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Front Cover: Adult male northeastern vervet monkey (*Chlorocebus pygerythrus arenaria*) in Marsabit National Park, central northern Kenya. Photo by Yvonne de Jong and Tom Butynski.

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Brief Communication:

Taxonomy of the Eastern Patas Monkey: Review of the Authority Name, Year, and Epithets 'pyrronotus' and 'pyrrhonotus'

Thomas M. Butynski and Yvonne A. de Jong

Eastern Africa Primate Diversity and Conservation Program, Nanyuki, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Patas monkeys *Erythrocebus* Trouessart, 1897, are semi-terrestrial primates endemic to tropical Africa. They are characterized by their large size (up to 18 kg), slender bodies, and orange, white, and black pelage (Figures 1 & 2). The taxonomy of the species and subspecies within *Erythrocebus* is complex and far from resolved. We are currently undertaking a review of the taxonomic arrangement within *Erythrocebus*.

During our review of the literature, we found considerable variation in the spelling of the epithet for the eastern patas monkey---'pyrronotus' vs 'pyrrhonotus.' Also, the names of the authority and year of publication of these two epithets vary considerably in the literature. Table 1 presents examples of this variation.

The confusion over 'pyrronotus' vs 'pyrrhonotus' goes back to the protologue of *Cercopithecus pyrronotus* Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1829. These authors first published the description and specific name of this monkey in *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft Naturforschender Freunde zu Berlin* (1829, p. 407; Figure 3). The epithet 'pyrronotus' is presented twice in this work.

Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833) subsequently published additional supporting text and an illustration with a caption (Plate 10) in *Symbolae Physicae* ('1832' appears in this publication but it was not printed and made available until 1833). Here they introduced the name 'pyrrhonotus' (Figure 4) while the caption to the drawing applied the name 'pyrronotus' (Figure 5).

Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833) used 'pyrrhonotus' in the title and listed 'pyrrhonotus' as a synonym (i.e., *Cercopithecus pyrrhonotus* Ehrenberg *Verhandl. d. Gesellschaft naturf. Fr. zu Berlin I.* 1927). They mentioned 'pyrrhonotus' twice in the description, while 'pyrronotus' was only presented in the caption to Plate 10. It is unlikely, therefore, that the spelling 'pyrrhonotus' is a lapsus. Note that *pyrrhos* originates from the Greek word *pyr* (fire), meaning 'flame-colored', 'fiery', or 'red-haired', *notus* means 'back'. As such, 'pyrrhonotus' is morphologically consistent and semantically appropriate for *Erythrocebus*.

From the time of its introduction in 1829 until 1981, 'pyrronotus' was frequently used (Table 1), probably mostly by those who had read both Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829) and Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833). Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire & Cuvier (1842) used 'pyrronotus.' Apart from Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833), Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1855) appears to have been the first author to apply 'pyrrhonotus.' Sclater (1872, 1893), Schlegel (1876), Forbes (1897), Trouessart (1897), and Anderson & de Winton (1902) followed Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1855) by citing 'pyrrhonotus.'

In 1905, Matschie brought 'pyrronotus' back into the literature. This usage was subsequently applied in some works (e.g., Allen 1925; Schwarz 1927; Hill 1966; Kock 1969; Yalden *et al.* 1977; Napier 1981), while 'pyrrhonotus' was retained in others (e.g., Pocock 1907; Elliot 1909, 1913; Hollister 1924; Allen 1939; Setzer 1956; Butler 1966; Dandelot 1974; Groves 1993, 2001, 2005; Grubb *et al.* 2003; Wallis



Figure 1. Eastern patas monkeys *Erythrocebus patas pyrrhonotus*, Borana Conservancy, Laikipia Plateau, central Kenya. Photograph by Y. de Jong & T. Butynski.

