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DESCRIPTIONS OF APPARENTLY NEW BIRDS FROM NORTH AMERICA AND THE WEST INDIES

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The following descriptions of apparently new species and subspecies of birds are based largely on material in the collection of Dr. L. C. Sanford or acquired by The American Museum of Natural History through his interest and support.

***Dendragapus obscurus munroi*, new subspecies**

SUBSPECIFIC CHARACTERS.—Similar to *Dendragapus obscurus fuliginosus* (Ridgway), but adult males uniformly much blacker above, especially on the back and rump; averaging blacker on the chest, and slightly more sooty on breast and abdomen; under tail-coverts with less gray vermiculation on the subterminal black area of each feather; feathers back of nostrils rich deep brown. Females much darker above, the black bars on the feathers averaging wider, the brown bars of a much deeper tint; back of neck brown, never grayish; rump almost devoid of gray edgings to the feathers; chest and flank feathers with their brown areas darker. Young males (first nuptial plumage) differing decidedly from males of similar age of *fuliginosus* in having the feathers of the head and a broad ring of feathers around the neck tinged with rusty brown, this brown ring below appearing between the whitish throat and black chest, and sharply demarcated.

TYPE.—No. 5321, collection of L. C. Sanford; ♂ ad.; Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia; June 21 1914; W. W. Brown.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Dendragapus obscurus fuliginosus.—Alaska (Sitka), 2 ♂, 3 ♀; coast of British Columbia, 6 ♂, 1 ♀; Washington, 2 ♂, 1 ♀.

Dendragapus obscurus munroi.—Queen Charlotte Islands, 15 ♂, 14 ♀.

The existence of a distinct new form of the sooty grouse on the Queen Charlotte Islands has long been suspected, and its description has only awaited the arrival of thoroughly comparable material. I take pleasure in naming it after J. A. Munro, who has collected the finest series of this race in existence and who has added so much to our knowledge of British Columbian birds.

Too much care cannot be used when working with these birds to make proper allowances for seasonal variation in plumage. It is not too much to say that extreme color differences in either race, which are purely

seasonal, are as great as the subspecific characters given above to distinguish the two races in comparable plumages. Not only are there two moults each year and a considerable amount of wear, but year-old birds differ from both juvenals and adults, and there is considerable individual variation. Moreover, there is considerable individual irregularity in the moults, so that birds of the two races taken in the same month are not necessarily comparable.

Taking males first, the material available shows that first-winter birds are distinguishable from winter adults in having a variable but greater amount of rusty-brown vermiculation and barring on the back and to a more limited extent on the chest. The head feathers are also faintly tipped with dark brown. The outer webs of all but the outermost primary are extensively freckled with grayish brown. By April or early May wear has worn away the lighter tips of many of these feathers, giving a more solid color effect, especially noticeable on the back. The first nuptial plumage is attained in May or early June and affects the feathers of the head, neck, chin, and throat, and to a slight extent the upper back. It is in this plumage that the Queen Charlotte Island race acquires the brown feathers mentioned in the diagnosis. In *fuliginosus*, however, these parts are indistinguishable from those of adults. First-year birds can only be told by the freckling on the primaries and rusty vermiculations on the feathers of the back. The first postnuptial moult commences as early as July 10 or not until after August 20, and differences between young and old now vanish. The one possible exception is the freckling of the primaries, traces of which can be found in two specimens, which in every other way are old birds. The most deeply and richly colored birds are naturally the adults in fresh winter plumage. Wear is slight, and slow in producing any considerable effect, December specimens not being separable from late August specimens. Suffice it to add that, in addition to the interesting difference found in specimens in first nuptial plumage, the new form is consistently darker and blacker, plumage for plumage and season for season.

The females exhibit seasonal variation to an even more marked degree, but I cannot distinguish the first nuptial from the second or adult nuptial plumage. In both races fresh birds just after both the prenuptial and postnuptial moults are much more richly colored, and the brown areas of the feathers of the head, neck, back, and chest are REDDISH brown. Nor can there be any reasonable doubt that the prenuptial moult affects a greater area of the body than in male birds.

