

Case 2673

***Micropterus patachonicus* King, 1831 and *Anas pteneres* Forster, 1844 (both currently in *Tachyeres* Owen, 1875; Aves, Anseriformes): proposed conservation of the specific names**

B. C. Livezey

Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045, U.S.A.

Abstract. Steamer ducks are large diving ducks of southern South America, classified today in the genus *Tachyeres* Owen, 1875. There are four species, three of them flightless. Usage of the names of two of the species is threatened by the unused senior name *Oidemia patachonica* King, 1828: *T. pteneres* (Forster, 1844) as a subjective synonym and *T. patachonicus* (King, 1831) as a secondary homonym.

1. During the surveying voyages of the British ships *Adventure* and *Beagle* during 1826–30, Captain P. P. King observed steamer ducks, and an unknown number of skin specimens were collected. In February 1827, King and members of the parties aboard the two ships made an excursion to Eagle Bay, Straits of Magellan, and collected specimens of an apparently flightless species (King, 1839, p. 35).

2. In July 1827, King sent from Rio de Janeiro a selection of 78 specimens, many of which were believed to represent new species, to N. A. Vigors, Secretary of the Zoological Society of London, in advance of the return of the expedition (King, 1828a, pp. 422–423). Among these skins was a single specimen of a large duck which King thought was new and which he named (King 1828b, p. 100) as *Oidemia patachonica*.

3. The collection of specimens also contained examples of another species which were smaller and more red on the scapulae and throat and in 1831 (p. 14) King named it as a new species, *patachonicus*, of *Micropterus* Lesson, 1828 (p. 416). Specimens of this second species were exhibited at a meeting of the Zoological Society of London in December 1830. In 1839, King (p. 542) mentioned that this species was capable of flight, thereby starting a century-long debate concerning the existence of both flighted and flightless species of steamer duck (see Cunningham, 1871, p. 493; Lowe, 1934). The species is currently known as *Tachyeres patachonicus* (*Tachyeres* Owen, 1875, p. 254, is the replacement name for *Micropterus* Lesson, 1828, preoccupied by the fish name *Micropterus* Lacépède, 1802). *T. patachonicus* King, 1831 is a junior secondary homonym of *Oidemia patachonica* King, 1828, which is also now placed in *Tachyeres*.

4. Subsequently, King (1839, pp. 35 and 542) concluded that the specimen he had named *Oidemia patachonica* corresponded closely with a flightless duck described from the voyage of the French vessel *Uranie* by Quoy & Gaimard in 1824 (p. 139) under the name *Anas brachyptera* Latham, 1790 (p. 834) (later placed in the genus *Micropterus*). King indicated the synonymy of his species with *M. brachypterus* (as then understood) and this was noted by Strickland (1841, p. 39) and Gibson (1877, p. 185). Eventually,

brachypterus was restricted by Murphy (1936, p. 954) to the flightless species endemic to the Falkland Islands, King's Magellanic species being separated as *Anas* (now *Tachyeres*) *pteneres* (Forster, 1844, p. 338). *T. pteneres* is the name in use today, although *O. patachonica* is the older synonym.

5. I recently examined the extant specimens from the original collection of King in the National Museums of Scotland (NMSZ 1926.109.111) and the British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH Old Vellum Catalogue No. 42-73b), which have been regarded as "co-types" of *Oidemia patachonica* (Stenhouse, 1929, p. 185; 1930, p. 274 (where the catalogue number of the former specimen is incorrectly cited as 1926.109.90 (R. McGowan, pers. comm.)); Warren, 1966, p. 221; Warren & Harrison, 1973, p. 5) and determined that both are of the Magellanic flightless species (inferred earlier for the former by Gibson, 1877, p. 185). No original material of the flighted species collected by King is known to exist.