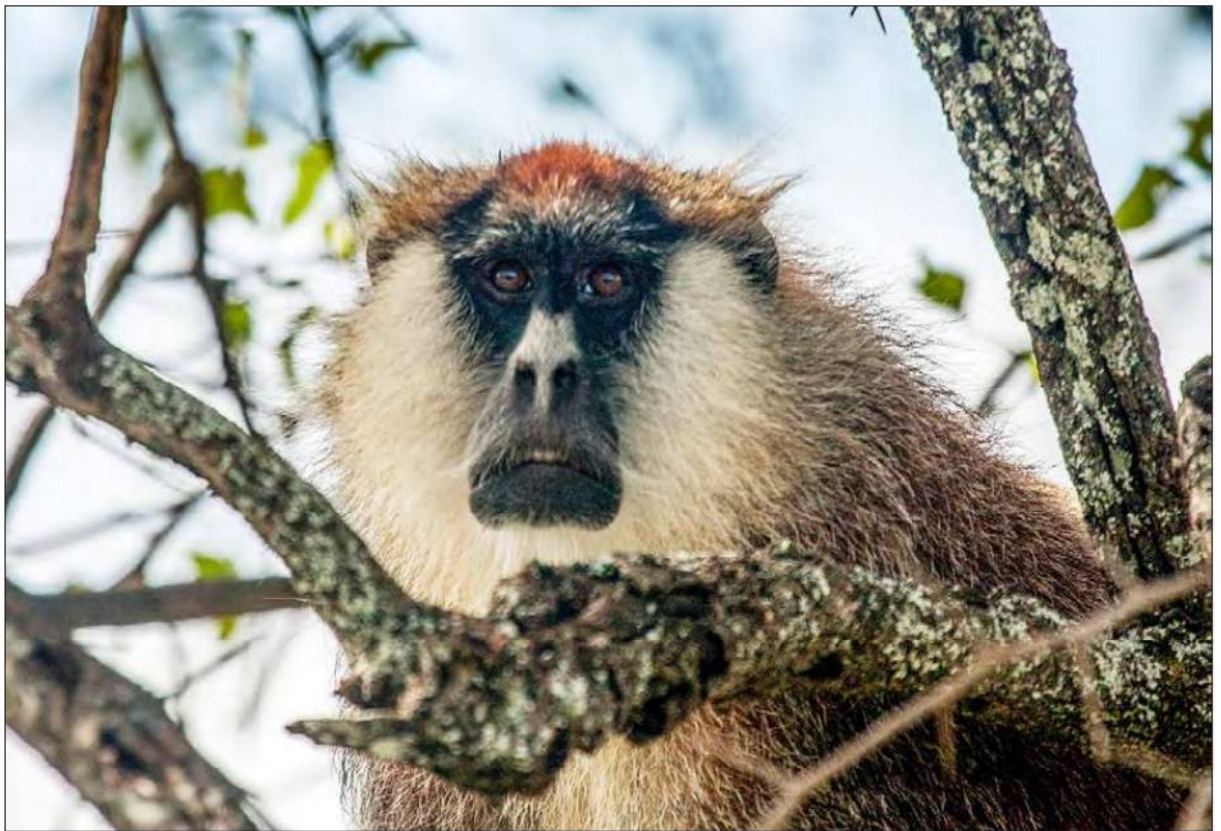


Figure 2. Adult male eastern patas monkey *Erythrocebus patas pyrrhonotus*, Kidepo Valley National Park, northeastern Uganda. Photograph by Y. de Jong & T. Butynski.

Table 1. Variation in the spelling of ‘pyrronotus’ vs ‘pyrrhonotus’ as the epithet for the eastern patas monkey.

Reference	Name	Authority and year cited
Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire & Cuvier (1842)	<i>pyrronotus</i>	No authority or year provided
Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1855)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	Ehrenberg (1829) Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1830)
Slater (1872, 1893); Trouessart (1897); Butler (1966)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	Hemprich & Ehrenberg (no year provided)
Schlegel (1876)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	Ehrenberg (no year provided)
Forbes (1897); Elliot (1913); Hollister (1924)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1838)
Anderson & de Winton (1902); Pocock (1907); Dandelot (1974); Groves (1993, 2001, 2005); Grubb <i>et al.</i> (2003); Wallis (2013); Gippoliti (2017); De Jong <i>et al.</i> (2025); GBIF (2026); IUCN (2026); PSG (2026)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829)
Matschie (1905); Allen (1925); Hill (1966); Kock (1969); Yalden <i>et al.</i> (1977); Napier (1981)	<i>pyrronotus</i>	Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829)
Elliot (1909)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	No authority or year provided
Schwarz (1927)	<i>pyrronotus</i>	Hemprich & Ehrenberg (no year provided)
Allen (1939), Setzer (1956)	<i>pyrrhonotus</i>	Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1832)
MDD (2026)	<i>pyrronotus</i>	Ehrenberg (1929)

2013; Gippoliti 2017; De Jong *et al.* 2025; Table 1).

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF 2026), the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (IUCN 2026), and the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group (PSG 2026) use ‘*pyrrhonotus*’. The American Society of Mammalogist’s Mammal Diversity Database (MDD 2026), however, uses ‘*pyrronotus*’.

Below, in italics, are parts of Article 32 (Original Spellings) and Article 33 (Subsequent Spellings) in the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1999). Here, we have inserted comments relevant to the usage of ‘*pyrronotus*’ and ‘*pyrrhonotus*’, and our conclusions. Our insertions are preceded by ‘***’.

