

AVIAN TAUTONYMS

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In my "AEIOU Words in Biology" in the February 1994 Word Ways, I conjectured that the Boat-billed Heron, *Cochlearius cochlearius cochlearius*, was possibly unique in having the five vowels once in each of its genus, species and subspecies names. Since then I have discovered a further 51 genus/species/subspecies trinomial tautonyms from the world of birds. My source was *A Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World* by Richard Howard and Alick Moore. In the list below, names marked with an asterisk appeared in a list of fourteen trinomial tautonyms in Ed Wolpow's "Triple Tautonyms in Biology" May 1983.

Alle alle alle	Little Auk
Amandava amandava amandava	Red Munia
Amazilia amazilia amazilia	Amazilia Hummingbird
Anhinga anhinga anhinga	American Darter
Anser anser anser	Greylag Goose
Apus apus apus	Common Swift
Bubo bubo bubo	Eagle Owl
Buteo buteo buteo	Common Buzzard*
Cardinalis cardinalis cardinalis	Common Cardinal
Carduelis carduelis carduelis	Goldfinch
Casuarus casuarus casuarus	Double-wattled Cassowary
Ciconia ciconia ciconia	European Stork
Cinclus cinclus cinclus	Dipper
Coccothraustes coccothraustes coccothraustes	Hawfinch
Coeligena coeligena coeligena	Bronzy Inca
Coturnix coturnix coturnix	Common Quail
Crossoptilon crossoptilon crossoptilon	White-eared Pheasant*
Curaeus curaeus curaeus	Austral Blackbird
Cygnus cygnus cygnus	Whooper Swan
Diuca diuca diuca	Common Diuca Finch
Dives dives dives	Melodious Blackbird
Francolinus francolinus francolinus	Black Partridge*
Gallinago gallinago gallinago	Common Snipe
Gallus gallus gallus	Red Junglefowl*
Grus grus grus	Common Crane
Histrionicus histrionicus histrionicus	Harlequin Duck
Icterus icterus icterus	Troupial
Jacana jacana jacana	Wattled Jacana
Lagopus lagopus lagopus	Willow/Red Grouse*
Limosa limosa limosa	Black-tailed Godwit
Manacus manacus manacus	White-bearded Manakin
Melanodera melanodera melanodera	Black-throated Finch

Milvus milvus milvus	Red Kite
Oenanthe oenanthe oenanthe	Common Wheatear
Oriolus oriolus oriolus	Golden Oriole
Perdix perdix perdix	Grey Partridge
Petronia petronia petronia	Rock Sparrow
Phoenicurus phoenicurus phoenicurus	Common Redstart
Pica pica pica	Yellow-billed Magpie
Pipra pipra pipra	White-crowned Manakin
Porphyrio porphyrio porphyrio	Purple Swamphen
Puffinus puffinus puffinus	Manx Shearwater
Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax	Chough
Pyrrhula pyrrhula pyrrhula	Bullfinch
Quelea quelea quelea	Red-billed Quelea*
Regulus regulus regulus	Goldcrest
Riparia riparia riparia	Sand Martin
Suiriri suiriri suiriri	Suiriri Flycatcher
Sula sula sula	Red-footed Booby
Tchagra tchagra tchagra	Levaillant's Bush Shrike
Tetrax tetrax tetrax	Little Bustard

So far, all the tautonymic names have consisted of two or three separate words. But what about single-word tautonyms? A small number can be found amongst the English common names of birds, though the word 'common' is somewhat of a misnomer as some of these are not at all familiar. They are the Boubou, Bulbul, Caracara, Kaka, Motmot, Huet-huet, Brubru Shrike, Borabora Kingfisher, Tawitawi Bleeding Heart, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Niamniam Parrot, Tink-tink Cisticola and Kauai O-o! Indeed, the See See Partridge was the only tautonymic common bird name I found which wasn't a single word. Aiaiai, the popular name for the Roseate Spoonbill, may be unique amongst bird names in being a single-word triple. It can be found below the line in Webster's Second Edition.

A few single-word tautonyms are also to be found amongst the thousands of genus, species and subspecies bird names although Turtur, a genus of Wood Doves, was the only such genus in my checklist.

Species names tautonyms:

Cyanolyca nana	Dwarf Jay
Lamprolaima rara	Spot-breasted Ibis
Milvago chimachima	Yellow-headed Caracara
Nectarinia talatala	Southern White-billed Sunbird
Pachyptila turtur	Fairy Prion
Sarcoamphus papa	King Vulture
Turdus boulboul	Grey-winged Blackbird

Subspecies name tautonyms:

Cisticola tetrax bulubulu	Tink-tink Cisticola
Microeca flavovirescens cuicui	Olive Microeca Flycatcher
Nilaus afer brubru	Brubru Shrike
Petroica macrocephala toitoi	New Zealand Tit
Tregellasia capito nana	Pale Yellow Robin

Tyto alba lulu

Bam Owl

Species and subspecies with the same tautonymic name:

Acanthiza nana nana

Little Thornbill

Cercomela tractrac tractrac

Leyard's Chat

Halcyon torotoro torotoro

Lesser Yellow-billed Kingfisher

Lagonostrieta rara rara

Black-bellied Fire Finch

Ortalis motmot motmot

Variable Chachalaca

Streptopelia turtur turtur

Turtle Dove

At a glance it can be seen that these species and subspecies names together form that rare entity, a four-way tautonym. And that is the end of my tautonymic tale of the birds, but can you spot the other logologically-interesting word which appears in this last group? (See Answers and Solutions.)

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