

The Editor,
Sir,

The apparent confusion which concerns Mr Moore is entirely the result of incorrect usage by authors, and does not reflect inconsistencies in the 1970 *Checklist*. Everyone knows that *Sula bassana* is widely distributed outside Australasia. Thus the correct scientific name for the Australasian Gannet is, in fact, *Sula bassana serrator*. Authors contributing to *Notornis* are required to follow the 1970 *Checklist* except where taxonomic questions are being discussed. A list of amendments to the 1970 *Checklist* has already been prepared and will shortly be published in *Notornis*. Readers will be pleased to learn that, except in a very few cases, vernacular names (i.e. names in local usage) are not being changed to conform with international (? English) usage. Conformity is already attained by the use of scientific names.

In 1953 and again in 1970 the Checklist Committee of the Ornithological Society decided it would be best to provide vernacular names for subspecies, many of which, like the Pied Tit *Petroica macrocephala toitoi*, are easily recognised in the field. Mr Moore does not, in fact, advance any argument in support of his proposed change in policy.

F. C. KINSKY; J. A. BARTLE

The Editor,
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19 March 1979

In 1955 Berger proposed that the small glossy cuckoos of both the African and Indo-Australian regions should be united in one genus *Chrysococcyx*. The submerging of *Chalcites* was advocated also by Friedman in 1968. Now Brian Gill has recently suggested (*Notornis* 25: 194) that the New Zealand Checklist Committee erred in retaining the generic name *Chalcites*. Admittedly, in the *Checklist of the birds of Australia* (1975) *Chalcites* is displaced by *Chrysococcyx*; but with reservations and the comment "This lumping of the Australian species in one genus is probably too severe." Perhaps the Australian authors acted over hastily. Berger's proposal has not been universally accepted and the opposition favouring the retention of *Chalcites* is fairly formidable. Among the champions of *Chalcites* are: B. E. Smythies *Birds of Borneo* (1960); A. Landsborough Thomson, *Dictionary of Birds* (1964); C. Vaurie, *Birds of the Palearctic Fauna* (1965); A. L. Rand and E. T. Gilliard, *Handbook of New Guinea Birds* (1967); Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley, *Handbook of Birds of India and Pakistan* (1969).

The small glossy cuckoos fall into two widely separated groups. The four African species *Chrysococcyx (sensu stricto)*, well illustrated in Bannerman's *Birds of West and Equatorial Africa*, Vol. 1, plate 34, belong to equatorial and southern Africa. They do not seem to have crossed the Sahara and none qualified for mention either in Nicoll's *Birds of Egypt*, edited by Meinertzhagen (1930) or in the much more recent *Birds of North Africa*, R. D. Etchecopar and F. Hue (1967).