Article 32. Original spellings

32.1. Definition

The “original spelling” of a name is the spelling used in the work in which the name was established.

*** The “original spelling” in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829) is ‘*pyrronotus*’.

32.2. Correct original spelling

The original spelling of a name is the “correct original spelling”, unless it is demonstrably incorrect as provided in Article 32.5.

*** The “correct original spelling” is ‘*pyrronotus*’. It is not “demonstrably incorrect.”

32.3. Preservation of correct original spelling

The correct original spelling of a name is to be preserved unaltered, except where it is mandatory to change the suffix or the gender ending under Article 34 (for treatment of emendations and incorrect subsequent spellings see Articles 32.5, 33.2, 33.3, 33.4).

*** The “correct original spelling” is ‘*pyrronotus*’.

32.5. Spellings that must be corrected (incorrect original spellings)

32.5.1. *If there is in the original publication itself, without recourse to any external source of information, clear evidence of an inadvertent error, such as a lapsus*

XLV.
Beobachtungen über die Affen-Arten in Sennaar, Cor-
dofan und Arabien

von

Dr. Hemprich und Dr. Ehrenberg;

Mitgetheilt

von Dr. C. G. Ehrenberg.

In den von uns bereisten Ländern Nord-Afrika's und West-Asiens begegneten uns die ersten Affen in der Richtung von Norden nach Süden in Afrika im 18ten; in Arabien im 19ten Grade nördlicher Breite. Im nordöstlichen Schakie giebt es nördlicher als im 18 Breitengrade durchaus keine Affen, während in Arabien schon bei Djedda (zwischen dem 21 — 22 Breitengrade) dergleichen häufig vorkommen, obwohl ich selbst wilde Affen nur erst bei Gumdude sah.

UEBER NORDAFRICANISCHE AFFEN.

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Die 3 Arten sind:

Cercopithecus Sabaeus,
Cercopithecus pyrrhonotus,
Cynocephalus Hamadryas.

Von der ersten Art, die wir in Dar Schakie zwischen Sennaar und Dongala als einheimisch kennen lernten, ohne jedoch sie daselbst in der Wildniß beobachtet zu haben, ist nur zu bemerken, daß es die kleinste und am gewöhnlichsten gezähmte der 3 Arten ist. Besonders wichtige Zusätze zu dem Bekannten sind bei dieser Art von uns nicht gemacht worden.

Interessanter ist die zweite Form: *Cercopithecus pyrrhonotus*, der Nisnās eine bisher unbekannte Art, welche dem rothen senegalensischen Patas sehr nahe steht, aber durch eine weit lebhaftere Färbung sich sogleich unterscheidet. Seine Charaktere sind folgende:

Figure 3. Title of the *Cercopithecus pyrrhonotus* prologue by Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829) in *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft Naturforschender Freunde zu Berlin* (1829) (6): 406–408.

SIMIA, CERCOPITHECUS, *pyrrhonotus* H. et E.

EX AETHIOPIAE PROVINCIIS DARFÜR, CORDOFAN ET SENNAAR.

Arabia aegyptiacis vocatur Nisnās نيسناس. In Habessinia habitare non videtur, nec in Senegalis ripa.

Figure 4. Title of the *Cercopithecus pyrrhonotus* protologue by Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833) in *Symbolae Physicae, seu Icones et Descriptions Mammalium* (Zoologica II, Mammalium, Part I). Berlin.



Figure 5. *Cercopithecus pyrrhonotus* in Plate 10 in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833). Note the spelling ‘pyrrhonotus’ in the caption.

calami or a copyist's or printer's error, it must be corrected. Incorrect transliteration or latinization, or use of an inappropriate connecting vowel, are not to be considered inadvertent errors.

*** The name ‘pyrrhonotus’ is not a lapsus, but rather an incorrect latinization. It seems likely that Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833), purposefully, introduced ‘pyrrhonotus’ (= red back) in order to provide a name that corrected the latinization of ‘pyrronotus.’ The name ‘pyrronotus’ (i.e., without the ‘h’) is not a stand-alone word in classical Greek or Latin but rather is a misspelling of ‘pyrrhonotus.’ Nonetheless, ‘pyrronotus’ is the “correct original spelling” for this epithet.

33.2.3. Any other emendation is an “unjustified emendation.”

Article 33. Subsequent spellings

33.1. Kinds of subsequent spellings

A subsequent spelling of a name, if different from the original spelling [Art. 32.1], is either an emendation [Art. 33.2], or an incorrect subsequent spelling [Art. 33.3], or a mandatory change [Art. 34].

