



**PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE**  
**NEW ENGLAND ZOÖLOGICAL CLUB**

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**A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF  
AMERICAN BUNTINGS**

BY OUTRAM BANGS

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WHEN the Bryant Collection came to the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy it contained the skin of a very peculiar little American bunting taken at Bolaños, Jalisco, Mexico, March 8, 1889 (by W. B. Richardson, I think, although his name does not appear on the label). A few years later this specimen was sent by Mr. Brewster to various ornithologists for their opinion concerning its identity. All who saw it declared it a hybrid. Ridgway wrote saying he had never seen anything like it, and ventured no guess as to its parentage, simply calling it a hybrid. Nelson did likewise. Oberholser thought it sprang from a union of "*Coturniculus benslowi*" and "*Passerculus savanna*." This was also Brewster's opinion. A. K. Fisher suggested "*Passerculus savanna*" and "*Melospiza georgiana*" as possible parents.

Several times since then I have taken this skin, and, in company with Mr. Peters, compared it carefully. It did not seem

to us that it was a hybrid, because we could find no two species which could give such a combination of characters. In appearance the bird somewhat suggests, in one way or another, all of the following genera: *Melospiza (lincolni)*, *Passerberbulus (lecontei)*, *Passerculus (savanna)* and *Ammodramus (australis)*, without agreeing definitely with any of them, or directly combining the characters of any two.

And so the matter has stood for forty-two years, until the other day, to my joy and surprise, Mr. A. M. Bailey sent me for identification a bird taken by himself thirty miles southwest of Durango, at 8000 feet altitude, on March 22, 1931; and this bird exactly matches the Bolaños specimen.

There is now, therefore, no longer any question of hybridism, and another peculiar genus must be added to the long list of American buntings:

#### XENOSPIZA gen. nov.

*Type, Xenospiza baileyi* sp. nov.

*Characters.*—Bill slender, very similar to that of *Passerberbulus lecontei*, culmen to base of forehead 12 mm., exposed culmen 11 mm. Wing short, 62 mm., much rounded, the distance from end of secondaries to tip, 8 mm.; second, third, fourth and fifth primaries subequal and longest; first primary equal to sixth; the secondaries very broad, with very blunt ends; tail relatively long, 53 mm., slightly graduated, the rectrices broad, and rounded at tips.

In general appearance, this curious little bird resembles both *Melospiza*, as represented by *M. lincolni*, and *Passerberbulus*, as represented by *P. lecontei*. From *M. lincolni* it differs by slightly more slender and smaller bill; and conspicuously by the much broader secondaries and by the plumage of the upper parts, which is composed of long, loose, parti-colored feathers, somewhat similar to those of *P. lecontei* and quite different from the close plumage of *M. lincolni*.

From *Passerherbulus lecontei*, which it resembles in its slender bill and in the plumage of the upper parts (the color, of course, is different), it differs much in its tail with broad, rounded rectrices—not narrow and pointed as in *P. lecontei*.

Its longer tail and narrow bill distinguish it from *Ammodramus*.

The color and pattern of the under parts are quite the same as in *Passerculus s. savanna*, except that the under tail-coverts are brown with black streaks, not white, but the likeness ends there, its relatively long tail and short wing separating it from the savannah sparrow group.

### **Xenospiza baileyi** sp. nov.

*Type*, M. C. Z., no. 45,986, adult male, Mexico, Jalisco, Bolaños, 8, March, 1889 (W. B. Richardson?).

*Color*.—Upper parts much varied; crown with an ill-defined gray mesial streak; sides of crown striped with chestnut and black; below this, over the eye, on sides of head, lores, and behind the eye, the color is plain dull grayish; auriculars dusky with pale shaft-stripes; on sides of neck behind ear-coverts a cream-colored patch of unspotted feathers; back, scapulars and rump with feathers chestnut basally (except, of course, the extreme base which is dusky grayish) with broad, black, tear-shaped, central markings toward the ends and widely fringed toward the tips and at the ends with buffy grayish; lesser wing-coverts pale chestnut; greater wing-coverts and secondaries with chestnut outer edges basally, with black centres, and with marginal ends and tips of grayish white; primaries dusky, edged with dull grayish buff; carpal edge yellow; under wing-coverts buffy white; tail dusky, the rectrices fringed with grayish buff; under parts mostly white; a series of black malar spots forming a stripe; chest and upper sides striped and spotted with black; lower sides and under tail-coverts buffy, striped with black; throat, breast and middle of belly unspotted white; feet and tarsus in dried skin, yellowish.

#### MEASUREMENTS (in millimeters)

Sex	Locality	Wing	Tail	Culmen to base of forehead	Exposed culmen	Tarsus
♂	Mexico: Jalisco, Bolaños	62	53	12	11.0	19
♂	Mexico: Durango, Durango	63	52	12	10.5	20

The two known examples of this handsome little bird, one from Bolaños, the other from near Durango, come from within one hundred and fifty miles of each other and from similar, and in all probability the same, general mountainous region. Bailey's example is from 8000 feet altitude; the height at which the Bolaños bird was taken was not indicated on the label, but the species undoubtedly belongs to high altitudes.

Mr. Bailey tells me this of the capture of his specimen. "The country from which the little dark-colored bird under discussion came, is a rugged mountain region, broken by precipitous canyons, and with wide expanses of park. There is much pine, with thorny shrubs and some gnarled oaks intermixed. Here we camped where a series of springs furnished fresh water. Below the springs was a small marsh, some fifty feet long by perhaps twenty feet across, grown to tall grass, dead at this season of the year (March). In this little marsh there were a dozen or more of the birds. One only was shot."

I take the greatest pleasure in naming the species for Mr. Bailey, who secured the second known specimen, and who most generously allowed me to make use of his discovery.