Zootaxa 2554: 65–68 (2010)
www.mapress.com/zootaxa/

Correspondence

ISSN 1175-5326 (print edition)
ZOOTAXA
ISSN 1175-5334 (online edition)

Bernieridae (Aves: Passeriformes): a family-group name for the Malagasy sylvioid radiation

ALICE CIBOIS[1], NORMAND DAVID[2], STEVEN M.S. GREGORY[3] & ERIC PASQUET[4]

[1]*Department of Mammalogy and Ornithology, Natural History Museum, CP 64 34 Geneva 6, Switzerland. E-mail: alice.cibois@ville-ge.ch*
[2]*10385A, Clark, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H3L 2S3. E-mail: normanddavid@videotron.ca*
[3]*35, Monarch Road, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 6EH, U.K.. E-mail: sgregory.avium@ntlworld.com*
[4]*Département Systématique et Evolution, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, UMR7205-CNRS, CP 51, 57 rue Cuvier, F-75231 Paris Cedex 05, France. E-mail: eric.pasquet@mnhn.fr*

The island of Madagascar is a renowned hotspot for adaptive radiations. Madagascar has been separated from mainland Africa since the end of the Jurassic, and from India since the Late Cretaceous. This long isolation, combined with the island's large size and relatively few dispersal events has resulted in an avifauna characterized by a low species count and high endemism: for instance, 80% of the breeding Malagasy songbirds (Passeriformes) are endemic (Hawkins & Goodman 2003). A first series of papers (Cibois *et al.* 1999, 2001; Fjeldsa *et al.* 1999) on the phylogeny of the Malagasy taxa traditionally classified as Timaliidae, Sylviidae and Pycnonotidae (all families included in the large sylvioid clade) showed that several of these passerines form an original radiation endemic to the island. Because these results were based solely on a single kind of molecular marker (mitochondrial DNA sequences), the authors refrained at that time from giving a name to this clade. More recently, other studies using nuclear markers as well (Beresford *et al.* 2005; Johansson *et al.* 2008a, 2008b) confirm the existence of this Malagasy sylvioid radiation. The species that comprise this group exhibit a great variety of bill shapes, wing and tail proportions, and tarsus lengths. This diversity in morphology is linked to varieties of habitat and prey favoured by these insectivorous forest dwellers (Schulenberg 2003). Thus the endemic Malagasy sylvioid clade rivals other island radiations, including the vangas of Madagascar and the finches of the Galapagos, in ecological and morphological diversity. Several authors were inclined to consider this group at the family level, using the name 'Bernieridae'. To our knowledge the first study using this name was the book "*The natural history of Madagascar*", edited by S. M. Goodman and J. Benstead in 2003, where the name 'Bernieridae' appeared in two chapters (in Tingle *et al.* (2003: p. 522) and Hawkins & Goodman (2003: p. 1036), although Schulenberg (2003: p. 1131) referred to the Malagasy "warblers" in his chapter on the radiations of passerine birds on Madagascar). An alternative spelling for the family-group name, 'Bernieriidae', can be found in several personal pages on the internet, but we have not found an occurrence of this in any publication, as defined in the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (4th edition, 1999). The name 'Bernieridae' was later used in several journal articles (Chouteau & Fenosoa 2008; Fuchs *et al.* 2008; Johansson *et al.* 2008a, 2008b), however, none of these have introduced the family-group name 'Bernieridae' according to the provisions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, i.e. the nominal taxon was not explicitly indicated as intentionally new (Article 16.1) and the type genus was not cited (Article 16.2). In the present paper, we therefore propose to rectify this situation by correctly introducing the family-group name for the Malagasy sylvioid radiation.

According to Cibois *et al.* (2001) and Johansson *et al.* (2008b), the 10 species that comprise this group are as follows (another endemic passerine, not yet studied, *Randia pseudozosterops* Delacour & Berlioz, 1931, could be a possible addition to this group):

Bernieria madagascariensis (Gmelin, 1789)
Muscicapa madagascariensis Gmelin J.F. 1789, Systema Naturae (ed. 13). Vol. 1, part 2: 940.

Xanthomixis zosterops (Sharpe, 1875)
Bernieria zosterops Sharpe 1875, Proc. zool. Soc. Lond. (1875): 76.

Accepted by P. Rasmussen: 24 Jun. 2010; published: 30 Jul. 2010