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On a possible type specimen of *Tropidorhynchus fuscicapillus* Wallace, 1862, in New York

by Mary LeCroy

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A recent paper on specimens of Dusky Friarbird *Philemon fuscicapillus* from Morotai Island, Indonesia, listed AMNH 697224 as a possible syntype of *Tropidorhynchus fuscicapillus* Wallace, 1862 (Besson 2012: 239). After correspondence with Besson, I did not accept this specimen as a possible syntype of Wallace's name and did not include it in my list of AMNH types (LeCroy 2011). The following are my reasons.

AMNH 697224 came to the American Museum of Natural History (New York) via the Rothschild Collection in 1932. Rothschild was cognisant of the value of prior labels and if this specimen had possessed an original label it would have remained and an additional Rothschild label would have been attached; often the history of his specimens can be unraveled based on their labels. AMNH 697224, in fact, does not even possess a Rothschild label; the single label it does bear is stamped 'Rothschild Collection' with a rubber stamp, which was done either before the specimen was shipped or after it arrived in New York, in order for its provenance to be traceable. It was one of five specimens of the species that came to AMNH with the Rothschild Collection, the other four having been collected by J. M. Dumas on Morotai (LeCroy & Jansen 2011) and were noted on the Rothschild label as having been collected by the former.

There is nothing to connect AMNH 697224 to Allen or to Wallace. There is, in fact, nothing on the label (Fig. 1) that provides a clue as to the collector. The old name '*Tropidorhynchus*' has been substituted with '*Philemon*'. Subsequently, apparently after it had been given its AMNH number, '*fuscicapillus*!' was added in a different hand. There is no locality or date of collection on the label and the reverse is blank.

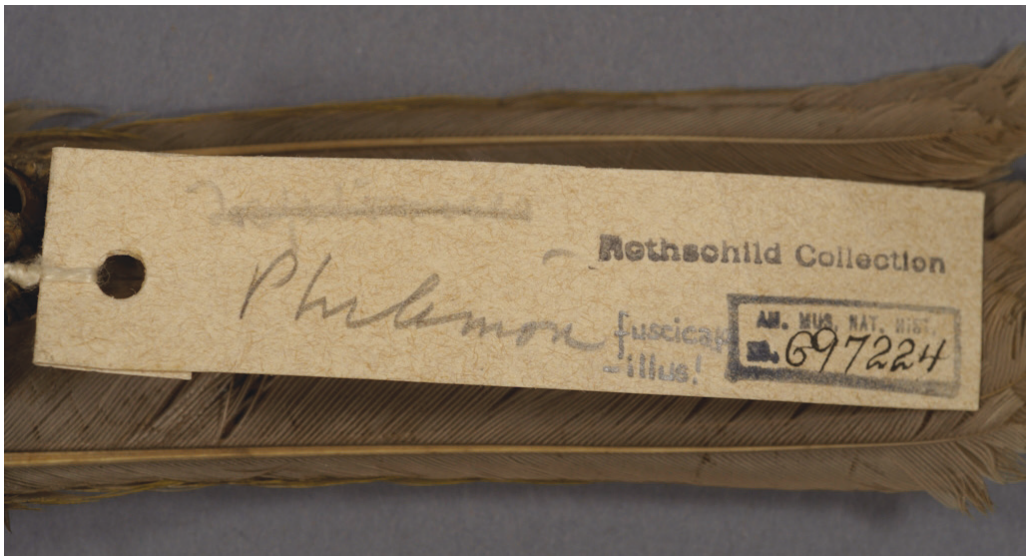


Figure 1. The single label on AMNH 697224; the reverse is blank (Matthew Shanley / AMNH Staff Photographer)



Figure 2. Ventral (top) and lateral views of AMNH 697224 (Matthew Shanley / AMNH Staff Photographer)

I do not consider the characteristics listed by Besson (2012: 243) as diagnostic of Allen's skinning technique to be unique. Furthermore, the specimen itself does not exhibit the characteristics listed. Fig. 2 shows the two photographs of AMNH 697224 sent to Besson in February 2011. The neck is slightly elongated, but the breast does not bulge, nor is the abdomen very flat, and while the feet are crossed, the legs are not tied to date (see Editorial comment) .

In some cases within the AMNH type lists, I have included specimens for which I considered their type status questionable and have so indicated this in the text. In this case, I have seen no evidence to date that the specimen in question might be a type and therefore do not accept it as such.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT.—The author of the paper discussed here, Ludovic Besson (*in litt.* 2013), has requested that we note that the legs of Allen's specimens are not in fact tied, *contra* Besson (2012: 243).