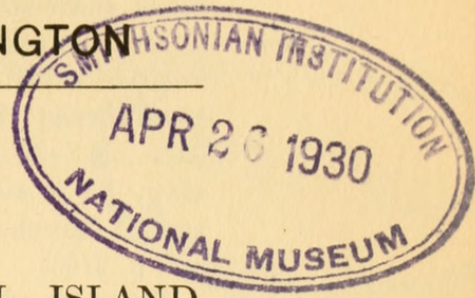


PROCEEDINGS
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THE SONG SPARROW OF SAN MIGUEL ISLAND,
CALIFORNIA.

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL.

Messrs. Chester C. Lamb and J. Elton Green visited San Miguel Island, off Santa Barbara, California, last fall for the prime purpose of obtaining for the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology representatives of the diminutive Gray Fox native to that island. The foxes were obtained, and also an interesting lot of birds among which a seemingly new race of Song Sparrow stands out conspicuously. This may now be named

Melospiza melodia micronyx, new subspecies.

Type.—Male adult, no. 51535, Mus. Vert. Zool.; San Miguel Island, California; September 21, 1927; collected by Chester C. Lamb; orig. no. 7930.

Diagnosis.—Among song sparrows in general (all the races of *Melospiza melodia*), coloration grayest; brown or brownish tones almost wanting; dark markings black and sharply contrasted against gray of dorsal surface or white of lower surface; bill, feet and especially claws weak; wing showing extreme of bluntness (longest primary not much longer than outermost).

Comparisons.—Nearest like the races already recognized from different islands in the Santa Barbara archipelago (see, for careful analysis of the characters of these, van Rossem, Condor, XXVI, 1924, pp. 217-220). Most nearly like *M. m. graminea* of Santa Barbara Island, but differs from it in broader and blacker dark streaking everywhere, in grayer ground-color dorsally, especially on the pileum, in paler flanks, in decidedly smaller claws, in blunter wing, and in slightly greater general size.

From *M. m. clementae*, *micronyx* differs as it does from *graminea*, only for the most part (save as to general size) in greater degree. Especially on the top of the head is the greater amount of grayness apparent; the broad brown capital side-stripes in *clementae* are in *micronyx* reduced to very narrow ones, which play out altogether on the nape instead of extending back to blend (in *clementae*) with the brownish tone of the dor-

sum. The broad gray occipital area is in *micronyx* lined sharply with black shaft streaks which are thus thrown into conspicuous contrast.

Measurements.—Twelve males, marked adult by field collectors on basis of skull condition, average as follows (minimum and maximum in parenthesis): Wing, 62.0 mm. (60.7–63.6); tail, 62.4 (60.5–63.7); tarsus, 21.7 (21.2–22.0); bill from nostril, 8.3 (8.0–8.7); outside chord of hind claw, 7.3 (6.4–7.9); weight, 22.1 g. (20.0–25.4). The first three of these sets of figures should be compared with those given by van Rossem (*loc. cit.*, p. 219).

With regard to outside chord of hind claw I find that the 29 specimens of *micronyx* give an average of 7.2 mm. (6.4–7.9); 51 of *clementae* give 8.2 (7.2–9.8); 25 of *graminea* give 8.1 (7.6–9.4). Sexual differences are slight: Of *clementae*, 17 females average 8.0, 34 males 8.3; of *micronyx*, 15 females 7.1, 14 males 7.3 mm.

Remarks.—In making the present study I have been helped by freely granted loans of Song Sparrows as follows: (1) A long series of *graminea* (Santa Barbara Island) from the Los Angeles Museum through Mr. L. E. Wyman; (2) a series of the Song Sparrow of Santa Cruz Island from the California Academy of Sciences through Mr. H. S. Swarth.

The Santa Cruz Island birds are not in satisfactory condition for accurate appraisement; but in so far as critical characters are appreciable (extent of brown, for example) I agree with van Rossem that they fall with *clementae*. I have seen no song sparrows at all from Santa Rosa Island.

Comparison of *micronyx* with examples of *cooperi* from the coast belt of Ventura County, as suggested by van Rossem's remarks (*loc. cit.*, p. 220) shows no close approach significant to me of immediate derivation. These examples of *cooperi* differ from *micronyx* in decidedly more massive bill, in broad brown side-stripes on head and correspondingly narrow median gray stripe, in browner flanks, and in browner, much less ashy, tone of coloration on sides of head and on whole dorsum.



Grinnell, Joseph. 1928. "The song sparrow of San Miguel Island, California." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 41, 1-40.

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