

A NEW SONG SPARROW FROM VIRGINIA.

BY W. E. CLYDE TODD.

IN the course of a critical revision of the Song Sparrows of eastern North America, undertaken in connection with my studies of the birds of Labrador and Hudson Bay, and which will appear in my forthcoming report on the ornithology of this region, an apparently new race from the coast of Virginia has been found. This I propose to call

***Melospiza melodia atlantica*, subsp. nov.**

Type, No. 294,442, Collection U. S. National Museum, adult male; Smith's Island, Virginia, May 25, 1898; William Palmer.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Melospiza melodia melodia* of the Atlantic slope region, but much grayer above, with the blackish streaking more distinct, and the reddish brown feather-edging reduced to a minimum. More nearly resembling *Melospiza melodia juddi*, but more grayish above even than that form. Measurements of type: wing, 67 mm.; tail, 65; exposed culmen, 12; tarsus, 21.

Remarks.—The new race is represented by a series of twenty-one breeding birds (May and June) from Smith's Island and Cobb's Island, Virginia, collected by Messrs. Joseph H. Riley, Edward J. Brown, the late William Palmer, and Dr. Louis B. Bishop. In series it is strikingly different from *melodia*, but is to be separated from *juddi* only by being still more grayish than the average individual of that form. This grayish cast is a pronounced feature even in fall and winter specimens, as shown by a December bird from Virginia Beach (on the mainland), and by three specimens from Pea Island and vicinity, on the coast of North Carolina. While it is evidently a littoral race, the series at my command will not admit of working out its range with precision. No specimens from New Jersey have been examined, but two May specimens from Pocantico, New York, and one from Shelter Island, at the eastern end of Long Island, approach *atlantica* very closely, and suggest that it may eventually be found to inhabit the entire coast region from Long Island to North Carolina.

It appears that Palmer had fully intended to describe this form, and had even gone so far as to select a type-specimen. I am therefore choosing the same individual as the type. Dr. Bishop has also been aware of the distinctness of his birds from Cobb's Island, but has generously placed them at my disposal upon learning of my interest in the matter. I am further indebted to the authorities of the United States National Museum for the loan of the type series and for the privilege of describing the new race.

Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.

GENERAL NOTES.

Record of Brunnich's Murre for Lake Co., Ohio.—December 12, 1920, found me seated at the end of a stone breakwater extending far out into Lake Erie. Discovering what at first sight I took to be a small Duck swimming rapidly in from the open water, I laid flat on my stomach with field glass ready to determine the species. The closer the bird approached the more puzzled I became, until at last I could plainly see the pointed bill, the end of which looked as though "whittled" off with one stroke of a knife blade. The bird passed the end of the breakwater so closely I could plainly see the black feet paddling behind the body. The tail was not raised as in the Razor-billed Auk which closely resembles this species in color pattern. When I arose and the Murre made a dive, which, for distance under water, was astounding. This record is interesting because one was shot at this very spot in 1896 and is now preserved at Lake Erie College.—E. A. DOOLITTLE, *Painesville, Ohio.*

The Songs of Leach's Petrel.—The nocturnal song of Leach's Petrel has been described by several observers, but it is so unusual in character that another attempt to describe it may be worth while. Another song of this bird, which seems to be a courtship song, has not, as far as I know, been described. During a visit of six days from July 30 to August 4, 1923, at the Life Saving Station at Outer Wood Island near Grand Manan, New Brunswick, I had ample opportunity to study these songs in the large breeding colony there.

The ordinary song was heard everywhere at night from the birds in the air and on the ground. The general theme or syllabication of this song did not vary, but the tones or pitch with which it was produced varied with the individual. Many songs were clear and melodious but some were harsh and rasping, and all ended with a sound as if of laughter or of a rapidly bouncing rubber ball. The song was executed with great speed, occupying in time only one and a half or two seconds, as closely as I could