



## Neotypification of *Larus cachinnans* Pallas, 1811 (Aves: Laridae)

JIŘÍ MLÍKOVSKÝ<sup>1</sup> & VLADIMIR M. LOSKOT<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Zoology, National Museum, Václavské náměstí 68, CZ-115 79 Praha 1, Czech Republic.

E-mail: [jiri\\_mlikovsky@nm.cz](mailto:jiri_mlikovsky@nm.cz)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Ornithology, Zoological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, RU-199034, Russia.

E-mail: [otus@zin.ru](mailto:otus@zin.ru)

### Introduction

The systematics of large white-headed gulls of the *Larus fuscus-argentatus* complex has long been problematic (e.g. Bruch 1853, 1855; Dresser 1873; Hartert 1921; Dwight 1925; Štegman 1934; Geyr von Schweppenburg 1938; Voous 1959) and is still in flux (e.g. Wink *et al.* 1994; Klein & Buchheim 1997; Panov & Monzиков 1999; de Knijff *et al.* 2001; Yésou 2002; Crochet *et al.* 2002, 2003; Liebers *et al.* 2004; Gay *et al.* 2007; Sternkopf *et al.* 2010). The earliest name for any Asian form is *Larus cachinnans*, proposed by Pallas (1811b: 318). This name is now generally applied to large white-headed gulls breeding in the Caspian region, but, as we show below, there is nothing in Pallas's (1811b) description of the taxon that unambiguously links it with southern Palearctic forms, even less with any particular one of them (see below for the type series).

Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811) was a German naturalist in the service of Russian tzars, who travelled widely through the southern Russian Empire. His travels resulted in the discovery of numerous new taxa of animals, including birds (Pallas 1769a,b, 1770, 1771, 1773, 1776), but not in the recognition of a new large white-headed gull. Only later, when Pallas (1811a,b) monographed the vertebrate fauna of Russia, did he recognize *Larus cachinnans* as a species. [For the dating of the latter work see ICZN (1954), Svetovidov (1976) and Dickinson (2011).]

As previously observed by Blasius (1858), Pallas (1811b: 318–320) used his *Larus cachinnans* in a very broad sense, in much the same way as Scandinavian authors used their *Larus argentatus* (Pontoppidan 1763: 622) or *Larus naevius* (Linnaeus 1766: 225). Pallas (1811b: 318) referred to several earlier authors (see below), but did not mention in the synonymy of his *cachinnans* any name available for the purposes of zoological nomenclature (ICZN 1999), which excludes the possibility that he created *cachinnans* as a new replacement name. Dresser (1873) suggested that *cachinnans* is indeterminate, but most earlier authors applied the name to some or all southern Palearctic white-headed gulls breeding from south-western Europe to Kamchatka (e.g. Keyserling & Blasius 1840: xcvi; Dresser 1903: 833; Hartert 1921: 1725; Dwight 1925: 202).

Dwight (1925: 202) seems to have been the first to restrict the type locality of *cachinnans* to the "Caspian Sea", and the Caspian Sea has been cited as the type locality by many subsequent authors (e.g. Buturlin 1934: 157; Dement'ev 1951: 472; Vaurie 1965: 471; Stepanân 1990: 222, 2003: 249). Independently, Štegman (1934: 376) restricted the type locality to "die östlichen Küsten des Kaspischen Meeres und Turkestan" ("eastern coasts of the Caspian Sea and Turkestan"). Restricting type localities was an allowed means of specifying the meaning of broadly defined animal taxa until the Third Edition of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1985), but the Fourth Edition of this Code (ICZN 1999) annulled such restrictions. The meaning of *Larus cachinnans* thus can be established only via lectotypification or neotypification. [See Olson and Banks (2007) for an analogous case.]

We transliterated toponyms and names of authors originally written in non-Latin scripts into Latin names according to currently valid rules (see Mlíkovský 2010a; Pedersen 2012). Nomenclatural issues follow the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1999). For current bird taxonomy, we follow Dickinson (2003).