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The history of the name *Strix pumila* and its authorship

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SUMMARY.—A recent proposal to seek to suppress the name *Strix pumila* is shown by a careful search of the old literature to be unnecessary as the name was first applied to one species where it ranks as a junior synonym, and later applied to a different species where it has no nomenclatural availability as it is preoccupied.

Dickinson *et al.* (2022) gave notice of intent to make an application to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to suppress the name *Strix pumila* Temminck, 1821, and to conserve the younger name *Strix minutissima* zu Wied, 1830. This communication explains why no such application is needed.

Our earlier belief was that use of the name *Strix pumila* by Lichtenstein (1823) was just a later use of Temminck's name and that both applied to the same species. But, in the course of drafting the proposed application, we noticed that an earlier use of this name by Lichtenstein (1818; see Fig. 1) in a list of duplicate specimens published by the Berlin Museum included 'indications' that might permit identification of the intended subject (see Art. 12.2.7, ICZN 1999). The relevance of these indications had not been recognised by authors who judged Lichtenstein's 1818 name to be a *nomen nudum*.

The indications were to two authors: Azara who used the vernacular name 'Caburé' and Levaillant who called it a 'Chouchette' and could have been based on descriptions or depictions. Lichtenstein (1818) mentioned 'Brasil', and as Azara was known mainly for his work in Paraguay, mention of Brazil seemed to be a link to Levaillant. Consequently, we set out to determine whether either author had provided a description or a plate.

Levaillant (1801) seemed to be the appropriate start point because of all his titled works this was the one that referred to South America, but it proved to be a dead end. Daudin (1800: 205), however, reported that

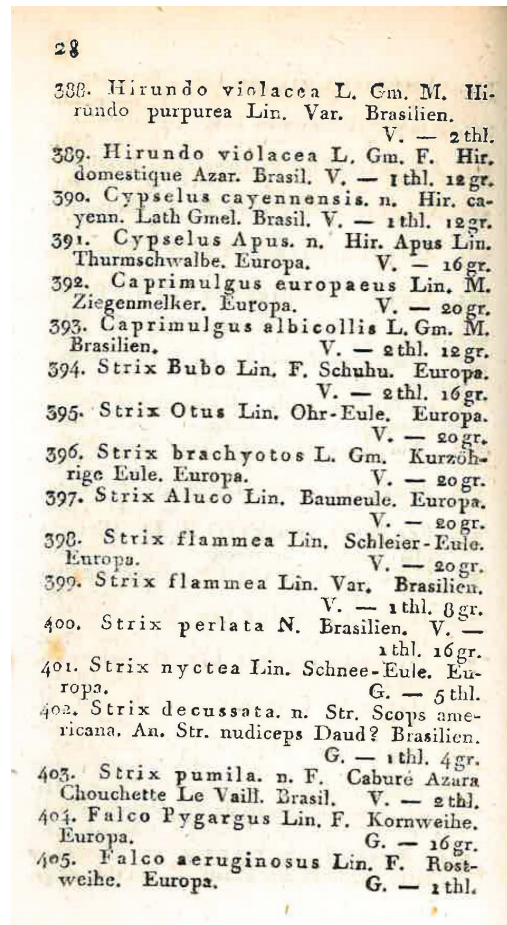


Figure 1: Lichtenstein's listing of the name *Strix pumila* with indications.



Figure 2 (above left). The illustration published by Levaillant (1799).

Figure 3 (above right). *Strix passerinoides* Temminck, 1825, livr. 58, pl. 344 in the *Planches Coloriées*; a synonym of *Glaucidium brasilianum* (J. F. Gmelin, 1788).

Figure 4 (left). *Strix pumila* Temminck, 1821 (livr. 7, pl. 39 in the *Planches Coloriées*) = *Glaucidium minutissimum* (zu Wied, 1830).

the owl described by Levaillant had been found in Gibraltar and was referred to not as a 'Chouchette' but by the name 'Chevechette' used by Levaillant (1799: Pl. 46) (see Fig. 2). The most likely identity of a pygmy owl occurring in Gibraltar would seem to be *Glaucidium passerinum* (Linnaeus, 1758).

However, zu Wied (1830: 239) made no mention of the earlier association of this name with Gibraltar. He suggested the plate might depict the dark morph of the 'Chouette chevêcheoise' *Strix passerinoides* Temminck, 1825 (see Fig. 3). However, zu Wied (1830) identified this with *Glaucidium brasilianum* (J. F. Gmelin, 1788) and it is now considered to be a junior synonym of *G. b. phaloenoides* (see van den Hoek Ostende *et al.* 1997).

Meanwhile our check of Azara (1802, 1809) revealed a detailed description of his ‘Caburé’ and this clearly identifies it as *Glaucidium brasilianum* (see von Berlepsch 1887, Bertoni 1901, Pereyra 1945). This is the only species of *Glaucidium* that is known in Paraguay (Guyra Paraguay 2004). In conclusion, *Strix pumila* Lichtenstein, 1818, must be seen as a junior synonym of *Glaucidium brasilianum*.

By contrast zu Wied (1830) observed that *Strix pumila* Temminck, 1821 (Fig. 4) was not based on the Paraguayan bird and that it depicted his new Brazilian taxon *Strix minutissima*. However, the name *Glaucidium minutissimum* was used by Peters (1940: 129) and treated as available adding ‘not *Strix pumilum* Lichtenstein, 1818’. Reversal of precedence is denied by Art. 23.9.1 (ICZN 1999), where both conditions are met.

The name *Strix pumila* Temminck, 1821, is a junior homonym of *Strix pumila* Lichtenstein, 1818, and as such is invalid despite its availability (see Art. 10.6, ICZN 1999).

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