

# The correct introduction and type species of *Fringillaria* Swainson, 1837 – a correction

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ABSTRACT: It is shown, *contra* Gregory and Mann (2022), that the subject of the plate and description of *Fringillaria capensis* Swainson, 1837, is a senior synonym of *Emberiza affinis gambiensis* Bannerman, 1932, and not *Emberiza flavigaster* Cretzschmar, 1828, as they had presumed. This becomes the nominal type species of *Fringillaria* Swainson, 1837, which in turn becomes a senior subjective synonym of *Cosmospina* Wolters, 1972. Although the change of type species of the genus or subgenus *Fringillaria* now attaches the name to clade D2 instead of clade D1, *sensu* Alström *et al.* (2008), it is not considered to cause any instability, but it is noted that clade D1 of Alström *et al.* (2008) would be left without an available name.

KEYWORDS: *Fringillaria*, *Emberiza*, Swainson, West Africa, type species, *capensis*, *affinis*, *gambiensis*, von Heuglin, Bannerman.

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Gregory and Mann (2022) had shown that the type species of *Fringillaria* Swainson, 1837, could not have been *Emberiza capensis* Linnaeus, 1766, as that species has no yellow in its plumage, unlike the one in Swainson's *The Natural History of the Birds of Western Africa*, vol. 1 (Swainson, 1837), the first published use of *Fringillaria*. They failed to realize, however, that the bird described and illustrated as *Fringillaria capensis* Swainson, 1837, from a specimen sent from Senegal, was not the same as that listed by Swainson in his brief synonymy as *Emberiza flavigaster* Ruppell = *Emberiza flavigaster* Cretzschmar, 1828, and described as having 'lesser wing-covers and a half collar on the nape, pure white' which differed markedly in this respect from the detailed description of the specimen from Senegal that followed. One of us (UO) noted that the bird depicted in Swainson's plate (Figure 1) could be clearly separated from *Emberiza flavigaster* by three diagnostic characters: pure white lores, uniformly yellow underparts and no white in the greater or median wing coverts. Swainson's description (1837: 212) included upperparts that were 'dark brown edged with very light grey', but did not mention a contrasting grey rump, which is conspicuous in *flavigaster*, and would have been unlikely to be omitted given the level of detail. The underparts were described as 'from the chin to the vent, the whole plumage is of a full, bright, and uniform yellow' (Swainson, 1837: 213).

The description and plate, together with the Senegal origin of the specimen, strongly suggests that Swainson's bird could not have been *Emberiza flavigaster*, which does not occur in Senegal, being an uncommon bird of remoter places further east such as Timbuktu and Ougadougou. Instead, they quite accurately characterized a male *Emberiza affinis* (*cf.* Byers *et al.*, 1995), rendering *Fringillaria capensis* Swainson, 1837, a senior synonym of *Emberiza affinis gambiensis* Bannerman, 1932, which is currently in the synonymy of *Emberiza affinis nigeriae* Bannerman & Bates, 1926. Illustrations of both *Emberiza affinis* von Heuglin, 1867 (Figure 2), and *Emberiza flavigaster* Cretzschmar, 1828 (Figure 3) are supplied for comparison with Swainson's plate 18.

PLATE 18.



**YELLOW BELLIED OR CAPE BUNTING.**

**Figure 1.** Plate 18 from Swainson's *The Natural History of the Birds of western Africa*. Volume 1 (1837). [www.books.google.com]





**Figure 2.** Adult male *Fringillaria affinis* (von Heuglin, 1867). [Illustration from *Buntings and Sparrows*, 1995, Clive Byers, Urban Olsson & Jon Curson, Pica Press, used by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.]



**Figure 3.** Adult male *Fringillaria flavigaster* (Cretschmar, 1828). [Illustration from *Buntings and Sparrows*, 1995, Clive Byers, Urban Olsson & Jon Curson, Pica Press, used by permission of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.]

Of course, ‘sent from Senegal’ is not conclusive evidence of the origin of Swainson’s specimen, but the *terra typica* of the other recognized forms are so far away (Nigeria, Central African Republic and South Sudan) as to make other shipping points more likely for those, even in Swainson’s day.

Shelley in *The Birds of Africa*, vol. 3 (Shelley, 1902: 148) gave ‘Senegal’ as the type locality and noted ‘the entire absence of white on the wing coverts’ and that ‘Swainson’s Golden-breasted Bunting inhabits Senegambia, the White Nile and Sennaar’. The same information was reported by Anton Reichenow in *Die Vögel Afrikas* (Reichenow, 1904: 287) who listed all of the then known synonyms of *Emberiza affinis* von Heuglin, 1867, including ‘*Fringillaria capensis* [non Gm.] Sw. W. Afr. I. 1837, 211 T. 18’.

That this was not noticed by Gregory and Mann (2022) when writing the original paper is a regrettable lapse, and necessitates this correction.

We therefore follow Shelley and Reichenow in recognizing that *Fringillaria capensis* Swainson, 1837, is a senior synonym of *Emberiza affinis* von Heuglin, 1867, most likely the form from Senegal, *Emberiza affinis gambiensis* Bannerman, 1932, which becomes the nominal type species of *Fringillaria*, under Article 68.3 (ICZN, 1999: 71):

### *Fringillaria*

*Fringillaria* Swainson, 1837 gender feminine

Birds of W. Africa, 1, pp. xiv, 211.

Type by monotypy

*Fringillaria capensis* Swainson, 1837 = *Emberiza affinis gambiensis* Bannerman, 1932

*Fringillaria affinis gambiensis* (Bannerman, 1932)

ZooBank LSID for *Fringillaria*: 9F50D1CC-A70B-44C3-8832-895AF5184337

All the while they are considered to be congeneric, *Fringillaria capensis* Swainson, 1837, remains a junior secondary homonym of *Emberiza capensis* Linnaeus, 1766, and even if they were removed to different genera, the junior name would be permanently invalid under Article 59.3 (ICZN, 1999: 62).

Although the correct identification of the type species of the genus or subgenus *Fringillaria* attaches the name to a different clade, it should not cause any instability, Art. 70.2, ICZN (1999: 74). It should, however, be noted that *Emberiza affinis* von Heuglin, 1867, was not sampled by Alström *et al.* (2008) in determining their clade D, which became ‘*Fringillaria* Swainson, 1837’ in Dickinson & Christidis (2014: 353), and that Koblik (2007: 152) included it in *Cosmospina* Wolters, 1972, which becomes a junior subjective synonym of *Fringillaria* Swainson, 1837, corresponding to clade D2 of Alström *et al.* (2008). In the event of clade D1 being separated generically, it would not have an available name.

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