

COMMENTS ON DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By Charles H. Blake

Accepting Jeff Swinebroad's invitation to comment on his difficult decisions, here are a few.

Black-capped and Carolina Chickadees

Two other useful characters. The Carolina has very narrow, light gray edgings to secondaries, the Black-capped has broader, white edgings to secondaries. This is good in the hand but not in the field. Difference in length between wing and tail is 9 to 10 mm. in Carolina and about 5 mm. in Black-capped. This may not hold for the small Florida race (carolinensis Ampiger).

The wing measurements given are unsatisfactory. I give estimated extremes for 90% of birds (almost identical with observed range), and in () between them the means, for young and known adults of Carolina (N.C.) and Black-capped (Mass.). My Carolinas may prove intermediate between the nominate race and extimus.

	Ad.		Imm.	
Carolina	57.1 (60.7)	64.3	56.2 (59.8)	63.4
Black-capped	62.0 (65.3)	68.6	60.2 (63.5)	66.8

Bewick's and Carolina Wrens

Additional point. Bewick's is gray rather than brown. Note: in juvenile plumage the undertail coverts of the Carolina have ill-defined dark bars, later plumages have black, sharp-edged bars.

Tennessee and Pine Warblers

Vermivora has the beak (seen in profile) quite straight top and bottom and very acute. Dendroica has the culmen decurved to a blunter tip. The dusky line through the eye of the Tennessee is a good character. It is more distinct than shown in Peterson's Pl. 52 and is a useful field character. Some Tennessees have a little white in the tail.

Scarlet and Summer Tanagers

The Scarlet has a dusky to black line 2-3 mm. at the outer (not rear) edge of the underwing coverts. This is entirely wanting in the Summer. The body plumage of female and young male Scarlet seems always to have a greenish tinge quite different from the clear yellow to slightly orange cast in the Summer.

Another good character is distance from nostril to bill tip.

Scarlet	- 11-12 mm., 80% 11½ or under
Summer	- 12½-14½ mm., 75% 13 or over.