

**Case 3449*****Diomedea melanophris* Temminck, 1828 (currently *Thalassarche melanophris*; Aves, Procellariiformes): proposed conservation of original spelling**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Articles 33.2.3 and 33.3 of the Code, is to rule that the name of the Black-browed Albatross *Diomedea melanophris* Temminck, 1828 (currently *Thalassarche melanophris*) is confirmed as the correct original spelling. Since 1839, half of authors have used *melanophris* and the other half *melanophrys*, following Temminck's (1839) incorrect subsequent spelling. The difference is not statistically significant, and it is proposed that the original spelling is confirmed as correct to follow the priority and to promote stability.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Aves; Procellariiformes; DIOMEDEIDAE; *Thalassarche melanophris*; *Thalassarche melanophrys*; Black-browed Albatross; Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans.

1. The 'Nouveau recueil de planches coloriées d'oiseaux' (hereafter 'Planches coloriées') of C.J. Temminck & M. Laugier de Chartrouse was issued in 102 parts ('livraisons') in the period 1820–1839, and comprised 600 coloured plates depicting about 669 species (e.g. Stresemann, 1951). This massive work was intended to be a supplement to Buffon's classic 'Histoire naturelle des oiseaux' (1771–1786) with the 'Planches enluminées' engraved by F.-N. Martinet embodied in it. Temminck (1828; livraison 77, pl. 456 and text) described a small albatross from the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, and named it *Diomedea melanophris*. Eleven years later, in his 'Tableau méthodique' (livraison 102, p. 76), Temminck spelt the specific name *melanophrys*, with a letter 'y' instead of an 'i'. This has long caused much confusion among subsequent authors, who have used either one or the other form with similar frequency. Previous attribution of *Diomedea melanophris* by some authors to Boié in Temminck lacks a sufficient evidentiary basis and it appears that Temminck (1828) simply used Boié's manuscript name.

2. Temminck (1828) did not provide an etymology for the name *melanophris* when describing his bird, but at the same time he gave it the French name 'Albatross sourcils-noirs' (now 'Albatros à sourcils noirs', in English 'Black-browed Albatross').



Thus he obviously derived the name *melanophris* from the Ancient Greek μέλας (melas: black) and οφρύς (ophrys: eyebrow), a direct allusion to the bird's distinctive dark eyebrow and dark grey-black patch round the eye. As the last vowel of the word οφρύς is 'υ' (upsilon) and not 'ι' (iota), it would have been more accurately transliterated as 'u' as in *Cichlocolaptes leucophrus* (Jardine & Selby, 1830) (Aves, FURNARIIDAE) or 'y' as in *Callonetta leucophrys* (Vieillot, 1816) (Aves, ANATIDAE) (see The International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, Third edition, 1985: Appendix B). It is noteworthy that Temminck rendered the Greek letter upsilon as 'i' rather than 'y' in several scientific names throughout the '*Planches coloriées*'. For example, he wrote *Larus melanorhinchus* (pl. 504) and *Gallinula eurizona* (pl. 417), but used *Diomedea brachiura* (pl. 11) only in the title, and *Diomedea brachyura* in the text. These spellings have also been changed in the '*Tableau méthodique*'.

3. Replacement of the letter 'i' by 'y' is certainly not without importance, because they had different pronunciations in Ancient Greek; 'ι' (iota) being pronounced like the French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. 'i', and 'υ' (upsilon) like the French 'u' or German 'ü'. Ancient Latins took 'y' from the Greek alphabet in order to render this last sound in latinized Greek words.

4. Temminck (1839, livraison 55, pl. 456 and text) did not make any explicit statement of intention when he changed the spelling of the name *melanophris* to *melanophrys* in his '*Tableau méthodique*', and only used it one time in this work, so that the provisions of Article 33.2.1 of the Code do not apply. It should be noted that '*Tableau méthodique*' was a systematic list of avian species, with references to '*Planches enluminées*' of the '*Histoire naturelle des oiseaux*' of Buffon (1770–1788) and Temminck's '*Planches coloriées*', without opportunity for mentioning the name *melanophrys* more than once.

5. A number of influential authorities have used either *melanophris* (e.g. Peters, 1931; Sibley & Monroe, 1990; del Hoyo et al., 1992) or *melanophrys* (e.g. Saunders & Salvin, 1896; Jouanin & Mougin, 1979; Brooke, 2004) without reaching a consensus and these works have been used by later authors. For example, out of a sample of 222 references ranging from the years 1865–2007, 112 (50.5%) used *melanophris* and 110 (49.5%) *melanophrys* (the lists of references are held by the Secretariat). The tendency to use *melanophrys* was a little more marked between the years 1990–2007; 81 works (53.3%) out of 152 using this spelling during this period. These differences were evidently not statistically significant (Chi-squared = 0.02, d.f. = 1,  $P > 0.05$  and Chi-squared = 0.66, d.f. = 1,  $P > 0.05$ , respectively), and it can be safely stated that both names have appeared in the scientific literature with about the same frequency since the middle of the 19th century.

6. In sum, no intentional emendation (Article 33.2.1) by Temminck (1839) can be demonstrated (only perhaps inferred), and *melanophrys* must thus be regarded initially as an incorrect subsequent spelling (Article 33.3). Under the circumstances of nearly equal and widespread use of both spellings of the species name, prevailing usage cannot be cited to award *melanophrys* the status of correct original spelling in place of *melanophris* (Article 33.3.1), even though the etymology would favour doing so. The best chance to end one and a half century of instability and to establish a single stable name for this species of albatross, is to have the original spelling by Temminck (Temminck, 1828) officially endorsed by the Commission and placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology. However, if the outcome of the



Commission's vote is to reject by a two-thirds majority in para. 7 (below), the result would be to rule under the plenary power that *Diomedea melanophris* Temminck, 1828 is suppressed and placed on the Official Index and *Diomedea melanophris* Temminck, 1828 is placed on the Official List (as a justified emendation).

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to rule that the name *melanophris* Temminck, 1828, as published in the binomen *Diomedea melanophris*, is the correct original spelling;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *melanophris* Temminck, 1828, as published in the binomen *Diomedea melanophris*, as ruled in (1) above;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *melanophris* Temminck, 1839, as published in the binomen *Diomedea melanophris* (incorrect subsequent spelling of *Diomedea melanophris* Temminck, 1828, as ruled in (1) above).

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).



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