

CYPSELUS ABESSYNICUS STREUBEL, 1848 (AVES, APODIDAE):
PROPOSED SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS.
Z.N.(S.) 1914

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The purpose of this application is to suppress a name, long used for one form, which has proved to relate to a different form to which another valid name has for over a century been universally applied. Strict application of priority would require not only two changes of name but also a confusing name transfer.

1. In 1848 Streubel described a swift *Cypselus abessynicus* (*Isis von Oken* 1848, col. 354) with the locality given as Ethiopia (then Abyssinia). The type locality was restricted to Massawa on the coast of the Eritrea Province of Ethiopia by Grant and Mackworth-Praed (1937, *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 58 : 21). The type specimen is in the Humboldt Museum in Berlin.

2. In the literature since 1848 Streubel's name *abessynicus* has been applied to a swift breeding in tropical Africa which is generally considered a sub-species of *Apus affinis* (J. E. Gray), the nominate form of which was described from Bengal in India in Gray & Hardwick's *Illustrations of Indian Zoology* 1 (2) : pl. 35, f. 2, 1830. The generic name *Cypselus* Illiger, 1811, used by both Gray and Streubel has been universally replaced by *Apus* Scopoli, 1777, on the grounds of priority.

3. An allied swift *Cypselus galilejensis* was described from the Sea of Galilee in Israel (then Palestine) in 1855 by Antinori (*Naumannia* : 307). This form is currently considered to have a breeding range from Morocco through Israel to Afghanistan. It is also currently treated as a sub-species of *Apus affinis*. The name *galilejensis* has been universally and exclusively used for the swift of this complex breeding in Israel, Syria and adjacent western Asia. Efforts to trace the type specimen of *galilejensis* have yielded no result.

4. Recently Brooke, on discovering that all Red Sea coastal Ethiopian and Somali specimens were *galilejensis*, concluded that *abessynicus* was not pertinent to the tropical African breeding form to which that name had been applied but was a name given to the southernmost breeding population of the form universally called *galilejensis*. The reasons for this conclusion are given by Brooke in the *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 89 : 166; 1969. In that paper Brooke pointed out that as the tropical African breeding form was without a name a new name had to be supplied for it and he proposed *Apus affinis aerobates* with type locality at Mbandaka in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Brooke also called attention to the unfortunate and confusing consequence of shifting the name *abessynicus* to the form which for more than a century had been universally known as *galilejensis* (see Hartert, 1892, *Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum* vol. xvi, p. 454; Peters, 1940, *Check-list of the Birds of the World* IV : 251; Meinertzhagen, 1954, *Birds of Arabia* : 283; Ripley, 1961, *A synopsis of the Birds of India and Pakistan* : 210; Heim de

Balsac and Mayaud, 1962, *Les Oiseaux du nord ouest de l'Afrique* : 197; Vaurie, 1965, *The Birds of the Palaearctic Fauna* 2 : 649; White, 1965, *A revised check list of African non-passerine birds* : 214; Dement'ev et al., 1966, *Birds of the Soviet Union* 1 : 699; Etchécopar and Hübner, 1967, *The Birds of North Africa* : 358). So far as we are aware, since 1855 the name *galilejensis* has always been used for the Israeli and west Asian populations and the name *abessynicus* has never been applied to them.

5. That *abessynicus* was applied erroneously to another form to which it is inapplicable raises a problem best handled by suppressing the name under the plenary powers. Transfer of the name from one form to another bearing a different well-known name is the most undesirable and confusing kind of nomenclatural change.

6. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is therefore requested to take the following action:

- (1) to use the plenary powers to suppress for the purpose of the Law of Priority but not for the purpose of the Law of Homonymy the specific name *abessynicus* Streubel, 1848, as published in the binomen *Cypselus abessynicus*;
- (2) to place the specific name *galilejensis* Antinori, 1855, as published in the binomen *Cypselus galilejensis*, on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;
- (3) to place the specific name *abessynicus* Streubel, 1848, as published in the binomen *Cypselus abessynicus*, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology;



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