

The dates of six taxa described by A.O. Hume (*Puffinus persicus*, *Ephialtes brucei* and *Ninox obscurus*) and W.E. Brooks (*Cyornis poliogenys*, *Phylloscopus sindianus* and *Calandrella tibetana*)

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The validity of a scientific taxon and its authorship may depend upon its date of publication, following the Principle of Priority laid down in Article 23 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature—henceforth known as ‘the Code’ (ICZN 1999). Therefore establishing such a date is of considerable importance.

In this paper I deal with the dates of some taxa described in *Stray Feathers*. An appendix contains a table with the imprint date, pagination and dates of publication of all twelve volumes of *Stray Feathers*.

Taxa described by Allan Octavian Hume

A.O. Hume described 11 new taxa (pp. 1–19) in Volume I, No. 1 of *Stray Feathers*—his 18th century ornithological journal. Of these, the dates of three taxa (see below) are discussed here, as various authorities (Table 1) have recorded their dates of publication inconsistently.

“*Puffinus Persicus*, Sp. Nov.” (p. 5). [at sea between Guadar and Muscat.]

“*Ephialtes Brucei*, Sp. Nov.” (p. 8) “Rahuri, Ahmednuggur”.

“*Ninox Obscurus*, Sp. Nov.” (p. 11) near “Camorta” in the “Nicobars”.

Ephialtes brucei retains its specific status and is now treated as *Otus brucei brucei*; *Puffinus persicus* is sometimes treated as a subspecies *Puffinus lherminieri persicus* and *Ninox obscurus* is usually considered to be a race of *Ninox scutulata*.

This volume of *Stray Feathers* had a title page dated “1873”. However, the “Contents of Vol. I. 1872–73” (pp. i–iii) state clearly that the six numbers that comprised it, were not all published in that year. “No. 1. – November,” was published in 1872 with the remainder in 1873—“No. 2, 3, & 4. – February,” “No. 5. – July,” and “No. 6. – December”. Despite the imprint date (or ‘specified date’) of “November, 1872” on the first page of Volume I No. 1 (p. 1), several authorities seem to have erred in dating these taxa, probably due to the title page date of “1873”. The specified date of November 1872 must be applied under the Code (Art. 21.2) unless that can be shown to be incorrect. No suggestion to this effect is known to the author. If necessary to date this more precisely Art. 21.3.1 of the Code should be applied and the actual date of publication of this part (Volume I, No. 1, November 1872) should be taken as 30th November 1872.

Table 1. Taxa described by Hume (1872)

Author	<i>Puffinus persicus</i>	<i>Otus b. brucei</i>	<i>Ninoxs. obscura</i>
Blanford 1895	—	1873	1873
Blanford 1898	1873	—	—
Baker 1922	—	1873	1873
Baker 1923	1873	—	—
Baker 1927	—	1873	1873
Baker 1929	1873	—	—
Baker 1930a	—	1873	1872
Baker 1930b	1875	—	—
Peters 1931	1873	—	—
Peters 1940	—	1873	1873
Ripley 1961	1873	1872	1872
Jouanin & Mougouin 1979	1873	—	—
Ripley 1982	1873	—	—
Ali & Ripley 2001	1873	1872	1872
del Hoyo et al. 1992	1873	—	—
del Hoyo et al. 1999	—	1873	1873
Dickinson 2003	1873	1873 ¹	1873

Following the evidence of the actual date of publication given above, it is suggested that in future, these taxa be cited as follows, with the actual date after the author and the parenthesized imprint date after the relevant pagination:

1. *Puffinus persicus* Hume, 1872, *Stray Feathers* I (1): 5 (1873). The recommended short citation (to be used within the body of an article) is *Puffinus persicus* Hume, 1872.
2. *Otus brucei brucei* (Hume, 1872), *Stray Feathers* I (1): 8 (1873). The recommended short citation (to be used within the body of an article) is *Otus brucei brucei* (Hume, 1872).
3. *Ninox scutulata obscura* A.O. Hume, 1872, *Stray Feathers* I (1): 11 (1873). The recommended short citation (to be used within the body of an article) is *Ninox scutulata obscura* Hume, 1872.

Taxa described by W. Edwin Brooks

W.E. Brooks described three new taxa (see below) in *Stray Feathers*, volume eight number six. The first two taxa retain

¹ Dickinson (2006) emends the date to 1872.

their specific status until today whereas the third is treated as *Calandrella acutirostris tibetana*.