We must here consider a form recently described from the Sitka region by Mr. Harry S. Swarth as *Dendragapus obscurus sitkensis* (Condor, 1921, p. 59). It is stated that males are indistinguishable from *fuliginosus*, but that females are "much more reddish in general coloration." Specimens before me taken near Sitka would seem at first sight fully to bear out this diagnosis; the males cannot be separated from Vancouver Island and Washington specimens; the females obviously possess the reddish coloration ascribed to them and are strikingly different from a May bird from Vancouver Island; and Mr. Swarth cites spring birds from this locality as part of his material of *fuliginosus*. My Sitka birds are fresh September and October specimens which have completed their postnuptial moult and are consequently not comparable with the Vancouver bird which has not yet commenced the prenuptial moult. A specimen from Puyallup, Washington, taken June 10, 1909, is illuminating in this connection. This bird has practically completed the prenuptial moult, is consequently in fresh plumage, is indistinguishable from my fresh Sitka birds, and is just as strikingly distinct from the Vancouver specimen. The series from the Queen Charlotte Islands fully bears out this seasonal variation. A series of June specimens shows the same color differences between individuals which have not moulted and those which have. Late August specimens, with the postnuptial moult practically completed, are the reddest and most richly colored of all. This is to be expected when we remember that this moult affects the whole body, and not just a part of it as in the prenuptial moult. These August specimens are indistinguishable as far as their redness is concerned from the fresh Sitka material already discussed. Also, freshly moulted June birds cannot be distinguished on the basis of their redness from a Washington specimen in similar plumage. In fact, the only character that separates the new form in this respect from mainland birds is its relatively greater darkness of tone of coloration, a darkness which applies just as well to fresh "red" birds.

It will be seen from the foregoing discussion that the race *sitkensis* is left without a definite diagnostic character; and consequently I did not include it in my comparative description. I have attempted to show that the color variation before and after moult is very great in these birds, and that this color variation takes the form of increased redness in fresh specimens. Consequently, no new subspecies can be held to be characterized satisfactorily in being "much more reddish in general coloration." Nor can the coloration of the female be correctly described, unless the season of the year and the condition of the moult are also

specifically and clearly explained. This is particularly true of the prenuptial moult, a partial one at best and consequently very irregular. In the female of *munroi* this moult takes place anywhere between early April and the middle of June. On the other hand, I wish most emphatically to state that I am not in a position definitely to declare *sitkensis* invalid, as I have not seen spring material of any kind from the type locality. It is perfectly conceivable that in a large series, with material definitely proved comparable, Sitka birds do average more reddish in coloration. I certainly cannot deny it. But proof must be adduced that this "redness" is subspecific and not a question of moult, and this proof is wholly lacking in the original description. It is obvious that Mr. Swarth's description of the female *fuliginosus* can apply only to specimens taken prior to the prenuptial moult. If his description of the female *sitkensis* is based on specimens in nuptial plumage, the characters he brings forward are not of subspecific value. It must be shown that he possessed not only Sitka material taken before the prenuptial moult, but also British Columbia or Washington material in fresh nuptial plumage.

I am particularly indebted to Dr. Dwight for the loan of invaluable material of both races and for kindly checking my analysis of the moults and plumages of the various specimens in the series examined.

***Vermivora browni*, new species**

SPECIFIC CHARACTERS.—Most closely related to *Vermivora crissalis* (Salvin and Godman), but forehead gray, not oleaginous brown; crown-patch orange, not chestnut; rump olive-yellow, not oleaginous; below light grayish olive, scarcely lighter on the middle of the abdomen; under tail-coverts chrome yellow, not oleaginous chestnut; flanks light brownish olive, the chest and sides of breast washed with same; size apparently smaller.

TYPE.—No. 174885, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Miquihuana, Tamaulipas, Mexico; June 15, 1922; W. W. Brown.

DESCRIPTION OF TYPE.—Upper parts brownish olive ("olive-citrine"), changing rather abruptly to olive-yellow on the rump and upper tail-coverts; wings and tail plain brownish olive; forehead gray; crown-patch xanthine-orange, larger and more conspicuous than in any other species of the genus, scarcely concealed, only the lateral feathers minutely tipped with gray; lores and orbital ring grayish white; sides of head gray; below light grayish-olive, much grayer on the chin and throat; flanks light brownish-olive, the chest and sides of breast washed with the same; under tail-coverts cadmium-yellow. Wing, 60; tail, 45.5; culmen, 11; depth of bill at base, 4.5; tarsus, 11.

