



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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Agenda Item 19

THE TAXONOMY AND NOMENCLATURE OF BIRDS LISTED ON THE APPENDICES OF CMS

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Background

1. In the course of the implementation of CMS, it has been decided formally to choose a standard taxonomic reference for the nomenclature of each zoological taxonomic group, and to conform to that reference whenever the name of an animal has to be quoted, either in the Convention Appendices or in any other legal or administrative document issued within the framework of the Convention.
2. Selection of the standard nomenclatural reference for each taxonomic group is decided by the COP, on the recommendation of the Scientific Council. The choice may be modified from time to time, to acknowledge changes in most common use or to accommodate newer versions of previously selected works.
3. CMS, being one of the major biodiversity-related MEAs recognizes that international efforts to take coherent action in order to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity at the species level can be significantly handicapped, if there is no common understanding of what animals or plants are included under a particular species name and likewise notes the need to keep up with current understanding of taxonomy.
4. With the purpose of strengthening collaboration between CMS and CITES, their Parties have adopted standard nomenclatural references which should be used in the implementation of the conventions. A series of decisions by the governing bodies of CITES and CMS have resulted in the two Conventions now using the same nomenclature and taxonomy for mammal species, and the CMS Scientific Council was given the task of considering potential implications deriving from aligning the CMS references for birds to those of CITES.
5. Within this process of harmonization of species nomenclature, and in accordance with Recommendation 9.4, in which the CMS Scientific Council was asked to assess possible changes arising from adopting the CITES reference for all bird species, document [UNEP/CMS/ScC16/Doc.16](#) was produced. This document was an analysis of the nomenclatural treatment of bird species listed in the CMS Appendices, according to the new taxonomic references. It was submitted to the 16th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council to address this

situation and to seek guidance on how CMS could best contribute to ensure greater harmonization between biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements in the field of taxonomy and nomenclature.

6. The Council was also requested to take into account the work of other relevant CMS Agreements in the process of the harmonization of nomenclatural references. Recommendation 9.4 specifically requests the Council to consider the most recent taxonomic information on species of albatrosses and large petrels adopted by the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and assess possible consequences deriving from the adoption of the standard nomenclature for the species listed on Annex I of ACAP.

7. This process was noted by the 4th meeting of the Chairs of the Scientific Advisory Bodies (CSAB) of Biodiversity-related Conventions (Gland, Switzerland 13 February 2011), and the CSAB expressed its support for the idea of moving towards harmonization of nomenclature and taxonomy in lists of species used by the biodiversity-related conventions.

8. The document produced by the CMS Secretariat presented an analysis of the consequences of choosing the new standard nomenclature for bird species included in CMS Appendixes. This analysis took the form of a comparative table considering taxonomic treatment and nomenclature of birds at the species level with the current reference, according to Dickinson (2003 plus Corrigenda 2005), and according to Wetlands International (Wetlands International. 2006. Waterbird Population Estimates - Fourth Edition). The sequence of families and the treatment of species follow the *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (del Hoyo et al. 1992, 1996) except for two families: Grebes, which follows the Grebe Specialist Group (O'Donnell & Fjeldså 1995) and Herons, which follows the Heron Specialist Group, *Action Plan for Herons of the World* (Hafner et al. 2003), as suggested by the Scientific Council Activity Planning meeting, which took place on 13 June 2009.

9. Both the ACAP Secretariat and its Taxonomy Working Group were consulted. The analysis concerning the taxonomic reference for albatross and petrel species covered by CMS and ACAP, produced by the CMS Secretariat, was submitted to ACAP's Advisory Committee, held on 13-17 April 2010. The Committee agreed that the Taxonomy Working Group should prepare a [document](#) on the merits of the CMS adopting the taxonomy used by ACAP, for consideration at the 16th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council.

10. The final version of the analysis had four annexes produced by the CMS Secretariat. [Annex I](#) included two tables, which presented an analysis of the consequences of choosing the new standard nomenclature for bird species included in CMS Appendix I and II, only for those species for which there was a nomenclatural change according to the new reference. The analysis covered all families which are listed on the CMS Appendixes with the exception of the Muscicapidae.

11. [Annex II](#) presented a comparison of taxonomic and nomenclature treatment at a high taxonomic level, i.e. Order and Family, according to the two current references (Morony et al and Sibley & Monroe), the suggested one, i.e. Dickinson (2003 plus Corrigenda 2005) and Wetlands International.

12. [Annex III](#) was the analysis of two Families listed in CMS Appendixes (Anseriformes and Charadriiformes) and changes in number of genera resulting from the adoption of a new reference.

13. [Annex IV](#) provided a comparison of taxonomic and nomenclatural treatment for all albatrosses and petrels included in the CMS Appendices, among Dickinson (2003 plus Corrigenda 2005) and the current references adopted by CMS and ACAP.

14. Four different cases of changes were identified by the analysis:

- Case 1: Different name, some species are now considered as included in a different genus or Dickinson uses an accepted synonym as the species name;
- Case 2: Same species, but according to Dickinson it includes several more subspecies;
- Case 3: Species splitting - one species splits into two “new” species; and
- Case 4: Different hierarchy, i.e. changes in the order of *taxa*, thus modifying the number of species covered by CMS Appendices.

