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Order PASSERIFORMES: Passerine (Perching) Birds

See Christidis & Boles (2008) for a review of recent studies relevant to the higher-level systematics of the passerine birds.

Suborder PASSERES (or POLYMYODI): Oscines (Songbirds)

The arrangement of songbirds in the 1970 Checklist (Checklist Committee 1970) was based on the premise that the species endemic to the Australasian region were derived directly from Eurasian groups and belonged in Old World families (e.g. *Gerygone* and *Petroica* in Muscicapidae). The 1990 Checklist (Checklist Committee 1990) followed the Australian lead in allocating various native songbirds to their own Australasian families (e.g. *Gerygone* to Acanthizidae, and *Petroica* to Eopsaltriidae), but the sequence was still based largely on the old Peters-Mayr arrangement. Since the late 1980s, when the 1990 Checklist was finalised, evidence from molecular biology, especially DNA studies, has shown that most of the Australian and New Zealand endemic songbirds are the product of a major Australasian radiation parallel to the radiation of songbirds in Eurasia and elsewhere. Many superficial morphological and ecological similarities between Australasian and Eurasian songbirds are the result of convergent evolution.

Sibley & Ahlquist (1985, 1990) and Sibley *et al.* (1988) recognised a division of the songbirds into two groups which were called Corvida and Passerida (Sibley & Ahlquist 1990). The Parvorder Corvida contained songbirds with Australasian affinities—nearly all the endemic New Zealand songbirds plus the introduced Australian magpie. The Parvorder Passerida contained songbirds with Old World affinities—nearly all the songbirds introduced to New Zealand, plus one endemic genus (*Bowdleria*) and a few native songbirds (e.g. *Hirundo*, *Zosterops*).

Recent studies (e.g. Barker *et al.* 2004, Cracraft *et al.* 2004) partly supported the distinction between Corvida and Passerida, but questioned the monophyly of the Corvida. Passerida is now thought not to be the sister group to Corvida but to be embedded within it (see detailed discussion by Christidis & Boles 2008) with *Petroica* added to the list of native Australasian passeridans. The following arrangement of New Zealand songbirds is based largely (and where relevant) on the sequence justified by Christidis & Boles (2008). It is an interim scheme which is likely to change in future checklists with further research on songbird phylogeny.

Recent improvements in techniques to eliminate or control mammalian predators on islands, or in defined mainland areas, mean that some of the New Zealand endemic songbirds are being translocated (re-introduced) to growing lists of localities at which predators are controlled. This is extending the ranges of the species concerned—ranges that were shrinking. Many of the more recent transfers are not mentioned in the species accounts because several years must pass before the viability of a given transfer can be assured.

“CORVIDA”: Australasian Songbirds

Corvida is not a monophyletic grouping and it will be split up when the details are worked out through further research. Meanwhile, it is convenient to distinguish the songbirds of Australasian origin and affinity from those (Passerida) that derive from groups with immediate ancestry elsewhere. The families recognised in this section, and their sequence, largely follow Christidis & Boles (2008). The three endemic families of New Zealand oscines—New Zealand wattlebirds (Callaeidae), stitchbird (Notiomystidae) and piopios (Turnagridae)—have presumably all had long evolutionary histories in New Zealand, with relatively early divergence from other corvidan lineages, and are placed first. The taxonomy of Norfolk Island songbirds follows Schodde & Mason (1999) which was based on a detailed analysis of Australian and Norfolk Island specimens.

In his list of the birds of New Zealand, G.R. Gray (1862) included the species *Climacteris scandens* Temminck, 1824—now a junior synonym of *Cormobates leucophaeus leucophaeus* (Latham, 1802)—

giving its locality as Norfolk Island, following a record published by Pelzeln (1860). As we have not been able to find further confirmation of that record, we have not included that species in this checklist.

Family MELIPHAGIDAE Swainson: Honeyeaters

Meliphagidae Swainson, 1825: *Zoological Journal* 1: 463 – Type genus *Meliphaga* Lewin, 1808.

The stitchbird, *Notiomystis cincta*, long considered to be a honeyeater (e.g. Checklist Committee 1953, 1970, 1990), has been shown by recent molecular studies not to be a honeyeater at all and has been removed to its own family (Driskell *et al.* 2007) placed early in this listing of oscine birds. Otherwise, the sequence of honeyeaters (below) follows Checklist Committee (1990). Molecular work by Driskell *et al.* (2007) estimated the divergence between *Anthornis* and *Prosthemadera* at 2.9 Ma.

Genus Anthornis G.R. Gray

Anthomiza Swainson, 1837: *Classification of Birds* 2: 326 – Type species (by monotypy) *Anthomiza caeruleocephala* Swainson, 1837 = *Anthornis melanura melanura* (Sparman). *Nomen oblitum* (fide Scofield *et al.* 2005, *Notornis* 52: 171).

