



Correct name for the Asian Brown Flycatcher (Aves: Muscicapidae, *Muscicapa*)

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Broad-billed flycatchers of East Siberia, which migrate to winter in south-east Asia south to the Greater Sunda Islands, were first described as new for science by Raffles (1822: 312) from Sumatra under the name *Muscicapa latirostris*. The species was known as *Muscicapa latirostris* Raffles (or *latirostris* in combination with other generic names) for over a century (e.g. Dresser 1902: 252, Hartert 1907: 477, Vaurie 1959: 331), but since the 1930s it has been called either *Muscicapa latirostris* Raffles or *Muscicapa daurica* Pallas (see below for the history). This dichotomy continues; some authors prefer *latirostris* (e.g. Peklo 1987; Stepanân 1990, 2003; Nakano & Murakami 2001; Popov 2004; Kwon *et al.* 2006; Takeuchi 2007; Kolbin 2008; Gavrilov 2011; Sonina & Durnev 2011), while others prefer *daurica* (e.g. Banks & Browning 1995; Clarke *et al.* 2009; Tojo 2009; Mohan & Kumar 2010; David 2011).

Because this situation is untenable, I restudied the nomenclatural status of these names with the following results. Nomenclatural issues follow the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1999; hereafter the Code) throughout this paper.

Before Raffles, Pallas (1811: 461) recognized this flycatcher as a taxon in East Siberia and described it in the account of his *Muscicapa grisola* as a "*β Varietas Daurica*" (his italics), which means nothing more than "a Daurian variety" (of *Muscicapa grisola*) in his Latin-language book. Pallas (1811a,b) used to list varieties in this way, which, unfortunately, misled various subsequent authors to understand these technical terms as scientific names (see, e.g., Hartert 1921a: 1935; 1921b: 2065; and Mlíkovský & Frahnert 2009 for examples).

Brandt (1843: col. 207, 1847: xliii) seems to have been the first who used "*Muscicapa grisola* var. *daurica*" as a valid name for a taxon, but he did not refer to any work by Pallas and provided no description for *daurica*. Subsequently, Salvadori (1874: 129) and his followers (e.g. Sharpe 1879: 127; Oustalet 1903: 51; Bianki 1907: 23) listed "*Muscicapa grisola*, var. *dauurica* Pall. Zoogr. Rosso-Asiat. I. p. 461" [= Pallas 1811a: 461] in the synonymy of *Alseonax latirostris* (Raffles), without citing the exact publication date of Pallas's work. This is not surprising, because estimated dates of publication of Pallas's *Zoographia* ranged from 1811 to 1831 at that time (see Sherborn 1934; ICZN 1954; Dickinson 2011) and Salvadori (1874) and others thus reasonably preferred Raffles's *latirostris*.

In 1934, Sherborn published an analysis of the dating problem, concluding that both volumes of Pallas's *Zoographia* with ornithological contents were published in 1811 and ICZN (1954) adopted this date as the official publication date of vols. 1–2 of Pallas's *Zoographia* (Pallas 1811a,b), although Stresemann (1951) argued that the work actually appeared in 1827.

Hartert & Steinbacher (1934: 230) recognized that dating Pallas's *Zoographia* to 1811 could lead some authors to suggest that *dauurica* has precedence over *latirostris* and cautioned that Pallas (1811: 461) did not use *dauurica* in a nomenclatural sense and that Raffles's (1822) *latirostris* is thus the oldest name available for the taxon (see also Witherby 1938: 303).

Despite this warning, Dement'ev (1935: 103) used *Alseonax daurica* "Pallas" as a valid name for this flycatcher, without even mentioning the *Muscicapa latirostris* of Raffles (see also Dement'ev 1937: 202 and 1941: 151, where the species was listed as *Muscicapa davurica* [sic] in both cases). A few Russian authors followed him (e.g. Suškin 1938: 150; Blagosklonov 1954: 86; Flint *et al.* 1968: 511), but others refused to do so (e.g. Portenko 1950: 322, 1960: 114; Škatulova 1965: 51; Nečaev 1969: 147). In the meantime, the species continued to be generally known as *Muscicapa latirostris* to non-Russian authors. The situation changed in 1986 when Watson (in Watson *et al.* 1986: 318) applied the name *Muscicapa dauurica* [sic] to the species in the influential *Peters's Check-list of Birds of the World* and his decision was accepted without re-examination in other official lists (e.g. American Ornithologists' Union 1998: 495; Dickinson 2003: 691; Dudley *et al.* 2006: 563; Koblik *et al.* 2006: 31, 169; Crochet *et al.* 2010: 14).

Watson (in Watson *et al.* 1986: 318) argued (1) that the fact that the name [= *dauurica*] was created for a variety does not prevent its use, and (2) that "Pallas' name has been in wide use in Russian literature". Watson erred in both points. First, Pallas never created the name *Muscicapa dauurica* (see above). Second, only some Russian authors adopted this name, while others continued to use *latirostris* (see above for selected references).