*** The “original spelling” is ‘pyrronotus.’ The “subsequent spelling” is ‘pyrrhonotus.’ The spelling ‘pyrrhonotus’ is not a lapsus as it is not “demonstrably incorrect.”

33.2. Emendations

Any demonstrably intentional change in the original spelling of a name other than a mandatory change is an “emendation”, except as provided in Article 33.4.

33.2.1. A change in the original spelling of a name is only to be interpreted as “demonstrably intentional” when in the work itself, or in an author’s (or publisher’s) corrigenda, there is an explicit statement of intention, or when both the original and the changed spelling are cited and the latter is adopted in place of the former, or when two or more names in the same work are treated in a similar way.

*** Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833) do not provide an “explicit statement of intention” that this work serves as an emendation for the spelling of ‘pyrrhonotus’, nor do they provide a justification or explanation as to why they introduced the name ‘pyrrhonotus.’ Nonetheless, this work serves as an emendation for ‘pyrrhonotus’ as this change is “demonstrably

intentional”, since “both the original spelling and the changed spelling are cited and the latter is adopted in place of the former”, and because the two names “are treated in a similar way.” Furthermore, intent is demonstrated by the fact that the addition of the letter ‘h’ correctly latinizes ‘pyrronotus.’ This is not a lapsus. Although this is an intentional emendation it is, nonetheless, an “unjustified emendation.”

33.2.2. *The correction of an incorrect original spelling in accordance with Article 32.5 is a “justified emendation”, and the name thus corrected retains the authorship and date of the original spelling [Art. 19.2].*

*** The name ‘pyrronotus’ is not an “incorrect original spelling.”

33.2.3. *Any other emendation is an “unjustified emendation”; the name thus emended is available and it has its own author and date and is a junior objective synonym of the name in its original spelling; it enters into homonymy and can be used as a substitute name, but*

33.2.3.1. *when an unjustified emendation is in prevailing usage and is attributed to the original author and date it is deemed to be a justified emendation.*

*** Based on the above, ‘pyrrhonotus’ is an “unjustified emendation.” However, since ‘pyrrhonotus’ has been in common usage in major taxonomic works since 1855, and in “prevailing usage” since about 1974 (Table 1), ‘pyrrhonotus’ is now deemed a “justified emendation.”

33.3. *Incorrect subsequent spellings*

Any subsequent spelling of a name different from the correct original spelling, other than a mandatory change or an emendation, is an “incorrect subsequent spelling”; it is not an available name and, like an incorrect original spelling [Art. 32.4], it does not enter into homonymy and cannot be used as a substitute name, but

33.3.1. *when an incorrect subsequent spelling is in prevailing usage and is attributed to the publication of the original spelling, the subsequent spelling and attribution are to be preserved and the spelling is deemed to be a correct original spelling.*

*** The emendation presented in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833) for ‘pyrrhonotus’ is an “unjustified emendation.” As such, ‘pyrrhonotus’ is an “incorrect subsequent spelling.” Since, however, ‘pyrrhonotus’ has been in “prevailing usage” for over 50 years, this name must now be preserved and taken to be the “correct original spelling.”

As far as we are aware, the correct name for the eastern patas monkey has not been of much concern---until now. The considerable disparities among the names and years used for the authorship of the names ‘pyrronotus’ and ‘pyrrhonotus’ strongly suggest that few authors studied the two publications in which these names first appeared. This lack of attention to the prologues seems to be the reason that ‘pyrrhonotus’ has been able to increasingly gain usage over the past 120 years or so.

We conclude:

1. That ‘pyrronotus’ in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829) precedes ‘pyrrhonotus’ in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833), that ‘pyrronotus’ was the “correct original spelling”, and that these are the correct authority names and years of publication for these names.
2. That ‘pyrrhonotus’ in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1833) was an “unjustified emendation” and, therefore, represented an “incorrect subsequent spelling.” The reason for this is that ‘pyrronotus’ was the “correct original spelling.”
3. That the “incorrect subsequent spelling” of ‘pyrrhonotus’ should now be taken as a “correct original spelling” and “current valid spelling” on the basis that ‘pyrrhonotus’ has been in “prevailing usage” for about the last 50 years.
4. That ‘pyrronotus’ in Hemprich & Ehrenberg (1829) is now the “historic original spelling” and “invalid.”
5. That, applying the current taxonomic arrangement, the name, authority, and year of publication for the eastern patas monkey is ‘*Erythrocebus patas pyrrhonotus* (Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1829).’

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