Anthomyza G.R. Gray, 1840: *List Gen. Birds* (1st edition): 15. Unjustified emendation of *Anthomiza* Swainson, 1837 and junior homonym of *Anthomyza* Fallén, 1810.

Anthornis G.R. Gray, 1840: *List Gen. Birds* (1st edition): 15. Unnecessary *nomen novum* for *Anthomiza* Swainson, not junior homonym of *Anthomyza* Fallén, 1810. *Nomen protectum* (fide Scofield *et al.* 2005, *Notornis* 52: 171).

The last revisers of the bellbird (Bartle & Sagar 1987) regarded all forms as subspecies. They characterised the Chatham Island bellbird as a “strong” subspecies with “overall similarity” to the mainland form. Holdaway *et al.* (2001) listed *A. melanocephala* as a separate species, citing differences that were outlined by Oliver (1955) and Bartle & Sagar (1987), and we follow that arrangement.

***Anthornis melanura* (Sparman)**

Bellbird

New Zealand. North and South Islands, Stewart Island / Rakiura, and many mainland offshore islands including Manawatāwhi / Three Kings; Auckland Islands.

***Anthornis melanura obscura* Falla**

Three Kings Bellbird

Anthornis melanura obscura Falla, 1948: *Rec. Auck. Inst. Museum* 3: 337 – Three Kings Islands.

Manawatāwhi / Three Kings Islands: in forest and scrub, throughout the group.

***Anthornis melanura oneho* Bartle & Sagar**

Poor Knights Bellbird

Anthornis melanura oneho Bartle & Sagar, 1987: *Notornis* 34(4): 297 – Poor Knights Islands.

Poor Knights Islands: throughout the group.

***Anthornis melanura melanura* (Sparman)**

Bellbird

Certhia melanura Sparman, 1786: *Mus. Carlsonianum* 1: no V, pl. 5 – “Promontorium Bonae Spei”, error for Queen Charlotte Sound, Marlborough (fide Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 446).

Certhia sannio Gmelin, 1788: *Syst. Nat.*, 13th edition 1(1): 471. Based on the “Mocking Creeper” of Latham 1783, *Gen. Synop. Birds* 2: 735 – New Zealand.

Philedon dumerilii Lesson & Garnot, 1828: in M.L.I. Duperrey, *Voy. Coquille, Zool. 1 Atlas* (6): pl. 21, fig. 1 – New Zealand, restricted to Bay of Islands (fide Bartle & Sagar 1987, *Notornis* 34(4): 260).

Anthomiza caeruleocephala Swainson, 1837: *Classification of Birds* 2: 327 – New Zealand. Unnecessary *nomen novum* for *Certhia melanura* Sparman, 1786.

Philedon sannio (Gmelin); Lesson 1838, *Compléments Oeuvres Buffon* 11: 165.

Anthornis melanura (Sparman); G.R. Gray 1840, *List Gen. Birds* (1st edition): 15.

Certhia olivacea J.R. Forster, 1844: in M.H.C. Lichtenstein, *Descrip. Animalium*: 79 – New Zealand.

Anthornis melanura Ellman, 1861: *Zoologist* 19: 7466 – New Zealand. Junior secondary homonym of *Certhia melanura* Sparman, 1786.

Anthornis ruficeps Pelzeln, 1867: *Verh. zool.-bot. Ges. Wien* 17: 316 – New Zealand.

Anthornis incoronata Bangs, 1911: *Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington* 24: 23 – Auckland Islands.

Anthornis melanura melanura (Sparman); Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 446.

Anthornis melanura dumerilii (Lesson) [sic]; Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 447.

Anthornis melanura incoronata Bangs; Mathews & Iredale 1913, *Ibis* 1 (10th ser.): 447.

North and South Islands, Stewart Island / Rakiura, and many offshore islands: present and often common throughout, excepting Northland, Waikato, southern Hawke’s Bay, Manawatu, Canterbury Plains and Central Otago. Formerly abundant in Auckland and Northland but became locally extinct in these areas in the 1860s (see Lee 2005). In Northland, may occur on the mainland as a stray opposite the offshore

islands (e.g. at Whangaparaoa Peninsula near Tiritiri Matangi Island). Found in forest and forest remnants; also in exotic vegetation of orchards, gardens, etc., especially in the South Island; also in large exotic plantations. On the Auckland Islands, in forest throughout. Recorded at Campbell Island / Motu Ihupuku in 2003 and 2004 (Scofield 2005a, 2006). Holocene fossil and midden records from widely scattered sites in both North and South Islands.