The single specimen on which this distinct new species is based was the great surprise of an interesting collection recently acquired by Dr. L. C. Sanford, containing an excellent series of the very rare *Spizella*

wortheni and several subspecies known only from this section of Tamaulipas. It was scarcely to be expected, however, that extra-tropical northeastern Mexico would yield a new species at this late date.

Brown's warbler is of particular interest because of its relationship to *Vermivora crissalis*, known from only a single female collected in southwestern Mexico in the State of Colima. There is nothing on record about this species except the original description, and unfortunately it has never been figured. Unless, however, that description is grossly inaccurate, there is no possibility that *V. browni* is conspecific. While it is true that a female is compared with a male, sexual difference is well known to be slight in this genus. The chief differences between them are in the color of the crown-patch and the under tail-coverts, parts which do not vary sexually in other species.

Another point of interest is structural. The bill of *V. browni* is a decided departure from the normal in the genus. As in *V. bachmani*, the maxilla is curved downwards, but the curvature involves the entire maxilla rather than the tip. The depth of the bill at base is, however, proportionately much greater than in any other member of the genus.¹ Thus, *bachmani* with a bill averaging 11.4 in length, averages only 3.5 in depth. Except for the lack of a subterminal tomial notch, the bill of *browni* can be almost perfectly matched by *Dendroica auduboni*, a much larger bird of a different genus. In this connection *Vermivora crissalis* needs a careful re-examination. The depth of the bill at base is not recorded, but in length it is apparently the greatest, and the other dimensions given would make it the largest member of the genus. It is true that the bill measurement was made from the tip to the rictus. This measurement is of course greater than the usual American measurement of the exposed culmen. The rictal measurement of *V. browni* is 12, one millimeter greater than the exposed culmen, so that it is unlikely that the exposed culmen of *V. crissalis* would be less than 13, as 14 is given for the rictal measurement. Nothing definite can be hazarded about the wing and tail measurements, as the European method of taking them usually gives slightly larger figures than ours.

The new species is named in honor of Mr. W. W. Brown, the collector, who has discovered so many species of interest in many parts of the New World. To Dr. L. C. Sanford I owe the privilege of describing it.

***Dendroica pinus*¹ *chrysoleuca*, new subspecies**

SUBSPECIFIC CHARACTERS.—Similar to *Dendroica pinus pinus* (Wilson) of eastern North America, but adult male very slightly yellower olive-green above; wings and

¹For change of name see Stone, 1921, Auk, p. 280.

tail clearer gray, less dusky; wing-coverts **NARROWLY** tipped and margined with pale gray, producing two bands which are much less distinct; superciliary streak, crescentic suborbital spot, chin, throat, and breast deeper and brighter yellow (gamboge-yellow), **ABRUPTLY** changing on abdomen, vent and under tail-coverts to a clearer, purer shade of white; size noticeably smaller; adult female scarcely differing from male, the yellow a little duller, much brighter than any female of typical *pinus* examined.

TYPE.—No. 166327, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Mt. Tina, Santo Domingo; January 10, 1917; R. H. Beck.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Dendroica pinus pinus.—133 ad. ♂, 41 ad. ♀ from the eastern United States, representing every season of the year.

Dendroica pinus achrustera.—Bahamas: New Providence, 6 ♂, 1 ♀.

Dendroica pinus abacoensis.—Bahamas: Abaco, 1 ♂, 1 ♀.

Dendroica pinus chrysoleuca.—Santo Domingo: Mt. Tina, 1 ♂; Mt. Rusilla, 1 ♂, 1 ♀.

The pine warbler was long ago recorded from Santo Domingo by the late C. B. Cory, who reported the receipt of young birds taken in July, thus proving that the bird bred. Very probably, however, these specimens were of no value for purposes of comparison. The bird is mentioned as common by Verrill, who does not state whether he secured specimens. Mr. Ridgway, in the 'Birds of North and Middle America' (II, p. 601, footnote), suggests that Haitian references may be to one of the Bahama races or an unnamed form.

