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SHORT NOTE

Emendation of the name of the fossil rail *Rallus hodgeni* Scarlett

An extinct species of flightless rail now known to have been widely distributed in the North and South Islands of New Zealand was originally described from postcranial elements from Pyramid Valley Swamp as *Rallus hodgeni* by Scarlett (1955). It was placed in various genera (see synonymy in Olson 1977) until specimens of skulls and mandibles showed that it belonged with the "*Tribonyx*" group of gallinules in the genus *Gallinula* (Olson 1975).

In the original description, Scarlett (1955:266) named the species "after Messrs J. and R. Hodgen, owners of Pyramid Valley swamp." Species-group names formed from personal names are to be formed in accordance with the rules of Latin grammar (ICZN 1985: Article 31a). Hence, because the species was clearly dedicated to more than one person, the genitive ending must be plural and *hodgeni* must be regarded as an incorrect original spelling (see the example given with ICZN Article 31c, which deals with a nearly identical case). Therefore, Scarlett's name should be emended to *Rallus hodgenorum* and the species should henceforth be known as: *Gallinula hodgenorum* (Scarlett).

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