



Correspondence

urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:F9900DEB-FA97-4943-A267-7A89E33552D1

Circumscription, diagnosis and description of two subfamilies and one genus of Australo-Papuan robins (Aves: Passeriformes: Petroicidae)

LESLIE CHRISTIDIS^{1,2}, MARTIN IRESTEDT³, DIANNE ROWE⁴, WALTER E. BOLES⁵ & JANETTE A. NORMAN⁶

¹National Marine Science Centre, Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour, New South Wales 2450, Australia;
email:les.christidis@scu.edu.au

²Department of Genetics, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia

³Molecular Systematics Laboratory, Swedish Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 50007, SE-104 05 Stockholm, Sweden

⁴Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia

⁵Division of Research and Collections, Australian Museum, 6 College St., Sydney, New South Wales 2010, Australia

⁶Department of Genetics, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia

Christidis *et al.* (2011) conducted a phylogenetic study of the Australo-Papuan robins (Aves: Passeriformes: Petroicidae) and erected three new taxa: two subfamilies, Amalocichlinae and Pachycephalopsinae, and a genus, *Cryptomicroeca*. Following the requirements of Article 11.7 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1999), these were created giving their circumscription, i.e., the lower taxa included in each, respectively. Additional requirements for the erection of these new taxa, as set out in Article 13.1 (ICZN 1999), however, were unfortunately not met. This Article (13.1.1) requires that the formation of a new name, in this case at both family and generic level, also provides a description or definition stating in words the characters that purportedly differentiate it from other taxa. This requirement was not met in Christidis *et al.* (2011), so we rectify this omission here. A similar problem that arose with the erection of the robin subfamily Microecinae by Loynes *et al.* (2009) was subsequently corrected by Loynes *et al.* (2011).

The three new taxa in Christidis *et al.* (2011) were originally recognised through phylogenetic and genetic analysis of their levels of differentiation from other petroicine robins at comparable taxonomic levels, which is not amenable to expressing in a manner to meet the requirements of the Code. Non-genetic characters that in combination diagnose the two new subfamilies are as follows:

Amalocichlinae subfam. nov. [type genus *Amalocichla* De Vis, only genus, comprising two species, *A. sclateriana* De Vis (type) and *A. incerta* (Salvadori)]: superficially turdine thrush-like in body shape; all plumage stages lacking red; adults with brown plumage, uniform above, drab and unmarked other than ill-defined ventral mottling (i.e., lacking spots, stripes, barring and tipping to any feathers); underwing stripe across base of remiges; wing short, rounded, curved (outer primary a little more than 50% of next); juveniles spotted on body and wing coverts; bill slender; rictal bristles present but not strongly developed; vomer lacking rostrally directed lobes; legs long and slender, tarsus booted; tail rather short; nest open cup; eggs whitish and finely spotted.

Pachycephalopsinae subfam. nov. [type genus *Pachycephalopsis* Salvadori; only genus, with two species, *P. poliosoma* (Sharpe) (type) and *P. hattamensis* (Meyer)]: stout and heavy-bodied; all plumage stages lacking red; adult plumages unmarked other than ill-defined ventral mottling (i.e., spots, stripes, barring and tipping to any feathers absent); underwing stripe across base of remiges lacking; juvenile plumages lacking spotting or streaking to body feathers or wing coverts; iris pale in adults; bill not flattened; rictal bristles moderately strongly developed; vomer lacking rostrally directed lobes; legs long; tail rather short; nest cup-shaped; eggs pale with dense blotching, most prominent at larger end.

The new genus is diagnosed as follows:

Cryptomicroeca genus. nov. [type and only species *Eopsaltria flaviventris* Sharpe]: Australo-Papuan robin with the characters set out by Loynes *et al.* (2011) for the Microecinae in spotted juvenile plumage; unmarked adult plumage; and flycatcher foraging-mode morphology, but which has adult “yellow robin” plumage with grey head, breast and upperparts (last suffused with olive) and yellow belly, flanks and undertail coverts, a colour pattern not found elsewhere in this subfamily. The nest is a deep inverted cone and adorned with moss and lichens and placed in a vertical fork, unlike in other microecines where the nest is more flat, saucer-shaped and undecorated, and placed on top of a horizontal branch.

It should also be pointed out that Christidis *et al.* (2011) incorrectly stated that the author for the subfamily name Drymodinae was Wolters (1975–1982). Although that author introduced this name in a taxonomic list, and indicated which taxa he considered it to comprise, he did not provide the characters required under Article 13.1.1. Those were subsequently given by Schodde and Mason (1999), from whom this name takes its validity under the Code.

Acknowledgements

We thank Ed Dickinson and Richard Schodde for identifying the taxonomic issues associated with both the Loynes *et al.* (2009) and Christidis *et al.* (2011) studies.

Reference

- Christidis, L., Irestedt, M., Rowe, D., Boles, W.E. & Norman, J.A. (2011) Mitochondrial and nuclear DNA phylogenies reveal a complex evolutionary history in the Australasian robins (Passeriformes: Petroicidae). *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, 61, 726–738.
- ICZN (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature) (1999) *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*, Fourth Edition. International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, London, xxix + 306 pp.
- Loynes, K., Joseph, L. & Keogh, J.S. (2009) Multi-locus phylogeny clarifies the systematics of the Australo-Papuan robins (Family Petroicidae, Passeriformes). *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, 53, 212–219.
- Loynes, K., Joseph, L. & Keogh, J.S. (2011) Circumscription, diagnosis and description of a subfamily of Australo-Papuan robins. *Zootaxa*, 3106, 67–68.
- Schodde, R. & Mason, I.J. (1999) *The Directory of Australian Birds*. Passerines. CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne, x + 851 pp.
- Wolters, H.E. (1975–1982). *Die Vogelarten der Erde. Eine systematische Liste mit Verbreitungangaben sowie deutschen und englischen Namen*. Paul Parey, Hamburg, xx + 745 pp.