6. Since King's 1839 publication the specific name *patachonicus* King, 1831 has been used to refer to the flighted species in over 200 ornithological works spanning 150 years, and in papers by both proponents and opponents of according species status to the flighted form; these include Murphy (1936, p. 968), Meyer de Schauensee (1970, p. 33) and Livezey & Humphrey (1986, p. 540). A representative list of a further five references is held by the Commission Secretariat. The only possible exception to the usage of *patachonicus* was the parenthetical suggestion of the alternate name *Micropterus macropterus* by Giglioli (1875, p. 934) for the flighted species; this was an informal, descriptive proposal without nomenclatural justification and Giglioli otherwise used *patachonicus* and cited only King's second paper (1831) in reference to the flighted form.

7. The fact that the name *patachonicus* was used by King for different species in 1828 and 1831 appears to have been overlooked by all but Stenhouse (1929, p. 185), who also mentioned the possible availability of the name suggested by Giglioli. There is variation, however, in the reference given for the name as used in its current (1831) sense; for example Murphy (1936, p. 968) and Delacour (1954, p. 276) both credit King, 1830 (sic, for 1831), whereas Weller (1976, p. 45) and Johnsgard (1979, p. 453) refer to King, 1828.

8. In order to maintain the usage of *Tachyeres patachonicus* in its accustomed (King, 1831) sense for the flighted species of steamer duck, I propose the suppression of *Oidemia patachonica* King, 1828 as a senior secondary homonym of *Micropterus patachonicus* King, 1831 and as a senior subjective synonym of *Anas pteneres* Forster, 1844.

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

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *patachonica* King, 1828, as published in the binomen *Oidemia patachonica*, and all other uses of the name prior to the publication of *patachonicus* King, 1831, in the binomen *Micropterus patachonicus*, for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *pteneres* Forster, 1844, as published in the binomen *Anas pteneres*;
 - (b) *patachonicus* King, 1831, as published in the binomen *Micropterus patachonicus*;

- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *patachonica* King, 1828, as published in the binomen *Oidemia patachonica*, and as suppressed in (1) above.

Acknowledgements

Support was provided by U.S. National Science Foundation grant BSR-8516623. I thank R. Y. McGowan (Royal Museums of Scotland) and D. K. Read (formerly of the British Museum (Natural History)) for assistance during visits, and I am especially grateful to D. Heppell (Royal Museums of Scotland) for his considerable advice on nomenclatural convention.