"*Cyornis poliogenys*, N. Sp." (p. 469) from "Salbaree" in the "Sikhim Terai" (=Salbari, Sikkim, India).

"*Phylloscopus sindianus*, Sp. Nov." (pp. 476) from "Sukhur" (=Sukkur, Sind).

"*Calandrella tibetana*, Sp. Nov." (p. 488) from "Thibet, beyond Sikhim" (=Tibet).

Volume VIII of *Stray Feathers* had a title page date of "1879". The first five parts were published in that year—"No. 1" in "April" and "No. 2–5" in "October". The last part, "No. 6", had an imprint date of "December 1879" on its first page (p. 423). However, on the last page of this part (p. 503) is a "Note" from "The Editor" dated "March 23rd, 1880", which states:

"That this number, which should have appeared in December 1879, and a great part of which was printed in November of that year, has, owing to circumstances beyond the Editor's control, remained unpublished for several months, and will only actually issue in May."

Though Hume included a correction to the volume's title page date, it is incomplete and at best a prediction of a supposed publication date in May 1880. It is therefore recommended that Art. 21.3.2 of the Code should be applied and the date of publication of this part (Volume VIII, No. 6, December 1879) be taken as 31st December 1880.

Various authorities have treated the dates of publication of these three taxa as either 1879 or 1880 (Table 2).

Table 2. Taxa described by Brooks (1880)

Author	<i>Cyornis poliogenys</i>	<i>Phylloscopus sindianus</i>	<i>Calandrella a. tibetana</i>
Oates 1889	-	Not given	-
Oates 1890	1879	-	1879
Baker 1921a	1879	-	1880
Baker 1921b	-	1880	-
Baker 1924	1879	1880	-
Baker 1926	-	-	1879
Baker 1930a	1879	1880	1879
Peters 1960	-	-	1880
Ripley 1961	1879	1879	1879
Ripley 1982	1879	1879	1879
Watson 1986 a,b	1879	1879	-
Ali & Ripley 2001a,b,c	1879	1879	1879
Roberts 1992	-	1879	-
Baker 1997	-	1879	-
Dickinson 2003	1879	1879	1880
del Hoyo et al. 2004	-	-	1880

Following the evidence of the actual date of publication given above, it is suggested that in future, these taxa be cited as follows, with the actual date after the author and the parenthesized imprint date after the relevant pagination:

1. *Cyornis poliogenys* W.E. Brooks, 1880, *Stray Feathers* 8 (6): 469 (1879). The recommended short citation (to be used within the body of an article) is *Cyornis poliogenys* W.E. Brooks, 1880.
2. *Phylloscopus sindianus* W.E. Brooks, 1880, *Stray Feathers* 8 (6): 476–480 (1879). The recommended short citation is *Phylloscopus sindianus* W.E. Brooks, 1880.
3. *Calandrella acutirostris tibetana* W.E. Brooks, 1880, *Stray Feathers* 8 (6): 488 (1879). The recommended short citation is *Calandrella acutirostris tibetana* W.E. Brooks, 1880.

Changing the dates of these taxa does not affect their priority under the Principle of Priority as no new names were suggested for any of them between 31.xii.1879 and 31.xii.1880 (Baker 1930a).

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

The dates of publication of Stray Feathers volumes 1-12 (1872-1899).

The dates in column five apply the requirements of Article 21 of The Code (ICZN 1999).

Year	Volume	Part	Pages	Date of publication	Notes
1872	I	1	1 l (title), i-iii (contents), 1 l (preface), 1-50 (text)	30.xi.1872	Volume title page dated "1873". Preface dated 1.xii.1873. Imprint date on p. 1 is "November, 1872".
1873		2, 3 & 4	51-323 (text)	28.ii.1873	Imprint date on p. 51 is "February, 1873".
1873		5	325-427 (text)	31.vii.1873	Imprint date on p. 325 is "July, 1873".
1873		6	429-496 (text)	31.xii.1873	Imprint date on p. 429 is "December, 1873".
1873		Index	i-xiv (text)		
1874	II	1, 2 & 3	1 l (title), 1-4 (preface), i-iii (contents), 1 l (insert),	31.i.1874 1-336 (text)	Volume title page dated "1874". Preface is undated. Imprint date on p. 1 is "January, 1874".
1874		4 & 5	337-466 (text)	31.v.1874	Imprint date on p. 337 is "June, 1874".
1874		6	467-536 (text)	31.x.1874	Imprint date on p. 467 is "October, 1874".
1874		Index	i-xix (text)		
1875	III	1, 2 & 3	1 l (title), i-iv (contents), 1-2 (preface), 1-268 (text)	31.i.1875	Volume title page dated "1875". Preface dated 2.xii.1875 (p. 2). Imprint date on p. 1 is "January, 1875".
1875		4	269-333 (text)	31.v.1875	Imprint date on p. 269 is "May, 1875".
1875		5	335-431 (text)	30.xi.1875	Imprint date on p. 335 is "November, 1875".
1875		6	433-500 (text)	31.xii.1875	Imprint date on p. 433 is "December, 1875".

