

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW EJECTS PEBBLE

By Kenneth W. Prescott

While my daughter Trudy and I were processing birds at my home station at Pennington, New Jersey, she called my attention to a White-throated Sparrow (Zonotrichia albicollis) which she was measuring. From the cloacal aperture, it ejected a small pebble weighing 0.3 grams. Ovate in shape, it was 1.1 mm long and 0.5 mm at the widest point. While it was too thin to measure with the mm ruler, the edges were smoothly rounded. The sparrow was "skulled" as HY, banded (107-011384) and released on December 7, 1968. It appeared to be healthy in all respects, weighed 28.2 grams (sans pebble), fat class "0" (scale 0-3) and wing chord 76.0 mm. While I find numerous accounts of pellets being ejected orally, I have not found a reference to the passing of a pebble from the opposite end of the alimentary tract.

New Jersey State Museum, Cultural Center, Trenton, N.J. 08625

CORRIGENDUM The gremlins omitted a line in Jack P. Hailman's article in the last issue of EBBA News (32:6, 251-252). Here, with our apologies, are the correct final two sentences of the first paragraph on page 251:-

"Therefore, if two means are equal and the SD's differ, one can conclude that there is a difference in variability between the two populations; likewise when the larger SD is coupled with the smaller mean. But, as in the case of Spencer's chickadees, if the larger SD is coupled with the larger mean, the difference in variability might be due to the difference in mean alone, and not represent a greater relative variability."



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