15. When such a change occurs, there are different consequences for appendix listings and for most of the cases (splitting, synonymy), rules were established, as described in the [document](#) produced by Mr. Pierre Devillers. However, in the case of “lumping” no such rules exist, raising therefore conflicting issues.

16. Mr. Devillers proposed a [rule](#) for the mentioned cases of lumping, as a way to avoid these difficulties and ambiguities, as clear as the rule that exists for division cases. This rule, like the previous one, would be applied with retroactive effect to cover the 2008 changes, which otherwise would necessitate a revised listing proposal to correct the adverse conservation effects outlined above.

Proposed rule

If, as a result of a change of standard nomenclatural reference adopted by the Conference of the Parties, a taxon listed in either Appendix I or Appendix II of the Convention is merged with one or more unlisted taxa, under its name or that of one of the unlisted taxa, the entire aggregate taxon will be listed in the Appendix that included the originally listed, narrower, taxon in all cases where the unlisted entity thus added has the same conservation status as, or a worse one than that of the previously listed taxon. In all other cases, a taxonomic or geographical restriction will be introduced, pending consideration by the Scientific Council and the Conference of the Parties of possibly adequate extended listing proposals.

Current situation

17. The document containing the analysis produced by the Secretariat was submitted to the 16th Meeting of the Scientific Council, together with another paper produced by the Vice Chair of the Scientific Council, Mr. Devillers, on the treatment of the cases of lumping of taxa.

Current nomenclatural references	Proposed nomenclatural references
<p>Morony, J.J, Bock, W.J. and Farrand, J. (1975) <i>Reference List of the Birds of the World</i>. Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, New York. [for taxonomy and nomenclature at the level of orders and families].</p> <p>Sibley, C.G. and Monroe, B.L. (1990) <i>Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World</i>. Yale University Press, New Haven; and</p> <p>Sibley, C.G. and Monroe, B.L. (1993) <i>A Supplement to Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World</i>. Yale University Press, New Haven. [for taxonomy and nomenclature at the level of genera and species].</p>	<p>Dickinson, E.C. (ed.) (2003): <i>The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World</i>. Revised and enlarged 3rd Edition. 1039 pp. London (Christopher Helm) together with Dickinson, E.C. (2005): <i>Corrigenda 4 (02.06.2005) to Howard & Moore Edition 3 (2003)</i> for all bird species.</p> <p>Taxonomic list approved for inclusion on Annex I of ACAP for albatrosses and large petrels.</p>

Table 1: Current and proposed nomenclatural references

18. The Scientific Council at its 16th Meeting examined the proposed taxonomic references for adoption, the document provided by the ACAP's Taxonomy Working Group on Taxonomy of albatrosses and larger petrels and the proposed rule for cases of lumping of taxa, the Scientific Councillors considering the advantages and disadvantages of adopting specific references or allowing flexibility in the light of scientific advances; the procedure of dealing with taxonomic changes as they affected the CMS Appendices; and whether to follow specialized instruments (e.g. ACAP for albatrosses and larger petrels).

19. The final decision of the 16th Scientific Council was to create an Intersessional Working Group in order to give advice on the taxonomy paper. The CMS Intersessional Working Group on Taxonomy and Nomenclature of Birds considered the analysis produced by the Secretariat and the rule for cases of lumping and recommended the Scientific Council to endorse for submission to the Conference of the Parties a proposal for:

- (a) The latest available edition of Dickinson, E.C. *The Howard and Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*. Current edition: 2003, Revised and enlarged 3rd Edition. London (Christopher Helm) together with the author's Corrigenda 4 (02.06.2005) to Howard & Moore Edition 3 (2003), as the Convention's standard nomenclatural reference for birds;
- (b) The taxonomy used by ACAP or as the Convention's standard nomenclatural reference for albatrosses and large petrels; and
- (c) The adoption of the rule proposed by Mr. Devillers for aggregation cases to take account of the merged species conservation status and the status of the merged component species.

20. The conclusions of the Working Group were submitted to the AEWA Technical Committee which is also running a parallel process of advising the 5th Session of the AEWA Meeting of the Parties on the most appropriate taxonomy for the purposes of the Agreement. The AEWA Technical Committee examined the conclusions of the Working Group at its 10th Meeting on 12-16 September 2011 and sent a communication to the Working Group on the disadvantages of using Dickinson over the BirdLife International taxonomy, outlined on the basis of pragmatic and financial reasons, and requested the Working Group to consider these implications in the course of formulating its final recommendations to the Scientific Council.

Action requested:

The Conference of the Parties is invited to:

- a. consider the proposed draft Resolution on *Taxonomy and Nomenclature of Birds listed on the Appendices of the CMS* (Resolution 10.13);
- b. adopt the rule proposed by Mr. Devillers for aggregation cases to take account of the merged species conservation status and the status of the merged component species; and
- c. provide guidance on future steps regarding the taxonomy and nomenclature of other CMS species not yet evaluated from a taxonomic perspective.