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## Invalid usage of *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach as the generic name for the Fijian shining parrots, *Prosopeia* Bonaparte, and its consequences

RICHARD SCHODDE<sup>1</sup>, WALTER J. BOCK<sup>2</sup>, DICK WATLING<sup>3</sup> & J. FERNANDO PACHECO<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Australian National Wildlife Collection, CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, PO Box 1700, Canberra, ACT 2601 Australia

E-mail: [rschodde@grapevine.com.au](mailto:rschodde@grapevine.com.au)

<sup>2</sup>Department of Biological Sciences, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027, U.S.A.

<sup>3</sup>Environmental Consultants Fiji, Suva, Fiji

<sup>4</sup>Comitê Brasileiro de Registros Ornitológicos, Brasil, Rua Bambina 50, ap. 104 22251-050 – Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil

Recently in this journal, Gregory & Dickinson (2012) replaced *Prosopeia* Bonaparte, 1854, the widely used and long-accustomed generic name for the Fijian shining parrots, with *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach, 1850. This action was then followed in the influential Howard & Moore global checklist of birds (Dickinson & Remsen 2013: 377) and the websites Avibase (2013) and TiF Checklist (2013). Gregory and Dickinson's decision rested on information in Kashin (1978), which showed that G.R. Gray (1855) was the first to assign a type species to *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach. Gray designated "*Coracopsis? personata* G.R. Gray, 1848", one of the shining parrots, by subsequent monotypy. Until then, *Prosopeia* had been used for the shining parrots for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the 21<sup>st</sup>, following Peters (1937: 250, footnote). Gregory & Dickinson's (2012) action nevertheless contravenes the purpose of Article 23.2 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, hereafter "the Code", which stresses that the Principle of Priority is not to be used to upset long-accepted names in their accustomed meaning. Because of this, we had been preparing an application to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to conserve *Prosopeia*—until we discovered an evident error in Gregory & Dickinson's argument. The apparent error, which makes application to conserve *Prosopeia* unnecessary, is explained here to affirm *Prosopeia* as the valid generic name for the shining parrots.

Mathews (1917: 289), in the reference footnoted by Peters (1937: 250), showed that Reichenbach (1850) based *Pyrrhulopsis* on the diagrammatic uncoloured figures of the head, foot and tail of a parrot of unassigned species. The figures, which we have examined, are too generalized to be of unambiguous identity; yet the name *Pyrrhulopsis* is still available under Article 12.2.7 of the Code. Mathews went on to point out that the first author to assign species to it was Bonaparte (1854) who had nominated six South American parrotlets. The species assigned by Bonaparte, with their current in-use synonyms (Dickinson & Remsen 2013) in parentheses, are: '*hueti* Temm.' (= *huetii* Temminck), '*purpuratus* Gm.' (= *purpuratus* Gmelin), '*melanopterus* Gm.' (= *batavica* Boddaert), '*porphyurus* Sw.' (= *purpuratus* Gmelin), '*surdus* Ill.' (= *surdus* Kuhl) and '*melanotus* Licht.' (= *melanonotus* Wied). The nominal species *Coracopsis personata* G.R. Gray from "?New Guinea" (=Fiji) was not included. Therefore, unless it was assigned earlier to *Pyrrhulopsis* in a publication of which, after exhaustive search, we are unaware, *Coracopsis personata* G.R. Gray was not one of the originally included species of that nominal genus (Article 67.2.2 of the Code). It follows that *Coracopsis personata* G.R. Gray is ineligible for designation as type species of *Pyrrhulopsis* under Articles 69.1 and 69.2 of the Code. Consequently, *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach cannot be used for the shining parrots.

The first available generic name that we have found for the shining parrots is *Prosopeia* Bonaparte, based explicitly on the single species *Coracopsis personata* G.R. Gray, 1848, and available under Article 12.2.5 of the Code (Bonaparte 1854). *Coracopsis personata* is automatically its type species by monotypy (Article 68.3 of the Code). Ironically, it was in the very paper in which he published *Prosopeia* that Bonaparte first assigned the South American parrotlets to *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach. Oversight of that action could have had unfortunate consequences. *Prosopeia* is not just a routine generic name for hum-drum, out-of-the-way birds, but the name used for a small group of rare, brilliantly plumaged and commercially valuable parrots in global lists of threatened fauna (IUCN Red List 2013; CITES 2013). One of the three species involved is graded as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List, and another as near threatened. Countries worldwide use the names on these lists in their fauna protection and control laws. There is always a lag, usually long, between any name change in ornithological checklists, particularly those on web-sites, and its updating in legal statutes. That leaves loopholes which invite exploitation by the international trade in wildlife. Changing a generic

name—indeed, any name—for threatened fauna to satisfy purely nomenclatural process is thus not a trivial matter, and only to be implemented after careful study and due consideration of outcomes.

The citation for the evidently correct generic name for the three species of shining parrots (Dickinson & Remsen 2013: 377) is as follows:

*Prosopieia* Bonaparte, 1854, *Revue et Magasin de Zoologie* 6: 153. Type by monotypy: *Coracopsis? personata* G.R.Gray, 1848.

The application of *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach remains to be settled. Tracking the identity of the six parrotlets originally included in it by Bonaparte reveals that all belong to the well-known genus *Touit* G.R. Gray, 1855 – see synonymies in Salvadori (1891: 350-358) for the application of Bonaparte's species names. Unfortunately, *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach is senior to *Touit* as well as *Prosopieia*, and so now threatens *Touit* instead. Even though Bonaparte (1856, 1857) later changed his mind about the identity of *Pyrrhulopsis*, and followed G.R. Gray (1855) in applying it to the shining parrots, his initial referral of South American parrotlets to it still stands in nomenclature (Article 67.2.2 of the Code). Moreover, the name cannot be rejected as a *nomen oblitum* under Article 23.9 of the Code because, as pointed out by Gregory & Dickinson (2012), it has been used as valid since 1899 – by Sharpe in 1900. *Pyrrhulopsis* is nevertheless a confounded name that has hardly been used in a hundred years. To stop it from replacing the long-accustomed and familiar *Touit*, we have, immediately prior to submission of this correspondence, applied to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature for its suppression. So that nomenclatural excision is taxonomically clean, we also designate *Psittacus huetii* Temminck here as the type species of *Pyrrhulopsis* Reichenbach. *Psittacus huetii* is an originally included species of *Pyrrhulopsis* (Bonaparte 1854) and type species of *Touit* G.R. Gray, 1855, thereby making *Pyrrhulopsis* and *Touit* objective synonyms. In the interim, we urge maintenance of current usage of *Touit*.

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