Year	Volume	Part	Pages	Date of publication	Notes
1875		Index	i-xxiii (text)		
1876	IV	1, 2 & 3	1 l (title), i-iii (contents), 1 l (preface), 1-230 (text)	10.ii.1876	Volume title page dated "1876". Preface dated 25.xi.1876. Imprint date on p. 1 is "January, 1876". Letter dated 10.ii.1876 (p. 228).
1876		4, 5 & 6	231-512 (text)	31.xii.1876	Imprint date on p. 231 is "December, 1876".
1876		Index	i-xviii (text)		
1877	V	1	1 l (title), i-v (contents), 1 l (preface), 1-63 (text)	30.iv.1877	Volume title page dated "1877". Preface dated 1.xii.1877. Imprint date on p. 1 is "April 1877".
1877		2	64-140 (text)	30.vi.1877	Imprint date on p. 64 is "June 1877".
1877		3 & 4	141-354 (text)	31.viii.1877	Imprint date on p. 141 is "August 1877".
1877		5 & 6	355-504 (text)	31.xii.1877	Imprint date on p. 355 is "November 1877". Editorial note on p. 504, "Note that the publication of this number has been delayed, and, although intended to appear on the 1st of November, will not actually issue until December."
1877		Index	i-xxi (text)		
1878	VI	1-6	1-6 (title, contents, preface), i-viii (text), 1-524 (text)	30.vi.1878	Volume title page dated "1878". Preface undated. Imprint date on p. i is "June 1878".
1878		Index	i-xxii (text)		
1878	VII	1 & 2	1 l (title), 1-3 (preface), i- v (contents), 1-172 (text)	31.viii.1878	Volume title page dated "1878". Preface undated. Imprint date on p. 1 is "August 1878".
1878		3, 4 & 5	173-470 (text)	31.xii.1878	Imprint date on p. 173 is "December 1878".
1879		6	471-528 (text)	31.iii.1879	Imprint date on p. 471 is "March 1879".
1879		Index	i-xxxi (text)		
1879	VIII	1	1 l (title), i-iii (contents), 1 l (preface), 1-150 (text)	30.iv.1879	Volume title page dated "1879". Preface dated 23.iii.1880. Imprint date on p. 1 is "April 1879".
1879		2-5	151-421 (text)	31.x.1879	Imprint date on p. 151 is "October 1879".
1880		6	423-503 (text)	31.xii.1880	Imprint date on p. 423 is "December 1879". No index is present at the end of this volume. Dating based on facts stated earlier in this paper.
1880	IX	1-3	1 l (title), i-iii (contents), 1 l (preface), 1-238 (text)	31.viii.1880	Volume title page dated "1880". Preface undated. Imprint date on p. 1 is "August 1880".
1880		4	239-300 (text)	30.xi.1880	Imprint date on p. 239 is "November 1880".
1881		5 & 6	301-508 (text)	30.ix.1881	Imprint date on p. 301 is "September 1881".
1881		Index	i-xxvii (text)		
1881	X	1, 2 & 3	2 ll (title & preface), i-iv (contents), 1-174 (text)	31.xii.1881	Volume title page dated "1887". Preface undated. Imprint date on p. 1 is "December 1881".
1882		4	175-328 (text)	31.vii.1882	Imprint date on p. 175 is "July 1882".
1883		5	329-434 (text)	31.iii.1883	Imprint date on p. 329 is "March 1883".
1887		6	435-531 (text)	31.xii.1887	Imprint date on p. 435 is "December 1887".
1887		Index	532-560 (text)		
1888	XI	1-4	1 l (title), i-v (text), 1-353 (text)	31.xii.1888	Volume title page dated "1888".
1899	XII		i-iv (title & preface), 1- 167 (text)	22.xi.1899	Volume title page dated "1899". Preface by Charles Chubb dated 22.xi.1899 (p. iv).

