

THE NAME OF THE CRAVERI BROTHERS' MURRELET

STORRS L. OLSON, Department of Vertebrate Zoology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560

Federico Craveri was a chemist, geologist, and naturalist who resided in Mexico for 18 years beginning in 1840. In 1847 he was joined for two years by his brother Ettore, who shared similar interests. Upon the death of their father, Ettore returned home to Italy to attend to the family museum in Brà, near Turin. Later, during his investigation of the economic potential of guano deposits on islands in the Gulf of California in 1856, Federico obtained specimens of a new species of murrelet, which, after considerable delay, was described and named by Tomasso Salvadori (1865) as *Uria craveri* (now *Endomychura* or *Synthliboramphus craveri*).

Practically from the outset this was known in North American literature as "Craveri's Murrelet," as, for example, in all six editions of the American Ornithologist's Union Check-list of North American Birds (1886–1983). Numerous sources concerning the origin of bird names invariably treat this murrelet as being dedicated solely to Federico Craveri (Coues 1882, Palmer 1928, Gruson 1972, Choate 1973, Jobling 1991). This is perpetuated even in the superb series of biographies by Mearns and Mearns (1992), from which the preceding biographical information was extracted, the error being the result of the authors' having had access only to an incomplete copy of Salvadori's paper that did not include the dedication (R. Mearns in litt. 15 July 1995).

Federico was the only one of the two brothers that Salvadori (1865:388) mentioned by name, and he was also identified as the collector of the type specimen, which has probably contributed to various authors' having long overlooked the fact that the species was clearly named for both brothers, as shown in Salvadori's original dedication (1865:388): "If it should truly be new I propose to name it *Uria Craveri* in memory of the generosity with which the brothers Mssrs. Craveri of Brà [*i signori fratelli Craveri di Brà*] have enriched the Turin Museum with many species of birds from Mexico and California" [my translation from the original Italian].

Had Salvadori intended the name for Federico alone, he would surely have used the spelling "*craverii*," just as he named *Lamprocolius defilippii* in the same paper in honor of Filippo De Filippi. The unmodified family name "*craveri*" was surely intended as a noun in apposition, probably deliberately to avoid the more cumbersome genitive plural "*craveriorum*," meaning "of the Craveris." Thus, although the scientific name is not subject to emendation, in the interest of historical accuracy it should be noted that the English name "Craveri's Murrelet" is incorrect. "Craveris'

NOTES

Murrelet" is too subtle a change to be noticed and perpetuated, and "Craveris's Murrelet" is neither euphonious nor easily comprehended. Nor is "Craveri Brothers' Murrelet" ever likely to gain much currency. Perhaps we shall have to do as Salvadori did in this case and drop the possessive (the use of which I would otherwise defend), and simply refer to the bird as the Craveri Murrelet.

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