

Establishing the precedence between two published 1964 descriptions of a new seabird

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ABSTRACT: a new bird described in France in 1964 appeared in two journals almost simultaneously. Each source has been cited and this note firmly establishes the precedence between the two and thus the source work to cite.

KEYWORDS: date of publication, precedence, *Bulletin du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle*, *L'Oiseau*, International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, *Pterodroma barau*, Barau's Petrel.

In 1964 Dr. Christian Jouanin described a new petrel, now known as Barau's Petrel, naming it *Bulweria barau* in two almost simultaneous journal publications. Later Jouanin & Mougín (1979) placed this species in the genus *Pterodroma* – where it has been treated since.

Jouanin initiated publication in the *Bulletin du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle*, volume 35, the '1963' volume, where his article, in part 6 of the volume, comprises pp. 593-597. This part includes the actual publication date of "19 juin 1964". He also published in the more widely read French journal *L'Oiseau*, vol. 34, part 1, where his article begins on page 83. This includes the following statement: "Une description détaillée de ce Pétrel, pour lequel nous proposons le nom de *Bulweria barau* nova species, est à l'impression dans le Bulletin du Muséum" (A detailed description of this petrel for which we propose the name *Bulweria barau* sp. nov. is in press for the Bulletin of the Museum).

It is apparent from this that Jouanin hoped that the issue of *L'Oiseau* would appear before that of the *Bulletin*. However, the article in *L'Oiseau* did not make clear that it had appeared first. Precise publication dates were not used by the editors of *L'Oiseau* and under French law the default option in dating the issues is the insertion of a 'date de depot légal'. That methodology, designed to accommodate some uncertainty, provides clarity to the period of 3 months (the trimester) in which publication was to take place. In this case this issue of *L'Oiseau* carries the signal "T2" on or near the back cover (see Table 53 in Dickinson *et al.*, 2011 – on the accompanying CD). This should imply publication during April, May or June of 1964.

This, as a date for the article in *L'Oiseau*, is an incomplete specification, requiring the date of 30 June – the last day of the period – to be used as the date of publication, under Article 21.3.1 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN, 1999). However, the preamble (Art. 21.3) also applies which means that evidence from another source that demonstrates the availability of the work at an earlier date is to be accepted. No evidence has been located that demonstrates that *L'Oiseau* appeared earlier than 30 June (or indeed 19 June, see below) although such evidence may exist.

Finding this kind of evidence usually depends on the discovery of a date of receipt stamped on the work by some major library. In this instance the issue of *Bulletin du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle* held by Natural History Museum, London, is date stamped 18 June 1964 – actually a day earlier than the printed date of publication. This contradicts Jouanin's expectation and supports the bibliographic source given by Jouanin & Mougín (1979) and not the source cited by Mayr (1971).

This case documents a need for dates of publication of printed works to be given more attention both by publishers and, where the publishers are imprecise, by our great natural history libraries. The problems associated with the dating of electronic publications are of evident concern to individual scientists aware of the significance of the Principle of Priority (see Dubois *et al.*, 2013), but in future the primary natural history museum libraries of the world will presumably also be asked to help with questions that arise where precedence is unclear and the Internet does not provide satisfactory information.

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