Notes to the Appendix

The 'Year' in column one is the imprint year on the first page of the concerned part (s).
In the fourth column, '1 l' signifies an unnumbered leaf (2 ll = 2 leaves).

Eggs

Michael Walters

Walters, M. 2006. Eggs. *Indian Birds* 2 (5): 136–138.

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Eggs were something that had never particularly interested me until I came to work at The Natural History Museum (NHM). But when I joined the Museum staff, the then egg curator, Colin Harrison was far more interested in fossils, and was trying to find an assistant to pass the egg collection on to. The NHM egg collection was built up largely in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But parts of it date back before that. The original collection was on display in the public galleries, the eggs being glued to wooden boards. This collection was dismantled in 1837, and a system of registration or cataloguing begun. The eggs dating from before 1837, are almost all without information, and are termed the Old Collection. In view of the way they were treated a surprising number still survive. They include two Great Auk eggs, badly broken on the side where they were glued to the wood. Only one of these eggs is dated. It is a Gannet's egg collected on the Bass Rock, off Scotland, in 1807 and was probably collected by William Bullock who was on the Rock in that year. This is the oldest datable egg in the collection. A collection from Colonel Montagu, received in 1816, is probably of eighteenth century vintage, but none of the eggs are dated.

When I first came to the Museum in 1970, the birds were still housed in London, and much of my first two years were spent packing them up to be sent to Tring. But I was able to spend some time on eggs. In South Kensington, the eggs were stored in two separate locations owing to problems of space. The main series was in the basement of the Entomology block, while the overflow was in a separate area called the egg corridor.

The catalogue cards would be annotated either "Sy" to indicate that that clutch was in the systematic series, or "Eg" to indicate that it was in the egg corridor, which meant that it was not so easily accessible. The systematic series consisted of a series of mahogany cabinets, on top of which had been placed a similar series of cabinets of wood painted cream-colour, and the collections expanded upwards from the mahogany cabinets into the cream ones. Within these cabinets the eggs were laid out in glass-topped boxes of variable sizes. When the egg collection was moved to Tring, it was moved in the cabinets in the boxes.

[When we got the collection to Tring, it was stored temporarily in what is now the spirit area, the spirit collection hadn't yet been moved, partly because the dexian racking to accommodate it had not been installed. Each of the cabinets had to be lifted, placed on a light trolley and wheeled down

the link corridor and up the bumpy ramp to the egg area. Getting trolleys up this slope without the egg cabinet falling off, or the trolley running away from you, was not a science, but an art. Once the cabinets were safely in the egg area, the boxes were transferred to the standard Tring cabinets, which are in two sections. The contents of the mahogany cabinets going into the bottom halves, and the contents of the cream cabinets into the top halves].

The collection is world wide in its coverage, but is particularly rich in eggs from the Indian sub-continent; indeed it probably contains the finest collection in the world from this area. These include the huge collections of A.O. Hume and Stuart Baker, as well as those of many other Army officers and civil servants stationed there. The collection had been last completely catalogued in 1895, by Henry Seebohm who at the same time wrote a manuscript catalogue. This formed the basis of the published Catalogue of Eggs by Eugene Oates during the years 1902-1912. In the intervening years, a great many eggs had been added, either catalogued or uncatalogued. It was decided that I should go through the collection and do a total re-cataloguing. This was necessary because since Seebohm's time, nomenclature and taxonomy had changed a great deal, and many of the boxes were labelled with obsolete names. As well as card-indexing everything that had not already been catalogued, I also checked Seebohm's manuscript catalogue and Oates' Catalogue, and in a considerable number of cases extra information could be added from these catalogues to that which had previously noted as accompanying the eggs. Perhaps not surprisingly, a large number of eggs listed by Oates were not to be found in the collection, and more surprisingly, a considerable number of eggs listed by Seebohm were not listed by Oates. I found it astounding that in the space of a decade so many eggs could have disappeared or been discarded. Most lamentably, I discovered that there were a few instances (though happily not many) where the loss of eggs listed in Seebohm and/or Oates, meant that there are no eggs of that species currently in the collection.

I was actually taught very little about the egg collection and the catalogueing problems it presented. I learned this as I went along. It revealed to me that my predecessors Colin Harrison and the late Shane Parker had made quite a lot of errors through failure to correctly interpret data written on eggs. For example the collection numbers on the eggs in Tristram's collection consist of a number followed by a Greek letter. These refer to page numbers and egg numbers on the