

Rediscovery of a long misattributed and misidentified Darwin Beagle bird specimen

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Steinheimer (2004) provided a most useful appendix that lists all bird specimens that Charles Darwin is known to have collected during the second voyage of *HMS Beagle* (1831–36), together with information on their then current status. As a result of their complicated post-Beagle history, this list reveals that the whereabouts of the majority of Darwin's specimens were unknown. Since then only two additional Darwin's Beagle birds have come to light: a mounted Cinereous Harrier *Circus cinereus* in Naturalis, Leiden, the Netherlands (van Grouw & Steinheimer 2008), and an egg of Spotted Nothura *Nothura maculosa* in the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, UK (Lowe *et al.* 2010).

During research into the bird specimens of Captain (later Vice-Admiral) Robert FitzRoy¹ from the same voyage, held at the Natural History Museum (NHM) (Sharpe 1906), we noted that an owl specimen (Fig. 1a) stored among specimens of Short-eared Owl *Asio*

A



B

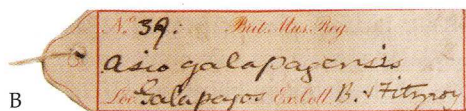


Figure 1(a). Specimen supposedly of Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus galapagoensis* and collected by Captain Robert FitzRoy during the 1831–36 voyage of *HMS Beagle*, but actually an *A. f. suinda* collected by Charles Darwin on the same voyage; (b) NHM label on specimen; (c) metal tag, with appended mm scale, on specimen (Lucie Goodayle / © Natural History Museum, London)



C



¹ We follow Sulloway (1982) and McConnell (2004) in adopting this spelling of FitzRoy's name, except in direct quotes.

