

SHORT NOTE

First revision of karoro *Larus dominicanus antipodum* (Bruch, 1853)

RICHARD LITTAUER

Te Kura Mātai Pūkaha, Pūrorohiko, School of Engineering and Computer Science, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand

Karoro or kelp gull *Larus dominicanus* Lichtenstein, 1823 is represented in New Zealand by a possibly distinct population, for which the subspecies name *antipodus* was proposed by Jiguet *et al.* (2012). They list the precedent for *antipodus* as *Larus antipodus* G.R. Gray, 1844. The precedence for this binomial is not clear and needs correction.

Pierre Antoine Delalande, who collected in South Africa in 1820, was likely the source of the original specimen for *L. antipodus*. He did not mention gulls in his only presentation to the Museum of Natural History in Paris (Delalande 1822), and he passed away shortly afterwards from diseases caught during his travels (Gunn & Codd 1981).

Bruch (1853) moved *L. antipodus* to *Dominicanus antipodus* in his monograph on the genus *Larus*. Jiguet (2002) correctly noted that the first description of *Dominicanus antipodus* should therefore be attributed as Bruch, 1853, as Gray (1844) included no actual description or figure with this name. When Bruch moved *L. antipodus*, he also added a footnote: “Linguistically speaking, it can only be called with the genitive *Antipodum*: the one who lives near the Antipodes” (Bruch 1853, translation my own, original in German). Bruch did not clarify further in his publication whether *D. antipodus* or *D. antipodum* should be the available

species name and his footnote was ignored by some but not all later authors. This confusion has percolated through the taxonomy since.

Antipodus is a Latin adjective in several dictionaries which include mediaeval Latin (Georges 1913; Gaffiot 2016; Du Cange 1883). It is a latinisation of the Greek ἀντίποδες, which was already borrowed into Latin as far back as Seneca (c. 64) as *antipodes*, a third declension plural-only masculine noun. *Antipodus* was unlikely to be known as a Latin word by Gray, as most classical Latin dictionaries do not include it, and it is more likely that he made a novel transliteration and latinisation of the Greek word. He also could have used *antipodes* (nominative, plural only), or *antipodum* (genitive pl.), or possibly a form of *antipous* (directly transliterating from Greek, here nom. sg.) or *antepedes* (an extant Latin calque, here nom. pl.).

According to Article 31.2 of the Code (ICZN 1999), the species name *antipodus* does not need to agree in number or gender with the masculine genus name *Larus* if it is a noun. If *antipodus* is considered an adjective, no change is needed as it already is in the masculine, nominative form. If it is considered a noun, it would be considered a noun in apposition and needs no adjustment. Bruch assumed it was only a Latin noun and attempted to change the case. This was not necessary according to the Code. The issue at hand is not that he attempted to correct it, however, rather that he spelled the species name in two different ways in his publication, and it is unclear which he preferred.

Received 16 October 2024; accepted 3 February 2025

*Correspondence: richard.littauer@gmail.com

In cases when two names are used in the same publication, Article 24.2.1 of the Code states “the precedence is fixed by the action of the first author citing in a published work those names or acts and selecting from them; this author is termed the “First Reviser”.” It goes on in 24.2.4: “Original authors may be deemed to be First Revisers of spellings. When the author, or one of joint authors, of two different original spellings of the same name subsequently uses one of them as valid in a work (including the author’s or publisher’s corrigenda), and neither had previously been selected as the correct spelling by a First Reviser, the author is deemed to be the First Reviser, whether or not the author cites both spellings together (that used as valid becomes the correct original spelling).” In short: the First Reviser to note both names and to choose one of them clarifies the precedence of the name going forward; or the first author can use the name in a subsequent publication and clearly favor one over the other to set precedence.

Bruch used the name *D. antipodum* shortly after his original publication (Bruch 1855): “*Antipodum* Cab., *antipodus* Gray”. Bruch was citing his own work in the journal two years prior, by noting that Cabanis was the publisher of the *Journal für Ornithologie*. He didn’t specify directly and clearly which name to use – the first *antipodum* or the following *antipodus*. Relative location in a published text does not determine precedence. As Bruch (1855) did not choose explicitly between the names, this publication did not fix the precedence of the species and Bruch is not his own First Reviser.

While Bruch could have published an unambiguous *D. antipodum* or *D. antipodus* subsequently and fixed the precedence, he did not do so that I can tell. I could find no later publication by Bruch, who passed away in 1857 (Carus 1876).

The first author to use, but not explicitly choose, only one of the names from Bruch was Gray (1862), listing “*Dominicanus antipodum* Bruch, Cab. Journ. für Ornith. 1853, p. 100”. Gray listed this under the heading “*LARUS ANTIPODUM* [sic], G. R. Gr. *List of Anseres B.M.* p. 169.”, showing that he had read Bruch’s footnote and that he preferred Bruch’s correction. However, he did not explicitly cite both names in the text, and so this is not the action of a First Reviser. Neither Gray nor Bruch noted Gray’s (1844) listing as a *nomen nudum*. Bonaparte (1854, 1856) also used *antipodum*, but he referenced it to Gray instead of Bruch, and he did not note the name *antipodus*, in either publication.

None of the subsequent authors have taken on the role of First Reviser by citing both names and choosing between them. Jiguet is closest, with his statement that “*D. antipodum*, Bruch, 1855, is the same name, differently accorded.” This is almost accurate, although what “accorded” means is vague, and could perhaps refer to the generic change. However, in a later paper, Jiguet *et al.* (2012) proposed two subspecies, one of which is “*L. d. antipodus* G.R. Gray, 1844 (New Zealand).” This is confusing, as Jiguet (2002) himself was the first to note that *antipodus* was a *nomen nudum*.