The three birds discussed above are part of the Brewster-Sanford Collection from Santo Domingo, which has already yielded so many novelties and rarities. They are all in unworn, fresh plumage, and the receipt of adequate material from the Bahamas now makes their description possible. As can readily be inferred, the new race is the brightest and most intensely colored extreme of the pine warblers, the two Bahaman races being distinctly duller and duskier than the typical race. The brilliant yellow throat and breast abruptly changing to a cleaner and purer white is a striking character, which makes the bird recognizable at a glance. True *pinus* is so variable that I have been careful to use only the most highly colored winter specimens for comparison in drawing up the diagnosis.

MEASUREMENTS

	Sex	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus
Mt. Rusilla	♂	71.	55.	11.5	20.5
Mt. Tina (type)	♂	66.5	50.	11.	19.
Mt. Rusilla	♀	65.5	49.	11.	19.

***Cœreba oblita*, new species**

SPECIFIC CHARACTERS.—Closely related to *Cœreba tricolor* (Ridgway) of Old Providence Island, Caribbean Sea, but throat and chest averaging very slightly darker grayish white; breast and abdomen averaging slightly more greenish yellow; flanks and anal region very slightly grayer olive; wings and tail averaging much longer; bill much shorter actually as well as proportionately, the measurements not overlapping.

TYPE.—No. 10391, Field Museum of Natural History; ♀ ad.; St. Andrews Island, Caribbean Sea; February 16, 1887; R. Henderson.

MEASUREMENTS OF TYPE.—Wing, 69; tail, 47; culmen, 11.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Cœreba tricolor.—Old Providence Island, 8 ♂, 7 ♀, 9 young.

Cœreba oblita.—St. Andrews Island, 6 ♂, 3 ♀.

Last fall, with the courteous coöperation of the authorities of the Field Museum of Natural History, I was enabled to select several specimens of *Cœreba tricolor* for this Museum as part of an exchange between the two institutions. In cataloguing these specimens, I noticed that one from St. Andrews differed decidedly from others from Old Providence. An investigation showed that the new species had been referred doubtfully to *C. tricolor* by Mr. Cory in a list of birds collected on St. Andrews (Auk, 1889, p. 181). His labels, however, do not show any question mark, and he was undoubtedly misled by the extremely close color resemblance between the two. Mr. Ridgway was unable to identify positively the St. Andrews bird in the 'Birds of North and Middle America,' II, having seen no specimens. Apparently, therefore, this little honey creeper, inhabiting one of the least visited islands in the New World, has been forgotten for many years, awaiting critical determination. I am greatly obliged to Dr. C. E. Hellmayr for loaning me the entire series in his care, without which this study would have been impossible.

While not yet recorded, as with the other members of the genus, there is marked sexual difference in size in the two species under consideration, but none in color, except that females have the upperparts less black, more dusky, faintly tinged with olive. On this basis I regard a so-called male of each species as undoubtedly wrongly sexed. Five females of *C. tricolor* are apparently paler below than males, but they prove to be alcoholic specimens made subsequently into skins, and other females of both species do not exhibit this character.

The color differences of *Cœreba oblita* are so slight that its subspecific separation on this basis alone would be of doubtful value. However, its much longer wings and tail, and above all the shorter bill, are excellent characters. The latter, especially, is a constant character. As the two

birds do not intergrade even by individual variation in this respect and are isolated on two remote islands; their specific separation is in my opinion fully warranted.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS

	Wing	Tail	Culmen
Males			
<i>Cæreba tricolor</i>	65. -68. (66.6)	42. -45. (43.7)	13. -14. (13.5)
<i>Cæreba oblita</i>	68. -73. (69.3)	45. -49. (46.3)	11. -12. (11.7)
Females			
<i>Cæreba tricolor</i>	61.5-64. (62.4)	39. -41.5(40.3)	12. -13. (12.5)
<i>Cæreba oblita</i>	62. -67. (64.)	42. -45. (43.)	10. -11. (10.5)