

Systematic notes on Asian birds. 57. The authorship of the generic name *Gymnoris*.

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Key words: nomenclature; author; J.E. Gray; Hodgson; Blyth; *Gymnoris*; *flavirostris*; *flavicollis*; *xanthocollis*. The currently accepted citation for *Gymnoris*: J.E. Gray, 1831, is shown to be fundamentally erroneous. The first valid citation is that of Blyth in 1845. However the nominal type species' name is preoccupied, and the *nomen novum* of *Fringilla xanthocollis* E. Burton, 1838, should be associated with it. The correct citation is given in full.

Introduction

The authorship of the generic name *Gymnoris* is in need of clarification as the usual citation, taken from Moreau and Greenway (1962: 23) and followed by others, e.g., Dickinson (2003: 718), is fundamentally in error. The date, authorship and type are all here reviewed.

History

The first use of *Gymnoris* appears on p. 84 of J.E. Gray's 'The Zoological Miscellany'. This occasional publication has caused considerable confusion in the past, in respect of dates of issue and of the validity of names within it, especially those based on Hodgson's specimens and drawings. The title page, clearly intended to be generic with a 'No.', i.e., 'number' at the top left corner, is dated '1831', and gives rise to the erroneous dating of the whole work by, e.g., Moreau and Greenway (1962: 23). Adler (1971) said of Gray's Miscellany that part 3 'concludes the series with pages 81-86' and that it is stated to have been issued in 1844. This is corroborated by the imprint at the foot of page 81, which reads 'GRAY, ZOOL. MISCELL. JUNE, 1844.'

The six pages of part 3 are entirely given over to a single paper: '*Catalogue of Nepalese Birds, collected between 1824 and 1844*. By B.H. HODGSON, Esq.' I reproduce the italics and small capitals deliberately to emphasize the fact that this paper was clearly written by Hodgson, and not J.E. Gray as others have suggested. Hodgson writes: 'The numbers after the names refer to the drawings and specimens, a nearly complete series of which has been sent to the British Museum', and on p. 84 one finds, under the head 'Fringillidæ', the binomen '*Gymnoris flavirostris*, 864.' This refers to one of Hodgson's drawings and to any specimens of it numbered from the drawing, as was Hodgson's practice. Sharpe (1888: 293) identified this as 'pl. 287' (no. 864), but as

Hodgson's drawings were, and remain, unpublished ¹ they cannot be considered to be an indication as defined by Article 12 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (1999: 16). Thus on first use *Gymnoris* is a *nomen nudum*. That this was correctly indicated by Baker (1930: 239) seems to have been entirely overlooked by Moreau and Greenway, and it is Baker *loc. cit.* who also indicated the likely point of valid introduction.

In 1845, in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (JASB) for 1844, vol. 13, no. 156, appeared a paper by Hodgson 'On the Leiotrichane Birds of the Subhemalayas'. The true extent of Hodgson's paper is pp. 933-941. However, on page 942 notes by Blyth, earlier included in square brackets, cease to be so distinguished and the authorship from here on is by Blyth, as may also be true of the "P.S." that fills the lower half of p. 941 although this is not certain. On the next page, without a clear sign that the postscript is over, Blyth mentions *Sylviparus modestus* Burton, 1838, and leads into 'A synopsis of Indian Pari' (pp. 942-944) (a title found only within the overarching title given to what starts as Hodgson's paper) and then, from the lower half of p. 944, into what could be cited as a second separate paper (pp. 944-963) usually referred to as a 'Synopsis of Indian Fringillidae' (a title inserted in page 944). This paper is significantly larger than Hodgson's to which it is appended. The anomalous structure of this three-part work is such that I judge it best to refer to Blyth 'in Hodgson' due to the lack of separate pages with authorship shown for parts two and three.

It is in this Synopsis of Indian Fringillidae that the name *Gymnoris* next appears, within the description of a new taxon *P[asser]. flaveolus* (p. 946) where Blyth mentions that 'some approach is shown to *Gymnoris flavicollis*'. The name *Gymnoris* here is a *nomen nudum*, as no author for the original combination is stated, and, significantly, *Passer flaveolus* Blyth, 1845, is intentionally excluded. However, on p. 948 comes a brief diagnosis of '*Gymnoris* Hodgson n.g.' which reads 'Differs from *Passer* in having the beak more elongated, slender and *Carduelis*-like: it being more slender than in restricted *Fringilla*.' There then follows a text dealing with "*G[ymnoris]. flavicollis; Fringilla flavicollis*, Franklin, P.Z.S., 1831 p. 120; referred to *Ploceus* by Col. Sykes, P.Z.S. 1832 p. 94, and with more propriety to *Pyrgita* vel [Latin = or] *Passer* by Mr. Jerdon." ² It is evident that Blyth employed Hodgson's MS name but the description is not quoted and appears to be by Blyth despite the footnote giving credit, at least for the name, to Hodgson.

Conclusion

This should be taken as the point of introduction for *Gymnoris* and, as no other species were listed, the correct citation is as follows:

¹ In fact a few of Hodgson's plates have been reproduced in recent times in Cocker & Inskipp (1988) and in Waterhouse (2004).

² In a footnote Blyth gives an excerpt of a letter from Strickland in which the latter says 'I consider *Fringilla flavicollis* to be a true *Passer*...'. Blyth then writes, on his own account: 'Had Mr Hodgson not separated *Gymnoris* from *Passer* as above, I should scarcely have myself ventured upon doing so.'

Gymnoris

Gymnoris Blyth, 1845.³ Synopsis of Indian Fringillidae, in Hodgson, On the Leiotrichane Birds of the Subhemalayas. JASB, 13 (156), p. 948 (1844).

Type by monotypy, *Fringilla flavicollis* Franklin, 1831 = *Fringilla xanthocollis* E. Burton, 1838.

Gymnoris xanthocollis (E. Burton, 1838).

Fringilla xanthocollis E. Burton, 1838 *nomen novum* for *Fringilla flavicollis* Franklin, 1831, nec *Fringilla flavicollis* Gmelin, 1789 = *Spiza americana* (Gmelin, 1789).

Postscript

That the nominal type species, *Fringilla flavicollis* Franklin, 1831, was preoccupied by *Fringilla flavicollis* Gmelin, 1789, was not at all apparent in the earlier literature. Nevertheless, as a junior primary homonym Franklin's name is permanently invalid, and must be replaced by the next oldest available name. It was Baker (1921) who footnoted the fact that the homonymy existed, but erroneously considered *Fringilla xanthosterna* Bonaparte, 1850, to be the oldest synonym. This was corrected by Baker (1926: 166) to *Fringilla xanthocollis* Burton, 1838, without comment, and again (1930: 240) in the full synonymy.

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³ The reason for dating this 1845 is discussed by Dickinson & Pittie (2006).

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