

## NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.

## VIII.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

IN the present installment<sup>1</sup> of these notes on North American birds there are discussed forms of three species belonging respectively to the families *Motacillidæ*, *Sylviidæ*, and *Troglodytidæ*.

***Anthus spinoletta rubescens* (Tunstall).**

IN a comparatively recent publication<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ernst Hartert treated the American Pipit as a subspecies of *Anthus spinoletta*.<sup>3</sup> Only a superficial examination is required to demonstrate that this is the correct view of its relationship. It is distinguishable from *Anthus spinoletta spinoletta* by its smaller size and by the more deeply ochraceous or cinnamon rufous suffusion on the under surface. So far as measurements are concerned, the difference between these two forms is merely average, since the extremes considerably overlap. Both these birds have a wide range of individual variation in color which manifests itself strikingly in two extreme color phases, one gray, the other deep ochraceous, between which there are all sorts of intermediates. There is also much difference in the amount of streaking on the lower parts, some specimens being almost immaculate, while others are very heavily marked on the breast and sides. This great individual variation so completely and widely overlaps the distinctions between *Anthus rubescens* and *Anthus spinoletta* that only on average characters are they separable even as subspecies. It is, therefore, perfectly evident that the former should stand as *Anthus spinoletta rubescens* (Tunstall).

<sup>1</sup> For previous papers in this series, cf. 'The Auk,' XXXIV, April, 1917, pp. 191-196; XXXIV, July, 1917, pp. 321-329; XXXIV, October, 1917, pp. 465-470; XXXV, January, 1918, pp. 62-65; XXXV, April, 1918, pp. 185-187; XXXV, October, 1918, pp. 463-467; XXXVI, January, 1919, pp. 81-85.

<sup>2</sup> Vögel paläarkt. Fauna, Heft III, June, 1905, p. 282.

<sup>3</sup> *Alauda Spinoletta* Linnaeus, Syst. Nat., ed. 10, I, 1758, p. 166 (Italy).

***Acanthopneuste borealis kennicotti* (Baird).**

The Kennicott Willow Warbler, *Acanthopneuste borealis kennicotti*, originally described by Professor Baird<sup>1</sup> and subsequently revived by Mr. Ridgway,<sup>2</sup> has for some unaccountable reason not been currently recognized. It is undoubtedly a good subspecies, differing from *Acanthopneuste borealis borealis* in its much smaller size, particularly of wing, tail, and bill, and in its somewhat less yellowish, more grayish upper parts, particularly at the spring and summer seasons. It should, therefore, be restored to a place in our North American list. It breeds in middle and western Alaska and migrates to parts of southeastern Asia.

***Salpinctes obsoletus guadeloupensis* Ridgway.**

The Guadalupe Rock Wren, *Salpinctes guadeloupensis* Ridgway, was originally described as a subspecies of *Salpinctes obsoletus*, but is commonly considered a distinct species. Mr. Ridgway has, however, within recent years<sup>3</sup> again reduced it to a subspecies of *Salpinctes obsoletus*, though this seems to have been ignored by present day writers. The study of a series of some 190 specimens of *Salpinctes obsoletus* and 25 of *Salpinctes guadeloupensis* unquestionably substantiates Mr. Ridgway's opinion in regard to their subspecific relationship. All the measurements of these two birds fully inosculate, as may be readily seen from the detailed figures that Mr. Ridgway has given.<sup>4</sup> In color the two birds look very different at first sight, but there not infrequently occur examples that completely bridge over the differences in coloration. In fact, the most deeply colored specimens of *Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus* are really darker than the lightest examples of *Salpinctes guadeloupensis*. Moreover, *Salpinctes obsoletus neglectus*, which is an undoubted subspecies of *Salpinctes obsoletus*, is, in the shade of the upper surface,

<sup>1</sup> *Phyllopneuste kennicotti* Baird, Trans. Chicago Acad. Sci., I, 1869, p. 313, pl. 30, fig. 2. (St. Michael, Alaska).

<sup>2</sup> Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 50, part III, 1904, p. 696.

<sup>3</sup> Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 50, part III, 1904, p. 650.

<sup>4</sup> Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., No. 50, part III, 1904, pp. 645, 646, 650.

almost the same as *Salpinctes guadeloupensis*. Furthermore, in testing Mr. W. De W. Miller's criterion of distinctness for *Salpinctes guadeloupensis*<sup>1</sup> the ratio of wing-length to exposed culmen we get the following results in our series; *Salpinctes obsoletus obsoletus*, 3.4-4.2; *Salpinctes obsoletus neglectus*, 3.3-3.7; *Salpinctes guadeloupensis*, 3.0-3.5. It is thus evident that even this character inoscillates. The Guadalupe Rock Wren and its subspecies should therefore stand as

***Salpinctus obsoletus guadeloupensis* Ridgway.**

***Salpinctus obsoletus proximus* Swarth.**

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## THE GEOGRAPHIC RACES OF *HEDYMELES MELANOCEPHALUS* SWAINSON.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

THAT there are two subspecies of *Hedymeles*<sup>2</sup> *melanocephalus* is pretty generally recognized. Determination of the 245 specimens of this species in the United States National Museum, including the Biological Survey Collection, has, however, revealed the fact that the names and geographic ranges of these forms seem to be in need of readjustment.

The results of this study appear worth placing on record, which we shall endeavor to do in the following pages.

### ***Hedymeles melanocephalus melanocephalus* Swainson.**

*Guiraca melanocephala* SWAINSON, Philos. Mag., New Ser., I, June, 1827, p. 438 (Temascaltepec, Mexico, Mexico).

*Fringilla epopæa* LICHTENSTEIN, Preis-Verz. Säug., Vögel, Amphib., Fische, und Krebse Mex., 1830, p. 2 (Mexico).

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<sup>1</sup> The Auk, XXXVI, No. 2, April, 1919, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> For the use of the generic name *Hedymeles* instead of *Zamelodia*, cf. Oberholser, 'The Auk,' XXXVI, No. 1, January, 1919, p. 115.