

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SUBSPECIES OF THE
WESTERN MEADOWLARK

BY S. F. RATHBUN.

SOME time ago my attention was called to certain apparent peculiarities in the meadowlarks inhabiting the coast region of the State of Washington. Since that time I have been able, by special efforts, to gather together a considerable series from the Pacific slope of Washington and Oregon, which series now clearly shows that the bird from this region is subspecifically distinct from that of the interior of the United States. In view of this fact it becomes necessary to separate it formally, and I therefore propose to call it

***Sturnella neglecta confluenta*, subsp. nov.**

NORTHWESTERN MEADOWLARK.

CHARS. SUBSP.—Similar to *Sturnella neglecta neglecta*, but the bars on tail and tertials broader and much more confluent; upper parts darker throughout, and their black areas more extensive; yellow of under parts averaging darker; spots and streaks on the sides of breast, body, and flanks larger and more conspicuous.

DESCRIPTION.—Type, adult male, No. 105, collection of S. F. Rathbun; Seattle, Washington, April 5, 1895; S. F. Rathbun. Upper parts mixed blackish, dark brown, umber, and buffy; pileum with a broad central streak of cream buff; tail brownish gray, broadly barred with brownish black, the bars on all but the terminal portion of the rectrices much confluent, the outer three pairs of tail-feathers extensively white; wings fuscous, all the feathers margined with pale brown, the tertials heavily barred with blackish, the greater wing-coverts more narrowly barred on their exterior webs with blackish brown; edge of wing yellow; supraloral stripe, breast, abdomen, chin, and throat, rich yellow, this color extending laterally over the greater portion of the malar region; superciliary stripe dull cream buff; breast and jugulum with a broad crescent of black; sides, flanks, and crissum, buffy or whitish, broadly streaked with dark brown and blackish; sides of breast with large brownish black spots; lining of wing dull white.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.—Pacific coast region of southwestern British Columbia and northwestern Washington, south to northwestern Oregon, and east to the Cascade Mountains.

In the color pattern of wings and tail this new subspecies of *Sturnella neglecta* is curiously similar to *Sturnella magna*, but of course its other characteristics readily distinguish it from that species. This new race is of particular interest in view of the fact that heretofore no subspecies of *Sturnella neglecta* have been distinguished; but *Sturnella neglecta confluenta* is fully as well marked a form as the subspecies of *Sturnella magna*, and practically none of the specimens in our extensive series cause any difficulty whatever in identification. The confluence of the bars on the tail is probably the best subspecific character, but the general coloration of the upper parts makes it readily distinguishable in both summer and winter plumage. There is no difference in size.

A specimen from Comox on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, in the collection of the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, belongs undoubtedly to this race; and I have traced it as far south as Salem, Oregon. It possibly occurs as well farther south along the coast of Oregon. All breeding specimens of *Sturnella neglecta* from east of the Cascades prove to belong to the typical race, so that its limit of distribution eastward is fairly presumed to be this range of mountains.

The type of *Sturnella neglecta*¹ was obtained by Audubon at old Fort Union, North Dakota, and birds from the Great Plains region have been considered as typical in our comparisons. All names applied to this species pertain without doubt to the interior form, which is typical *Sturnella neglecta neglecta*, and therefore the race from the northwestern coast of the United States here distinguished is entitled to a new name as above given.

I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. J. M. Edson, of Bellingham, Washington, and to the University of Washington, for the loan of some of the specimens used in the preparation of this paper, and I wish here to express my sincere thanks for their courtesy.

Thirty specimens of *Sturnella neglecta confluenta* have been examined from the following localities:

British Columbia — Comox.

¹ Audubon, *Birds Amer.*, oct. ed., VII, 1843, p. 339, plate 489.

Washington — Bellingham, Whatcom Co.; Auburn, Duvall, North Bend, Seattle, Snoqualmie, King Co.; Kiona Benton County¹; Enumclaw, Tacoma, Pierce Co.; Olympia, Thurston Co.

Oregon — Forest Grove; Bush Lake near Salem; North Salem.

Measurements in millimeters of *Sturnella neglecta confluenta* are as follows:

No. & Collection.	Sex.	Locality.	Date.	Wing.	Tail.	Exposed culmen.	Tarsus.	Middle toe without claw.
105, S. F. Rathbun	♂	Seattle, Wash.	Apr. 5, 1895	125	76	34	39	24
920, S. F. Rathbun	♂	Olympia, "	Sept. 25, 1916	122	79	32	37	27
921, S. F. Rathbun	♂	Tacoma, "	Oct. 8, 1911	118	77	33.5	36.5	28
922, S. F. Rathbun	♂	Auburn, "	Sept. 21, 1916	132	82	32	36	26
923, J. M. Edson	♂	Bellingham, "	Mar. 7, 1915	125	80	31	36.5	27.5
139400, U. S. N. M.	♂	Comox, B. C.	June 11, 1895	127	75	34	35.5	27
112, S. F. Rathbun	♀	Seattle, Wash.	Apr. 21, 1895	108	62	28	34.5	26.5
924, S. F. Rathbun	♀	Enumclaw, "	Sept. 21, 1916	110	65	28	34	24.5
925, S. F. Rathbun	♀	Auburn, "	Sept. 21, 1916	109	65	30	36	25
926, S. F. Rathbun	♀	Duvall, "	Oct. 4, 1916	111.5	70	30	35	23
1107, Univ. Wash.	♀	Salem, Oregon	Mar. 16, 1891	115	67.5	29.5	36	26
Average of six adult males				124.8	78.2	32.8	36.8	26.6
Average of five adult females				110.7	65.9	29.1	35.1	25.

DESCRIPTION OF *TELESPIZA ULTIMA* FROM NIHOA ISLAND.

BY WILLIAM ALANSON BRYAN.

CONTINUING my note on the discovery of a new land bird on the island of Nihoa, which appeared in the January, 1916, number of 'The Auk,' I am now able to report that through the interest of Lieut. W. H. Munter, specimens have been secured which on comparison with the "Laysan finch," *Telespiza cantans* Wilson, fully warrant the separation of the Nihoa birds under the new name that was only withheld in my former article for want of a definite type specimen.

In view of the fact that the species under consideration is

¹ Not breeding at this locality.



Rathbun, S F. 1917. "Description of a New Subspecies of the Western Meadowlark." *The Auk* 34, 68–70. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4072540>.

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