

DESCRIPTIONS OF TWO NEW SUBSPECIES OF
THE SEASIDE SPARROW (*AMMODRAMUS*
MARITIMUS).

BY J. A. ALLEN.

MR. W. E. D. SCOTT, of Tarpon Springs, Florida, sent to me recently for examination an interesting series of Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows, taken at Tarpon Springs, Feb. 28, 1888. The Sharp-tailed Sparrows, six in number, differ very appreciably from New Jersey and Long Island specimens, being smaller, and having the streaks on the breast heavier and more sharply defined, but they are perhaps hardly different enough from the northern birds to require recognition by name.

The two Seaside Sparrows are intermediate between *Ammodramus maritimus* and *A. nigrescens*, but approach the latter more nearly than the former. They suggest that material from other points may eventually bridge the gap between these two forms, and that *A. nigrescens* will prove to be merely a subspecies of *A. maritimus*, as it was originally described by Mr. Ridgway. For the present the Tarpon Springs birds may be recognized as

***Ammodramus maritimus peninsulæ*, subsp. nov. SCOTT'S
SEASIDE SPARROW.**

SUBSP. CHAR. — *Adult* ♀ (Tarpon Springs, Fla., Feb. 28, 1888; W. E. D. Scott): — Similar to *A. nigrescens* in size and proportions, and in the size and form of the bill. Above the feathers are centrally dull brownish, edged broadly with olive and gray. Below with narrow black streaks on the breast and flanks, much narrower and less sharply defined than in *A. nigrescens*, but much stronger and much more sharply defined than in *A. maritimus* in any phase of plumage. Throat and abdominal region white; rest of underparts suffused with brownish ash, streaked with blackish. Wing, 2.20; tail, 2.00; tarsus, .83; culmen, from base .52.

Types, No. 31,209 and 31,210, females, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., New York City, [and No. 2600, ♂, Coll. A. K. Fisher].

HABITAT.—Southwestern Florida (Tarpon Springs and Cedar Keys), [and Louisiana (Grand Isle)].

Through the kindness of Mr. William Brewster I have been able to compare the birds from Tarpon Springs with his large

series of *A. nigrescens* from Indian River. I find also in Mr. George B. Sennett's collection a specimen collected many years since at Cedar Keys in November which is practically identical with the Tarpon birds.

Some April examples of *A. nigrescens* approach var. *peninsulæ* in having the black of the upper parts, particularly of the head, hind-neck, and fore-back, edged with olive and gray; but beneath the broad black streaks contrast strongly with the narrower and less sharply outlined streaks of *peninsulæ*.

In *A. maritimus*, in breeding dress, the breast and sides are ashy with obscure plumbeous centres, rarely showing a tendency to well-defined streaks. In autumn, however, the dark centres take more the form of streaks. From *maritimus*, in all stages of plumage, *peninsulæ* differs by its much smaller size, much darker upper parts, decided streaks below, darker flanks, and whiter throat and abdomen.

I am indebted to Mr. Scott for generously placing this interesting material in my hands for description.

Since the above was put in type I have received from my friend, Dr. A. K. Fisher, of Washington, D. C., sixteen specimens of Seaside Sparrows collected by him at Grand Isle, Louisiana, June 6-9, 1886. Ten of them are adults in rather worn plumage and six are in first plumage. These specimens prove of great interest, considered in connection with still other material now to be mentioned.

Three of the Louisiana specimens (No. 2600, 2622, and 2624, Coll. Dr. A. K. Fisher) are practically identical, considering the difference in season, with the birds from Tarpon Springs and Cedar Keys. In the others the plumage is more worn (in some of them exceedingly abraded), and the streaks below are either much less distinct or quite wanting. All agree in small size and dark colors, in this respect differing strikingly from true *maritimus*, and agreeing with the Florida birds. The Louisiana birds in first plumage differ rather more from northern birds in corresponding plumage than do the adults. (See the comparative descriptions of the young given below.) The average difference in size is about one fourth of an inch in the length of the wing, the wing in northern birds averaging about 2.50 and in the southern about 2.25.

