake Eagle (Southern Banded Snake Eagle) *Circaetus fasciolatus* was initially proposed by G. R. Gray, *Cat. Accipitr. Brit. Mus.*, 1848: 18, where the name is a *nomen nudum*. Peters, *Check-list of Birds of the World*, 1, 1931: 270, credited validation of the binomen to Gurney (*Ibis*, 1861: 130), which view is likewise adopted by Stresemann & Amadon, in the second edition of *Peters*, 1, 1979: 310. Most recent authors, however, including Clancey (Ed), *S.A.O.S. Checklist of Southern African Birds*, 1980: 38 and Wolters, *Die Vogelarten der Erde*, 1976: 86, *inter alia*, ascribe the valid introduction of Gray's binomen to J. J. Kaup in his 'Monograph of the Falconidae' in Jardine, *Contributions to Ornithology*, 3, 1850: 72, in the combination *Circaetus fasciolatus*, listed in the subgenus *Spilornis* G. R. Gray, 1840. The type-specimen of *fasciolatus* is a relaxed mounted specimen from Port Natal=Durban, Natal, in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring, purchased from the dealer Argent (*vide* Warren, *Type-specimens, Birds, British Museum (Nat. Hist.)*, 1 (Non-passerines), 1966: 96). Judging from the date of the specimen's accession – 1845 – the accepted type-specimen of *C. fasciolatus* Kaup, 1850, is the same skin as was available to Gray in 1848.

Kaup's validation of *fasciolatus* in terms of the requirements of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* has priority over that of Gurney (1861), and cannot be set aside because the introduction of the name is accompanied by a short description, which reads: "Neck-feathers pointed; lower breast, belly, and tibial feathers white, with ash-gray rufous broad bars," while the type-locality (Port Natal) is cited. This latter action is based on the Argent and only skin in the British Museum at the time (1850). Gurney (*loc. cit.*) also provides a brief description and lists a second specimen from Natal (taken in October 1858). His descriptive statement states that *C. fasciolatus* is "readily distinguished from *Circaetus zonurus* (= *Circaetus cinerascens* von Müller, 1851) by the greater length of its tail, and by the five dark bands with which the tail is transversely marked, as well as by the anterior part of the inside of the wing adjacent to the carpal joint being transversely marked with brownish-grey bars, instead of being white".

The authority of *Peters' Check-list*, 1 (second edition), 1979, notwithstanding, attribution of the name of the present snake eagle must stand as hereunder given:



*Circaetus fasciolatus* Kaup

*C. (ircaetus) fasciolatus* Kp=Kaup, in Jardine, *Contributions to Ornithology*, 3, 1850, p. 72; Port Natal=Durban, Natal, South Africa.

It is worthwhile noting that Warren (1966) incorrectly gives the name of the present species as introduced by Kaup as *Spilornis fasciolatus*.

For assistance with the literature I am indebted to Mrs Anne Vale of the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring, and the Librarian of the Transvaal Museum, Pretoria.

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P. A. Clancey  
23 July 1987

## IN BRIEF (3)

The Raptor Research Foundation announces a \$500 annual grant in memory of Leslie Brown, "one of the most inspired and productive raptor biologists of recent decades". The grant is to provide financial assistance to promote the research and dissemination of information on birds of prey. Applications must be received by 1 October. Proposals, donations and enquiries about tax exempt contributions to the fund, as well as applications themselves, should be sent to: Dr Jeff Lincer, Chairman, RRF Leslie Brown Memorial Fund, 4718 Dunn Drive, Sarasota, FL 34233, USA.

## Books Received

Massa, B. (Ed) 1985. *Atlas Faunae Siciliae – Aves*. Il Naturalista Siciliano. Vol IX. Numero speciale. Pp. 1–242. 18 black-and-white habitat photographs and 92 breeding species illustrated in colour from Dresser (Vol 8. 1871–1881). Organo dell Societa Siciliana di Scienze Naturali, Palermo, Sicily. No price given. 240 x 165 mm.

"This Atlas is a small contribution to the European Atlas of breeding birds and to the preservation of nature in Sicily". So states the English introductory paragraph, but in fact the work is far from small. It is a comprehensive account with maps of the habitat and distribution of 124 proved breeding birds and 7 possibles (each has a brief but succinct summary in English) researched for the 5 years 1979–1983. Comparison is also made with past distribution. Presently endangered species are not mapped but a lengthy appendix analyses a "red list" of breeding species. Brief English précis are very helpfully inserted throughout the text. An invaluable base for future estimation of the avifauna of Sicily, which will be companioned by the B.O.U. Check-list 'The Birds of Sicily' by Dr Bruno Massa and C. Iapichino due at the end of 1988.

Hill, M. & Langsbury, G. 1987. *A Field Guide to Photographing Birds in Britain and Western Europe*. Pp. 1–251. Plentifully illustrated with diagrams and with colour photographs. Hard covers, Collins. £12.95. 19 x 13 cm.

Aims at encouraging better photography technically by the average birdwatcher with photographic intentions. This is combined with a detailed geographical guide to specific localities in towns, on coasts and islands, at inland freshwaters, in forest and open country on heath and moorland and mountain regions embracing the UK and western Europe – areas where increasing experience and success, as well as good birdwatching, can be gained. An important chapter is on 'Ethics and the Law' and there is a comprehensive survey of equipment as well as techniques. The coloured photographs are mostly quite outstanding.





Clancey, P. A. 1987. "The authorship of the raptor name *Circaetus fasciolatus*." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 107, 191–192.

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