

ART. 16. A NEW RACE OF HUDSONIAN CHICKADEE

V.31  
BY W. E. CLYDE TODD

Several years ago, with a fine series of 136 specimens of the Hudsonian Chickadee at my command, by far the larger part of which was collected expressly for the purpose of this investigation, I prepared an extensive manuscript on the taxonomy of this species for my projected report on the birds of the Labrador Peninsula. Presentation of these notes in their original form is necessarily deferred, but now that we are looking forward to the publication of a comprehensive study of this species by a competent Canadian ornithologist, it may be in order to put on record at least that part of them which deals with an apparently new race from the coast of Labrador. Since my earlier study, 35 specimens have been added to the Carnegie Museum series of this species, and I have also had the benefit of additional material lent for examination by the authorities of the United States National Museum, the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology, to the authorities of which institutions I desire to express my thanks. A brief resumé of the taxonomic history of this species is a necessary preliminary.

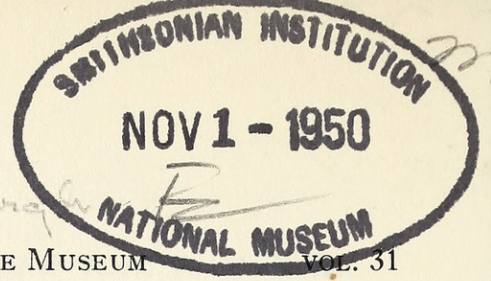
*Parus hudsonicus* was described by Forster (Philosophical Transactions, 62, 1772, pp. 383, 408, 430) from the mouth of the Severn River, on the west coast of Hudson Bay. Before any specimens from this point were available, I found that birds from Churchill to the north, and from James Bay and northern Ontario on the south, were comparable in every respect—a judgment that was fully confirmed by actual examination of a series from the type-locality. The range of this, the typical race, extends eastward into the Labrador Peninsula and northward to the limit of trees. Specimens from the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence (“*nigricans*” of Townsend) are not satisfactorily distinguishable from others from Fort Chimo (“*ungava*” Rhoads) and Richmond Gulf. Recent authors (including Ridgway, 1904), however, recognize *littoralis* (Bryant, 1865) for the birds of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. With specimens from the type-locality (Yarmouth, Nova Scotia), collected by myself in 1901, and with considerable borrowed material from other localities in these provinces, I must confess that I am very dubious about the validity of *littoralis*. In the specimens examined, there is much variation in exact shade of color, and the average smaller size seems to be inconsequential. A larger series of really good specimens, comparable for season, might suffice to establish its validity, but as matters stand I consider it doubtful.



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With Rhoads' type-series of *columbianus* before me, I am quite unable to distinguish this supposed race, but again my present material is insufficient for a final conclusion. The northwestern race *evura* of Coues (1884) is easily recognizable by its larger size and somewhat different coloration. Leaving these western birds, and returning to the East, I find that the recently described *rabbittsi* of Burleigh (1948) is barely distinguishable in fresh plumage by the characters assigned in the original description, namely, the slight grayish cast of the underparts (as compared with typical *hudsonicus*), the duller and darker brown flanks (nearer snuff brown than sayal brown), and the slightly duller and darker brown upperparts, with less contrast between the pileum and back than in the typical bird. In breeding dress these distinctions are mostly obscured.

Specimens from the coast of Labrador, however, cannot be referred to any of the described races. They are certainly as worthy of subspecific status as are the Newfoundland birds. In naming them herewith I must explain that, following Ridgway, I continue to use *Penthestes* for the generic group instead of *Parus*.

***Penthestes hudsonicus labradorius*, subsp. nov.**

Ten specimens: Nain, Mikkovik, and Rigolet, Labrador (August 29—September 25).

*Type*, No. 100,125, Collection Carnegie Museum, immature male; Rigolet, Labrador, September 24, 1926; W. E. Clyde Todd.

*Subspecific characters*.—Similar to *Penthestes hudsonicus hudsonicus* (Forster) of Hudson Bay, etc., but upperparts slightly duller brown; underparts more purely and more extensively white; and brown color of flanks paler, duller, and more restricted. Wing (type), 67; tail, 61; bill, 10; tarsus, 15.5.

*Range*.—Coast of Labrador.

*Remarks*.—As a series, these specimens may readily be separated from James Bay birds, as their characters stand out sufficiently well, but individual birds might be hard to distinguish. This is by far the whitest (below) of all the forms of *P. hudsonicus*. All of the series on which it is based happen to be birds of the year in fresh plumage, which show the characters to good advantage. Whether spring and summer specimens can be as readily discriminated remains to be seen. They are not so satisfactory for comparison as a rule—an observation which applies with equal force to all individuals of this species.



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