In this connection it seemed of interest to compare with the Louisiana and Florida birds a small series in Mr. George B. Sennett's collection, taken by him in the breeding season at Corpus Christi, Texas, May 25, 1882. Mr. Sennett has, on different occasions, called my attention to the differences between these birds and true *maritimus*, but the material representing this group of birds then available was much less than at present, and with his characteristic conservatism in such matters he deferred describing the Texas birds till their status could be better determined. He now kindly permits me to make use of this material, consisting of three specimens in breeding plumage and one in first plumage. The Texas form being evidently entitled to recognition, it gives me pleasure to name it in honor of one who is doing so much to extend our knowledge of Texan ornithology.

***Ammodramus maritimus sennetti*, subsp. nov. TEXAN
SEASIDE SPARROW.**

SUBSP. CHAR. *Male and female adult* (Corpus Christi, Texas; Coll. G. B. Sennett):—Size of *Ammodramus maritimus nigrescens* and *A. m. peninsulæ*. Above similar to *A. maritimus*, but all the colors are lighter and paler; nape distinctly streaked with black,—a feature absent in *maritimus* and only occasionally indicated in *peninsulæ*. Below the prevailing shade of gray is much lighter than in *maritimus*, with distinct, narrow, blackish streaks on the breast and flanks, those on the breast bordered with white or ochraceous white; white of throat and abdomen also purer than in *maritimus*.

Types, No. 3304, ♂, and No. 3303, ♀, Coll. G. B. Sennett.

HABITAT.—Gulf coast of Texas (Corpus Christi).

I have before me the young in first plumage of *A. maritimus*, *A. m. peninsulæ*, and *A. m. sennetti*, in which the differences are even more strongly pronounced than in the adults, as shown in the following comparative descriptions.

***A. maritimus*.** *Juv. in first plumage*:—Prevailing color above olive brown streaked with black, narrowly on head, nape, lower back, and rump, broadly on interscapulars. Below, throat and abdomen soiled white; sides, of neck, jugulum and flanks pale buffy, narrowly streaked with black. (Five specimens, Long Island, N. Y.)

***A. m. peninsulæ*.** *Juv. in first plumage*:—Prevailing color above black, the feathers narrowly edged with ochraceous. Below, throat and middle of abdomen white; sides of neck, jugulum, and flanks bright ochraceous, narrowly streaked with black. (Six specimens, Grand Isle, La.)

A. m. sennetti. *Juv. in first plumage*.—Prevailing color above gray-brown, streaked with black, broadly so on the interscapulum. Below pale fulvous white, strongest on sides of neck, jugulum, and flanks, where also sparsely streaked with black. (One specimen, No. 4956, Coll. G. B. Sennett—Corpus Christi, Texas, June 14, 1887.)

The name *peninsulæ* was given to Scott's Seaside Sparrow before the Louisiana material came to hand. The name is thus not happily chosen, as the form is doubtless locally common along not only the Gulf coast of Florida, but westward at least to Western Louisiana.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS *TITYRA*, FROM ECUADOR.

BY J. A. ALLEN.

A SMALL collection of birds, collected mainly in the vicinity of Quito, Ecuador, was recently purchased of Mr. Ludovic Söderström by the American Museum of Natural History. It contains a number of rare species, and others of special interest for the locality of their capture; an annotated list of the collection will be given later in another connection. It contained four specimens of *Tityra*, two of which are referable to *T. personata*; one of these has much more than the usual amount of white in the tail—thus approaching *T. semifasciata*—and the other very much less than the normal amount. One of the other specimens I refer with hesitation to *T. albitorques*, from which it differs in the small amount of white at the base of the tail, there being little more than is seen in *T. inquisitrix*. This specimen thus has the head-markings of *T. albitorques* and nearly the tail of *T. inquisitrix*. The fourth specimen is so different from any of the described species of this genus that I venture to characterize it as new.

Tityra nigriceps, sp. nov.

SP. CHAR. *Adult ♂*.—Similar to *T. personata*, but with the whole head and throat black, and the white at the base of the tail restricted to the extreme base of the feathers, which are merely white centrally for



Allen, J. A. 1888. "Descriptions of Two New Subspecies of the Seaside Sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus*).*" The Auk* 5, 284–287.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/4067319>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/55093>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/4067319>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/89827>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.