A First Reviser is necessary “when the precedence between names or nomenclatural acts cannot be objectively determined.” That this is happening here can be seen from the comical difference in citations from following authors. These refer to either Gray’s (1844) *nomen nudum antipodus* (which, for instance, Jiguet *et al.* 2012 does); to Gray (1844) for *antipodum* (Bonaparte 1854 & 1856, and Gray 1862 himself, without comment); to Bruch (1853) for *antipodus* (Mathew & Iredale 1913; Jiguet 2002; Checklist Committee 2022); or to Bruch (1855) for *antipodum* (Gray 1862; Jiguet 2002; Checklist Committee 2022). Again, this needs clarification.

I hold that, out of Bruch’s (1853) two published forms, *Dominicanus antipodus* and *Dominicanus antipodum*,

antipodum should be chosen as the precedence. This means that the precedence is not *Larus antipodus* G.R. Gray, 1844, but *Dominicanus antipodum* Bruch, 1853. Thus, the full available name should be *Larus dominicanus antipodum* (Bruch, 1853).

Choosing *antipodum* has a few advantages. First, it would be irrelevant in practice whether or not Bruch (1855) meant the ordering of “*antipodum* Cab., *antipodus* Gray” to determine the precedence of the genitive over the nominative; it’ll be as if he did. And while it doesn’t strictly matter where in a published text the name is, *antipodum* did come first in Bruch (1855). Second, Gray (1862) also reverted to *antipodum*, and as the first person to publish the name at all, this recognises his contribution and correction. Third, while it could be a noun in apposition in either event, *antipodum* is a Latin word in a case that would fit Latin grammar as the appositional genitive (Ayer 2014). And finally, it clears up the function of the footnote in Bruch (1853), and seems to me to be probably what he would have wanted.

Choosing *antipodum* has one disadvantage: many subsequent works use *antipodus*. Even though there was no choice by a First Reviser, these could be considered misspellings. Under ICZN Article 33.2.3.1. “when an unjustified emendation is in prevailing usage and is attributed to the original author and date it is deemed to be a justified emendation.” This would apply here, if Gray, 1844 was the original author of the available name – but he was not. As there is confusion about the author of the original description, only works which cite Bruch (1853) directly should be used to determine prevailing usage under Article 33.2.3.1. Other uses could point to the *nomen nudum antipodus* Gray, 1844 and would not be considered emendations of the available name *Larus dominicanus antipodum* (Bruch, 1853).

In works that clearly refer directly to Bruch (1853), five use *antipodus* (Saunders 1878, 1896; Mathews & Iredale 1913; Mathews 1927; Jiguet 2002), while three use *antipodum* (Gray 1862; Gray 1871; Kidder 1875). I could find no references to Bruch (1853) that include both *antipodus* and *antipodum*.

Article 33.5 of the Code states: “In any case of doubt whether a different subsequent spelling is an emendation or an incorrect subsequent spelling, it is to be treated as an incorrect subsequent spelling (and therefore unavailable), and not as an emendation.” The sample size is so small that I am unsure if it is correct to consider *antipodus* as the prevailing usage, and so Article 33.2.3.1 does not apply. For comparison, Article 23.9.1.2 stipulates that precedence can be reverted when “the junior synonym or homonym has been used for a particular taxon, as its presumed valid name, in at least 25 works, published by at least 10 authors in the immediately preceding 50 years and encompassing a span of not less than 10 years.” This is certainly not the case here. So: *Larus dominicanus antipodum* (Bruch, 1853) is the correct spelling.

Larus dominicanus antipodum is not recognised universally as a valid subspecies. At the time of writing, *L. d. antipodus* G.R. Gray, 1844 is only accepted by HBW and BirdLife International (2023) and Lepage *et al.* (2014). Some authorities are waiting on better genetic studies, following Jiguet *et al.* (2012)’s advice (Checklist Committee 2022). Linhares *et al.* (2024) could not find any supported clades through a study of mtDNA, although they did find some population structure by looking at haplotype frequency. Their sample size, particularly for birds from Aotearoa New Zealand, could have been larger. Morphometric studies like Jiguet *et al.* (2012) did not cover bare parts, which may show more phenotypic variation. More studies of *L. dominicanus* are warranted.

A note on the Checklist

The Checklist Committee (2022) has a short section listing references for *Larus dominicanus*. I suggest that the following relevant lines be amended or added:

- Larus antipodus*? [sic] G.R. Gray, 1844: *List Birds Brit. Mus.* 3: 169 – New Zealand. *Nomen nudum*.
Dominicanus antipodum Bruch 1853, *Journ. für Ornith.* 1: 100. Cf. First Reviser Littauer, R. (2025).
Dominicanus Antipodum Cab. [sic], *antipodus* (Gray); Bruch 1855, *Journ. für Ornith.* 3: 281.
Larus antipodum; F.W. Hutton 1870, *Ibis* 2(8): 396.
 –? *antipodum* G.R. Gr.; Cab. Journ. 1853 [sic, Bruch]; G.R. Gray 1871, *Hand-list Birds* 3: 112.
Dominicanus antipodus, Bruch, 1853; Jiguet 2002, *Bull. B.O.C.* 122(1), 71.
Larus dominicanus antipodus G.R. Gray, 1844; Jiguet et al. 2012, *Zoological Studies* 51(6): 891 – New Zealand.

Gray (1871) did not include “? *antipodum*” in a genus, instead leaving the generic name blank, although he did note *Dominicanus* Bruch, 1853 as the source of the tentative genus.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Eva Dixon and Julia Tsang for proofreading and rubber ducking this manuscript, and to Douglas Yanega for his thoughts.

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Keywords: *Larus antipodum*, *Larus antipodus*, first revision, nomenclature, New Zealand, ICZN