

Acknowledgements

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IN BRIEF

THE GENDER OF THE AVIAN GENUS *BATIS*

Clancey (1989, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 109: 122) submits that the gender of the genus *Batis* Boie 1833 (Afrotropical flycatchers of the family Platysteiridae or Muscicapidae) should be treated as of the feminine gender on the basis of consensus of usage over the past century or more. However,

it is clear from Article 30(a) of the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (1985, 3rd edition) that a genus of Greek or Latin origin takes "the gender given for that word in the standard Greek or Latin dictionaries". *Batis* is a Greek word of feminine gender (Dowsett 1988, *Tauraco* 11: 143) and it is this fact that determines the gender of the avian genus. It is only for names not of Greek or Latin or modern Indo-European origin that Article 30(d) of the Code indicates acceptance of an implied gender.

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13 October 1989

FURTHER ON THE RAPTOR NAME
CIRCAETUS FASCIOLATUS

The authorship of the binomen of the Afrotropical snake eagle species *Circaetus fasciolatus* has for long been a question of debate among avian taxonomists. In a short note on the matter in *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.*, 107(4), 1987: 191–192, I accepted the widely held view that it was first introduced by G. R. Gray in his *Cat. Accipitr. Brit. Mus.*, 1848: 18, where an assumed *nomen nudum*, and decided that its validation in terms of the *International Code* should date from the year 1850 and its author as J. J. Kaup (in Jardine, *Contr. Ornith.*, 3: 72).

Under date 5 March 1990, Herr K. Gröbler, of Leipzig, East Germany (D.D.R.), has kindly drawn my attention to the fact that while Kaup is indeed the true author of the name *C. fasciolatus*, it was actually first described by him in the *Isis von Oken*, 1847 (December), column 954, the original description reading as follows: "In das Subgen. *Spilornis* zähle man die Art *Circaetus fasciolatus* Kaup. Alle kopffedern zugespitzt; Unterbrust, Bauch, Hosen weiss, mit 3–4 aschgrauen, zum Theil roströthlich angeflogenen breiten Querbinden auf jeder Feder. Ein sehr ausgezeichnete Art von Port Natal. Britisches Museum".

This new information reveals that Gray, in 1848, simply used Kaup's already available name, and that the true describer had had access to the then unique specimen in London well in advance of the publication of the *Cat. Accipitr. Brit. Mus.* The name *C. fasciolatus* will now have its original date and citation adjusted in accord with the above details.

I am indebted to Herr Gröbler for drawing my attention to the existence of the original description of this snake eagle in L. Oken's *Isis*.

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31 March 1990



Dowsett, Robert J. 1990. "The gender of the avian genus *Batis*." *Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club* 110, 109–110.

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