



Circumscription, diagnosis and description of a subfamily of Australo-Papuan robins

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The family-group name Microecinae Loynes, Joseph and Keogh, 2009 was erected by Loynes et al. (2009) following their phylogenetic analysis of the Australo-Papuan robins (Aves: Passeriformes: Petroicidae). Loynes et al. (2009) assigned to Microecinae one genus *Microeca* Gould, 1840, which as conventionally construed (see Boles 2007) comprises six species (*M. flavigaster*, *M. fascinans*, *M. griseiceps*, *M. hemixantha*, *M. flavovirescens*, *M. papuana*) found in Australia, New Guinea and some surrounding islands (see Schodde and Mason 1999, Boles 2007 for details). Loynes et al. (2009) were able to include only the first three of those six species in their analysis. They did, however, transfer a further species from *Eopsaltria* to *Microeca*, which was thus recognized as *M. flaviventris*.

The name Microecinae was formed in accordance with Article 11.7 of ICZN (1999). It was erected with a clear statement that it included only *Microeca* as traditionally construed. It was also accompanied by a bibliographic reference to Boles (2007) as supporting the need for division of the subfamily Petroicinae to which *Microeca* had previously been assigned. Regrettably, however, the requirements of Article 13.1, specifically Article 13.1.1 of ICZN (1999) were not met. Article 13.1.1 indicates the need for a new family-group name to be accompanied by a description or definition stating in words the characters that purportedly differentiate it. That the diagnostic traits of Microecinae were at best implied by Loynes et al. (2009) to be those of *Microeca* does not meet the criteria of Article 13.1.1 and so the name is unavailable. Given this, we here propose that Microecinae Loynes, Joseph and Keogh, 2009 be replaced by:

Microecinae Loynes, Joseph and Keogh, 2011 Australo-Papuan robins traditionally assigned to the genus *Microeca* including *M. flaviventris* (see Loynes et al. 2009) and characterized by traits listed in Schodde and Mason (1999) for *Microeca* as there construed: dorsally white-spotted juvenile plumages in which white spotting persists on thumb-wing coverts in first year birds, no red in any plumage phase, adult plumages characterized mostly by flavonoid-pigmented tones, flattened bills with large rictal bristles, weak feet, unbarred remiges, and flat, saucer-shaped nests.. Type genus: *Microeca* Gould, 1840.

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Literature Cited

Boles, W.E. (2007) Family Petroicidae (Australasian robins). Pp. 438–488. *In*: Del Hoyo, J., Elliot, A., & Christie, A.