References

- Cunningham, R. O. 1871. On some Points in the Anatomy of the Steamer Duck (*Micropterus cinereus*). *Transactions of the Zoological Society of London*, 7(7): 493–501.
- Delacour, J. 1954. *The Waterfowl of the World*, vol. 1. 284 pp. Country Life, London.
- Forster, J. R. 1844. *Descriptiones Animalium quae in itinere ad Maris Australis Terras per annos 1772, 1773 et 1774 suscepto collegit*. 424 pp. Officina Academica, Berolini.
- Gibson, J. 1877. On certain birds collected by the late Captain (Rear-Admiral) P. P. King in the Straits of Magellan between the years 1826–27. *Proceedings of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh*, 4: 183–186.
- Giglioli, E. H. 1875. *Viaggio intorno al globo della R. Pirocurvetta Italiana Magenta negli anni 1865–66–67–68 sotto il comando del Capitano di fregata V. F. Arminjon*. 1031 pp. Maisner, Milano.
- Johnsgard, P. A. 1979. Order Anseriformes. Pp. 425–506 in Mayr, E. & Cottrell, G. W. (Eds.), *Check-list of Birds of the World, A Revision of the Work of James L. Peters*. Ed. 2, vol. 1. xvii + 547 pp. Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- King, P. P. 1828a. Extracts from a letter addressed by Capt. Phillip Parker King, R.N., F.R.S. and L.S., to N. A. Vigors, Esq., on the animals of the Straits of Magellan. *Zoological Journal (London)*, 3: 422–432.
- King, P. P. 1828b. Extracts from a letter addressed by Capt. Phillip Parker King, R.N., F.R.S. and L.S., to N. A. Vigors, Esq., on the animals of the Straits of Magellan (concluded). *Zoological Journal (London)*, 4: 91–105.
- King, P. P. 1831. Characters of new genera and species of birds from the Straits of Magellan. *Proceedings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society of London*, 1: 14–16, 29–30.
- King, P. P. 1839. *Narrative of the surveying voyages of his Majesty's ships Adventure and Beagle, between the years 1826 and 1836, describing their examination of the southern shores of South America, and the Beagle's circumnavigation of the globe*, vol. 1. 597 pp. Henry Colburn, London.
- Latham, J. 1790. *Index Ornithologicus, sive systema ornithologiae; complectens avium divisionem in classes, ordines, genera, species, ipsarumque varietates: adjectis synonymis, locis, descriptionibus*, vol. 2, pp. 467–920. Leigh & Sotheby, London.
- Lesson, R.-P. 1828. *Manuel d'ornithologie, ou description des genres et des principales espèces d'oiseaux*, vol. 2. 448 pp. Roret, Paris.
- Livezey, B. C. & Humphrey, P. S. 1986. Flightlessness in steamer-ducks (Anatidae: *Tachyeres*): its morphological bases and probable evolution. *Evolution*, 40(3): 540–558.
- Lowe, P. R. 1934. On the Evidence for the Existence of Two Species of Steamer Duck (*Tachyeres*), and Primary and Secondary Flightlessness in Birds. *Ibis*, (13) 4(3): 467–495.
- Meyer de Schauensee, R. 1970. *A Guide to the Birds of South America*. 470 pp. Livingston Publishing Co., Wynnewood, Pennsylvania.
- Murphy, R. C. 1936. *Oceanic Birds of South America*, vol. 2, pp. 641–1245. American Museum of Natural History, New York.

- Owen, R. 1875. On *Dinornis* (Part XX): containing a Restoration of the Skeleton of *Cnemidornis calcitrans*, Ow., with remarks on its affinities in the Lamellirostral group. *Transactions of the Zoological Society of London*, 9(3): 253-272.
- Quoy, J. R. C. & Gaimard, J. P. 1824. *Voyage autour de monde par les Corvettes l'Uranie et la Physicienne*, vol. 3 (Zoologie). 712 pp. Pillet Aine, Paris.
- Stenhouse, J. H. 1929. Some birds of historical interest in the Royal Scottish Museum. I. Birds of the voyage of H.M.S. "Adventure" and "Beagle", 1826-30. *Scottish Naturalist*, No. 180: 181-187.
- Stenhouse, J. H. 1930. Bird-types in the Royal Scottish Museum. *Novitates Zoologicae*, 35(3): 270-276.
- Strickland, H. E. 1841. Commentary on Mr. G. R. Gray's "Genera of Birds", 1840. *Annals of Natural History*, 7: 26-41.
- Warren, R. L. M. 1966. *Type-specimens of Birds in the British Museum (Natural History)*, vol. 1 (Non-passerines). 320 pp. British Museum (Natural History), London.
- Warren, R. L. M. & Harrison, C. J. O. 1973. *Type-specimens of Birds in the British Museum (Natural History)*, vol. 3. 76 pp. British Museum (Natural History), London.
- Weller, M. W. 1976. Ecology and behaviour of steamer ducks. *Wildfowl*, 27: 45-53.



Livezey, B C. 1989. "Micropterus patachonicus King 1831 And Anas pteneres Forster 1844 Both Currently In Tachyeres Owen 1875 Aves Anseriformes Proposed Conservation Of The Specific Names." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 46, 181–184. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.527>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/44487>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.527>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/527>

Holding Institution

Natural History Museum Library, London

Sponsored by

Natural History Museum Library, London

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.

Rights Holder: International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

License: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>

Rights: <https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions>

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.