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Dates of publication of Bleeker's *Atlas ichthyologique* and *Poissons de Madagascar*

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Abstract

The publication dates of the 36 livraisons of Bleeker's *Atlas ichthyologique des Indes orientales néerlandaises* (1862–1878) are here compiled from reports of the books received by the Royal Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam that were published as supplements to the *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Natuurkunde*. While the dates of livraisons 1–18 were already known with some accuracy, only the publication year was known for livraisons 19–36. The dates are now narrowed to within a month. This source also shows that *Poissons de Madagascar* was published in December 1874 at the latest.

Key words: Pieter Bleeker, Atlas Ichthyologique, bibliography, biography

Introduction

Pieter Bleeker's *Atlas ichthyologique* was published in 36 livraisons (instalments), commonly of 40 pages and 12 plates, between 1862 and 1878. It remained unfinished at Bleeker's death on 24 January 1878. The history of the *Atlas*, the problems surrounding its production, and explanation of the irregular schedule are described by Bleeker (1878a–b), Mees (1962), Boeseman (1983), Norman & Whitehead (1984) and Oijen (2005).

The work is a milestone in the history of fish taxonomy in Southeast Asia. It is also part of complex nomenclatural problems related to Bleeker's productivity and way of working (Kottelat, 2011). A number of new nomenclatural acts (new taxa, type designations, etc.) were done in parallel in several of Bleeker's publications. Most of these are in texts of identical or similar content and the priority of one over the other is of no consequence. In other cases, priority may be of importance, e.g., when a new genus name was used for the first time in different publications, citing each other, but including different species in each separate proposal of the new genus name. In such a case, the type species must be selected among the species listed in the first use of the name and this may influence the content and status of the name (for examples, see Kottelat, 2011).

For a long time, no attention was paid on the exact date of publication of the different livraisons of Bleeker's *Atlas*. Authors were simply using the date on the cover page (which was issued only after the whole of each volume was printed). The dates of publication of the livraisons of Bleeker's *Atlas ichthyologique* have been researched and listed by Mees (1962: 77), Boeseman (1983: 4), and Norman & Whitehead (1984: 302). These authors succeeded in dating with some accuracy livraisons 1–18, and less accurately livraisons 19 and 20. For the remaining livraisons they could find only the year.

For that period, information on dates of publication is often found in the journals of academies and societies. Often, new publications received from other societies are mentioned at regular intervals in the minutes of meetings. These dates of receipt are indicative of a latest possible publication date; if the publisher is geographically close, in the same country, the travel time was usually short and the receipt date may be very close to the actual publication date.

Bleeker presented all livraisons of the *Atlas ichthyologique* to the Royal Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam. The Academy published the *Verlagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Natuurkunde* (hereafter *VMKAW*). The Academy also published a list of the works received by its library. This was published as a supplement to *VMKAW*, with its own pagination. It is not entirely clear to me whether this was really